

ECONOMY, REGENERATION & CLIMATE CHANGE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting: 23 November 2023

At: 6.00 pm

PRESENT

Councillor Claire Vibert (Chair) in the chair; Councillor Dena Ryness (Vice-Chair); Councillors Will Dawson, Helen Foster-Grime, James Frizzell, Ian Hunter, Ian Powney, John Taylor and Pete West.

1. MINUTES

The minutes (copies of which had been circulated) of the meeting held on 12 October 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.

The following interest was declared:

<u>Officer</u>	<u>Interest</u>
Mark Glynn	Agenda item 5 - 'Responding to our Medium-Term Financial Plan' as Chair of the Totally Local Company (TLC) Board. TLC were referenced within the report.

3. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST TEST

RESOLVED - That the press and public be excluded for the following items of business (if required) as exempt by virtue of Paragraph 3, 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 12 'Cheadle Eco Business Park and Adswold Depot'.

4. CALL-IN

There were no call-in items to consider.

5. RESPONDING TO OUR MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

The Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration & Housing (Councillor Colin MacAlister) and the Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Environment (Councillor Mark Roberts) submitted reports (copies of which had been circulated) providing further detail on the budget change proposals being considered by Cabinet to address financial and demand challenges, enable longer term transformation and ensure the delivery of shared strategic partnership ambitions, and taking into consideration feedback received to date.

The Cabinet Members were in attendance at the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:

- It was noted that the Autumn statement had been released on 22 November 2023.
- Concerns were raised in relation to proposed additional charges for certain waste collections and it was noted that the charges would enable the council to make significant savings.
- During the height of the covid-19 pandemic, green waste collections were changed from weekly to fortnightly and enabled the council to sustain critical services during that time. The data gained from that period had proved useful and demonstrated no significant difference in tonnage collections. Members were pleased that the proposal would improve the efficiency of the service and enable a reduction in the council's carbon footprint.
- It was suggested that food bin caddy liners be made available on request or for collection. Further, that residents be encouraged to compost more.
- A more intelligent IT system was expected to be implemented to improve the efficiency of service for waste operatives on crew rounds.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

6. 2023/24 MID-YEAR (QUARTER 2) PORTFOLIO PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES REPORTS: CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY, REGENERATION & HOUSING

The Director of Place Management and Director of Development & Regeneration submitted portfolio reports (copies of which had been circulated) which were based on the 2023/24 Portfolio Performance and Resource Agreements agreed in June 2023. The Mid-Year Reports focussed on delivery of the portfolio priorities from April to September 2023 and included forecast performance and financial data (where available) for the portfolios, along with an update on the portfolio savings programmes.

The Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration & Housing (Councillor Colin MacAlister) and the Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Environment (Councillor Mark Roberts) attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The following comments were made/ issues raised in relation to the Economy, Regeneration & Housing portfolio:

- Priority 1: Delivering ambitious housing projects
 - Members were pleased to hear that over 1,700 new homes were on site for delivery across the borough.
 - It was noted that the council were losing stock through the government's 'Right to Buy' scheme and that the matter needed to be addressed by government.
- Priority 3: Driving investment in regeneration projects
 - It was noted that the town was reasonably stable in terms of occupancy base and the team were seeing an increased number of new entrants into the town.

Although there would always be a degree of entry and exit in the market, Stockport did not see a significant level of reported failures.

- Priority 4: Supporting the business base in Stockport
 - ERH 5.3: Youth Employment Hub – it was noted that the reason for the red RAG rating with a deteriorating trend was owing to the fact that the activity was led by partners in Job Centre Plus (JCP) for which the council had a role in facilitating and enabling the delivery of this work. Officers were scheduled to meet with JCP week commencing 27 November 2023 to discuss actions JCP planned to take to recover the position.

