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## **ECONOMY & REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Meeting: 2 March 2023

At: 6.00 pm

### PRESENT

Councillor Oliver Johnstone (Chair) in the chair; Councillor David Meller (Vice-Chair); Councillors Paul Ankers, Will Dawson, Roy Driver, Louise Heywood, Ian Hunter and John Taylor.

### **1. MINUTES**

The minutes (copies of which had been circulated) of the meeting held on 19 January 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors and officers were invited to declare any interests they had in any of the items on the agenda for the meeting.

No declarations of interest were made.

### **3. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST TEST**

RESOLVED - That the press and public be excluded for the following item as exempt by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972 as containing information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the local authority):

- agenda item 14 – Adlington Walk Future High Streets Fund; and
- agenda item 15 – Merseyway Update.

### **4. CALL-IN**

There were no call-in items to consider.

### **5. ECONOMY AND REGENERATION PORTFOLIO PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES REPORT: QUARTER 3 UPDATE**

A representative of the Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) which provided the quarter 3 update for the Economy and Regeneration portfolio. The report was based on the 2022/ 2023 Portfolio Performance and Resource Agreements. The quarter 3 update focused on highlights and exceptions in relation to delivering the portfolio priorities since the mid-year report. The report also included forecast performance and financial data (where this was available) for the portfolio, along with an update on the portfolio savings programme.

The Cabinet Member for Economy and Regeneration (Councillor Colin MacAlister) attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:

- Members were advised that staffing numbers had increased in the Planning Department, and specifically with the Enforcement Team which was now a team of three members of staff.
- It was noted that the response was being drafted to the government's current consultation on reform of the planning system in England. The proposed planning fees by government were unknown at this stage.
- Further information would be provided to members as to the timescales for what minor and major enforcement breaches might look like in their resolution.
- It was noted that youth unemployment in Stockport was higher than the national average.
- Members were advised that the jobs fair held in Brinnington was a success and the input from employers in the fair was the keys to its success; it was hoped that the fair could be held again next year.
- Members noted that Willmott Dixon had prepared a report social value which would be useful in identifying the local benefits the organisation had provided the Borough.
- It was expected that the council would consult on the draft Stockport Local Plan once the National Planning Policy Framework consultation had concluded. Members would be kept up to date with progress.
- It was requested that district centre occupancy rates be included within future reports.
- Thought was being given to a future plan for highways investment following the conclusion of the current Highways Investment Plan 2023 – 2024. Concern was raised in relation to a geographic unbalance of works, and it was hoped that this could be given further consideration in the future programme of works. Members were advised that the programme of works followed a methodology.
- It was queried as to whether highway drainage works were being reviewed following works to ensure that they remain cleared.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

## **6. DISTRICT CENTRE ACTION PLAN**

A representative of the Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) which provided an update on the district centre visioning sessions and the development of actions plans for each centre.

The Cabinet Member for Economy and Regeneration, Councillor Colin MacAlister, and Town Centre Manager, Helen Walters, attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:

- It was noted that the detailed action plans reflected the work of the Institute of Place Management. All visioning session had taken place and reports were scheduled to be considered at meetings of the seven Area Committees week commencing 6 March 2023.

- It was expected that learning from the work on district centres could be used to inform future work on local and smaller centres.
- It was reported that groups of interested parties were submitting queries to District Centre Managers that would be better placed with Neighbourhood Managers. Relationships with the Neighbourhood and Parking Teams would be strengthened to address this.
- It was reported that some of the visioning sessions were not attended by traders. However, some of those traders fed into the electronic survey.
- It was suggested that the Scrutiny Committee receive data of district centre footfall to provide them with an indication of the vibrancy of district centres.

RESOLVED – That the progress being made by the District Centre Managers to develop actions plans in partnership with local stakeholders to help create strong viable district centres be noted.

## **7. UNITED KINGDOM SHARED PROSPERITY FUND - STOCKPORT ARRANGEMENTS**

A representative of the Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) which provided information as to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Communities and Place funding allocation for Stockport and the proposed governance arrangements for it.

The Cabinet Member for Economy and Regeneration, Councillor Colin MacAlister, and Head of Economy, Work and Skills, Richard Mortimer, attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:

- It was suggested that a district centre champion be part of Communities and Place Project Bid Reference Group; thought would be given as to the appropriate person that could participate e.g., a District Centre Manager.
- It was noted that funding would be borough-wide and not solely for district centres.
- It was suggested that reporting to the Scrutiny Committee on funds awarded would be a useful mechanism for members to raise any concerns with awards and/ or processes.
- There would be an opportunity for applicants to reapply for funding if their applications were unsuccessful, and as a consequence, there was no appeal process. An applicant would receive feedback to enable them to review the strengths and weaknesses of their application.
- It was noted that the intention of the fund was to replace the European Structural Fund and was likely to be oversubscribed; it was difficult to anticipate the volume of applications that would be received.
- There would be a communications plan in place to promote the fund.
- The Scrutiny Committee recommended that Cabinet consider District Centre Manager and elected member participation in the process in some form.

