

## **ECONOMY, REGENERATION & CLIMATE CHANGE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Meeting: 18 January 2024  
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 23 November 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 interests were declared:

| <u>Officer</u> | <u>Interest</u>   |
|----------------|---|
| Paul Richards  | Agenda item 7 'Briefing note to scrutiny: Interchange Park Update' as Chief Executive of Stockport Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC). MDC was referenced within the report. |
| Mark Glynn     | Agenda item 5 'Cabinet Response: 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).

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

There were no call-in items to consider.

## **5. CABINET RESPONSE: RESPONDING TO MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN**

The Cabinet Members for Economy, Regeneration & Housing (Councillor Colin MacAlister) and Climate Change & Environment (Councillor Mark Roberts) submitted a joint report (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.

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

The following comments were made/issues raised:

- Following a suggestion by members of the Scrutiny Committee at their meeting held on 23 November 2023, members were pleased to note that caddy liners were now available to residents through the library service.
- In response to a question as to the differential of the cost to the applicant for the submission of a larger development application as opposed to a householder application, it was advised that this was significant.
- It was noted that there had been a low number of responses to the budget consultation, although this number had doubled from the consultation carried out last year. It was asked that further thought be given to increasing the level of response in the future. Ideas as to how to further increase engagement were welcomed.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

## **6. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET AND RENT LEVELS FOR 2024/25**

The Director for Corporate and Support Services and Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Place Management submitted a joint report (copies of which had been circulated) providing detail on the illustrative Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget for 2024/25, including the level of rent and service charges.

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:

- Members welcomed the proposed continuation of hardship fund provision into 2024/25 in providing additional support to families that need it most.
- Key updates and data on homelessness and housing need in the borough were expected to be included within future Portfolio Performance and Resources Reports.
- It was noted that the proposed service charge increases would support with maintenance of the council's stock in ensuring good quality stock, as well as supporting future ambitions for the stock, including climate ambitions.
- It was felt that the 'Right to Buy' policy continued to prove problematic, and it was noted that Greater Manchester (GM) local authorities were intending to put proposals to government on the matter.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

## **7. BRIEFING NOTE TO SCRUTINY: INTERCHANGE PARK UPDATE**

The Assistant Director of Neighbourhoods submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing an update to Scrutiny Committee on the opening of the Interchange Park.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:

- Members were advised that completion of the park was expected March 2024 and the park would be a fantastic asset for existing and future residents.
- The report set out the plan for the activation and animation of the park. The report also set out measures to ensure that the park was a safe place for everyone.
- It was noted that the report had also been considered by the Communities and Transport Scrutiny Committee at their meeting held on 15 January 2024.
- It was suggested that a tour of the park be arranged for Scrutiny Committee members.

Members welcomed the report and update.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

## **8. STOCKPORT COUNTY FOOTBALL CLUB – MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

The Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) seeking Cabinet approval for the terms of a Memorandum of Understanding between the council and Stockport County Football Club.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:

- The Memorandum of Understanding would establish the ways in which the council and the club intended to work together and would build on the positive partnership working and good will that already existed.
- It was reported that the club was an asset to the borough, and the work the club did in the community was commendable.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

## **9. ECO4 FLEX SCHEME FOR THE INSTALLATION OF ENERGY SAVING/CARBON REDUCTION MEASURES IN PRIVATE HOUSING**

The Director of Place Management submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing a summary of the ECO4 flex scheme currently being delivered within Stockport.

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:

- A letter was expected to be sent to residents drawing their attention to the scheme, which offered fully funded works to improve energy efficiency in the home to those eligible.
- The scheme provided an opportunity to have a positive impact on residents and their livelihoods, as well as upgrading housing stock.
- The [yourhomebetter.co.uk](https://yourhomebetter.co.uk) website was a useful tool for those wishing to improve energy efficiency in the home and who were able to fund upgrades to their homes themselves.
- It was reported that the council was leading the way in GM with regards to the number of installations that had taken place and the contact the council had had with residents about the scheme.
- The council were awaiting a government steer as to how the private rented sector could be incentivised to make improvements.
- Further opportunities for members to undertake Carbon Literacy training were available in the coming weeks.

Thanks were expressed to officers for their work in promoting the scheme.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

## **10. GREATER MANCHESTER CLEAN AIR PLAN UPDATE REPORT**

The Director of Place Management submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing an update on the progress of developing a Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan.

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:

- The approach set out in the report had been put to government as the right approach for GM – a fairer approach that would enable cleaner air quicker.
- A key element of the plan was the replacement of buses, and it was noted that an all-member briefing was scheduled to take place at the end of the month around bus franchising and how this linked in with clean air work.
- It was noted that the government were not progressing with their scheme on retrofitted buses as the results were variable as to whether they decreased emissions.

RESOLVED – That the proposed approach to improving air quality in Greater Manchester be noted.

### **11. 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 group leaders had met earlier today (18 January 2024) to discuss next steps for the plan. Further, that the National Planning Policy Framework changes vindicated the decision to pause work on the plan. The consultation could now move forward.

It was asked that an update report be produced for the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

### **12. UPDATE ON THE WORK OF THE SCRUTINY REVIEW PANEL**

Members received a verbal update from the Chair of the Scrutiny Review Panel (Councillor Dena Ryness) on the work of the panel.

It was noted that the agenda for the next meeting of the panel scheduled to be held on 2 February 2024, would be published next week (25 January 2024).

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

### **13. 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 noted that the presentation from Totally Stockport on the work of the Stockport Business Improvement District in improving the offering in Stockport Town Centre would be moved to the 29 February 2024 meeting agenda.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.14 pm