The following comments were made/ issues raised in relation to the Climate Change & Environment portfolio:

- Members were advised that Stockport had been highlighted by The Cities Commission for Climate Investment in 'The UK Net Zero Neighbourhood Prospectus' which was expected to be presented at COP28 in Dubai and meant representation for Stockport on an international scale.
- Priority 1: Mainstreaming CAN
 - A number of council officers were carbon literate, including officers within the planning department. It was understood that the council's planning department, which steered development in the borough, was the first local authority planning department in the United Kingdom to have undertaken carbon literacy training.
 - Members were advised that the Climate Action Now (CAN) team comprised of three members of staff; each service within the council had a responsibility to deliver on the council's CAN objectives and undertaking carbon literacy training formed part of meeting those objectives.
 - A further carbon literacy training session for members was expected to take place towards the end of the calendar year.
 - Members were proud of the work of the council in working towards achieving its CAN objectives. Members were pleased that the council were involving and engaging the young people of the borough in CAN work.
- Priority 2: Renewable energy and efficiency
 - The importance of working with schools around energy and efficiency was stressed.
 - It was noted that all schools eligible for solar panels had been written to. A tool enabling schools to identify the roof space they had for solar panels was in development.
 - A CAN calendar had been designed by a Stockport school and created for schools; each month had an idea as to how children and their families could reduce their carbon footprint.
- Priority 4: Waste management
 - It was noted that the council had written to the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs about disposable vapes and the damage they cause to the environment given that there was no method for recycling the product at present.

RESOLVED – That the reports be noted.

7. HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING NEED

The Director of Place Management submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing detail on housing need, supply and homelessness in the borough.

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

The following comments were made/ issues raised:

- There was an acute shortage of affordable housing nationally. Increasing housing need linked to limited supply and escalating rents and property prices had led to more households facing housing insecurity and homelessness.
- It was suggested that the report be circulated to all members of the council for a greater understanding of the context that the local authority was operating within.
- In response to a question as to how the council were trying to free up larger accommodation for larger families, members were advised that sometimes cash incentives were used e.g., paying for removal expenses. Although the council were looking at options to accelerate downsizing incentives, this would only account for a small contribution of housing to a much bigger problem.
- The team continuously reviewed where empty properties could be brought back into use.
- It was suggested that an update on homelessness and housing need be a regular update to the Scrutiny Committee.

Thanks were expressed to the team for a comprehensive report and the ongoing work to prevent homelessness in the borough.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

8. ADLINGTON WALK FUTURE HIGH STREETS FUND (STOCKROOM)

The Director of Strategy submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) which set out the progress with the construction of Stockroom and detailed how the council was preparing to deliver the transformational project.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:

- It was noted that the designers of the project had designed Manchester Central Library.
- The project was expected to be complete this time next year.
- It was suggested that cycle parking be considered as part of the project.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

9. REFERENDUM AND ADOPTION OF MARPLE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) which provided an update on work on the Marple Neighbourhood Plan since the plan's submission to the examiner, as well as key progress on the plan and next stages in the process before it formally became part of the development plan for Stockport.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:

- Members were advised that the election process for a neighbourhood planning referendum was the same as any other local authority election.
- It was noted that the plan had been through significant consultation and had had local input.
- It was suggested that the team consider how to make the neighbourhood planning process more engaging and accessible for young people.
- It was also suggested that further voting options on the ballot be explored for future neighbourhood plans.
- It was felt that it would be valuable to have a borough wide local plan for neighbourhood plans to accompany.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

10. DRAFT STOCKPORT LOCAL PLAN

Members received a verbal update from the Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration & Housing (Councillor Colin MacAlister) on the Draft Stockport Local Plan.

It was noted that the National Planning Policy Framework which set out government's planning policies for England (and how they were expected to be applied) was expected in the autumn.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

11. AGENDA PLANNING

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

It was suggested that a report as to how Greater Manchester local authorities were working to achieve their climate objectives (and the interplay between these organisations in doing so) be brought back to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Committee. Further, that an update on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) be shared with the Scrutiny Committee in the new year.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the report be noted.

- (2) That the Assistant Director for Legal and Democratic Governance be requested to make arrangements for items to be programmed onto the agenda in relation to how Greater Manchester local authorities were working to achieve their climate objectives (and the interplay between these organisations in doing so), and the use of the UKSPF.

Item including information 'not for publication'

12. CHEADLE ECO BUSINESS PARK AND ADSWOOD DEPOT

The Director of Place Management submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) which provided an update to members and sought Cabinet approval to progress with the proposed redevelopment of Bird Hall Lane Industrial Estate into Cheadle Eco Business Park.

RESOLVED – That the report and progress on the Cheadle Eco Business Park and Adswold Redevelopment be noted.

The meeting closed at 8.00 pm