RESOLVED – (1) that the content of the report, approach relating to Stockport's UKSPF investment plan for Communities and Place, and the suitability of the proposed

governance model for any future Support for Local Business and the People and Skills elements of UKSPF (once they are approved), be noted;

(2) that authority delegated to the Director of Development and Regeneration (who will approve funding allocations for projects) in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economy and Regeneration to oversee and approve the delivery of activities relating to Stockport's investment plan, be noted;

(3) That regular updates on UKSPF to the Scrutiny Committee be agreed; and

(4) That the Cabinet be recommended to consider District Centre Manager and elected member participation in the process in some form.

## **8. STOCKPORT RAIL STATION REGENERATION UPDATE**

A representative of the Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) which provided an update on the Stockport Station Project, including progress on the project to date and next steps.

The Director of Development and Regeneration, Paul Richards, attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

It was suggested that work undertaken to assess capacity on the line be reviewed by the Head of Highways and Transportation to ensure that the level of service provided would be fit for purpose and as efficient as possible in terms of timetabling and the interplay between operators at the station.

It was felt that the proposed changes were a welcome development.

RESOLVED – (1) That the contents of the report and progress on the project be noted;

(2) That the approach to the development and submission of the business case be endorsed; and

(3) That delegated authority to the Director of Development and Regeneration, the Director of Place Management, and the Deputy Chief Executive (Corporate and Support Services), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economy and Regeneration, for the following, be noted:

- The council, in its role as accountable body to sign off and submit the business case documents for the Stockport Railway Station project.
- The council, in its role as accountable body to enter into all required funding agreements, and associated terms with Avanti West Coast and Network Rail.
- Authority to enter all contract, partner, land and procurement arrangements, and to seek permissions, including planning permissions, as required to build and operate or manage, as appropriate, reporting back as necessary and appropriate to the Cabinet.

- Authority to approve the final schemes and their construction programme following approval of the final business cases.
- Authority to enter into agreement with the landowners for temporary access rights and purchase the land necessary to construct the schemes.
- Agree to authorise officers to enter into final negotiations with affected landowners to agree heads of terms for land purchase by agreement.
- That authority is delegated to the Assistant Director for Legal and Democratic Governance to do all things necessary or incidental to the implementation of the abovementioned resolutions.

## **9. TRANSPORTATION CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2023 - 2024**

A representative of the Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) detailing the proposed Transportation Capital Programme for 2023/ 2024 and indicative programmes for future years.

The Director of Development and Regeneration, Paul Richards, attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:

- Concerns were raised as to a number of locations that it was felt needed urgent work but were not on the list of planned works. It was asked whether members could submit locations for inclusion on the list. It was noted that planned works were listed in order of priority.
- It was suggested that the council consider increasing funding for the Road Safety around Schools budget, owing to the ever-increasing traffic management issues around schools.

RESOLVED – (1) That the report be noted; and

(2) That the Transportation Capital Programme 2023 – 2024 for approval by the Cabinet Member for Economy and Regeneration be endorsed.

## **10. DRAFT STOCKPORT LOCAL PLAN**

The Cabinet Member for Economy and Regeneration (Councillor Colin MacAlister) attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The council were due to respond to the government's National Planning Policy Framework consultation. Once the consultation had concluded, it was expected that work on the draft Stockport Local Plan could be progressed. Members would be kept up to date with progress.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

## **11. LEVELLING UP FUND BIDS**

This item has been placed on the agenda at the request of the Scrutiny Committee at their meeting held on 19 January 2023.

It was advised that detail on the Levelling Up Fund bids would be circulated to members of the Scrutiny Committee following the meeting.

## **12. DRAFT FINAL REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY REVIEW PANEL - ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CASE FOR METROLINK IN STOCKPORT**

A representative of the Chair of the Scrutiny Review Panel, Councillor David Meller, submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) detailing the work of the panel, including the panel's key findings and recommendations for consideration by Cabinet.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:

- As part of the scrutiny work programme approved by Full Council, a review of the Economic and Social Case for Metrolink in Stockport by the Economy and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee was agreed and subsequently undertaken from October 2022 to February 2023.
- The report contained a series of key findings and recommendations for onward submission to Cabinet for consideration.
- It was hoped that the work would support the council's ambition in bringing Metrolink to Stockport.
- It was suggested that the work be communicated to as many stakeholders as possible, including local Members of Parliament, and that this be added to the list of recommendations within the report to Cabinet.

Thanks were expressed to members, officers and Transport for Greater Manchester for their support with this piece of work.

RESOLVED – That the report, subject to the additional recommendation that the work of the panel be presented to local Members of Parliament for their information, be endorsed for submission to Cabinet.

## **13. AGENDA PLANNING**

A representative of the Assistant Director for Legal and Democratic Governance submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) which set out the planned agenda items for the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee, and detailed forward plan items that fell within the remit of the committee for information.

RESOLVED – (1) That the report be noted.

Items containing information 'not for publication'

**14. ADLINGTON WALK FUTURE HIGH STREETS FUND**

A representative of the Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing an update on progress relating to the delivery of Stockroom and sought Cabinet approval to delegate entering into a build contract and additional finance in light of construction inflationary pressures.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

**15. MERSEYWAY UPDATE**

A representative of the Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) which sought Cabinet approval for the appointment of a contractor to begin the main refurbishment works to the former BHS store, as well as Cabinet authorisation for the Assistant Director for Legal and Democratic Governance to do all things necessary to enter into contract with the preferred main contractor.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 8.37 pm