

**CORPORATE, RESOURCE MANAGEMENT & GOVERNANCE SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

Meeting: 11 June 2024
At: 6.00 pm

PRESENT

Councillor Christine Carrigan (Chair) in the chair; Councillor Carole McCann (Vice-Chair); Councillors Jake Austin, Dickie Davies, Helen Foster-Grime, Mark Jones, Jeremy Meal, Paul Wright and Alex Wynne.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes (copies of which had been circulated) of the meeting held on 27 February 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

The following Personal Interests were declared:-

<u>Officer</u>	<u>Interest</u>
Michael Cullen and Vicki Bates	Agenda Item 9 – ‘TLC Annual Report’ as a non-executive Director of TLC
Mark Glynn	Agenda Item 9 – ‘TLC Annual Report’ as the Chair of TLC

3. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST TEST

The Chair invited the Committee to consider whether to exclude the public and press from the meeting during consideration of Agenda item 14 – ‘Fleet Management Loan Facility’ as it contained information that was ‘not for publication’.

RESOLVED – That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the addendum to Agenda Item 14 – ‘Fleet Management Loan Facility’ which contained information ‘not for publication’ by virtue of Category 3 ‘Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority)’ as set out in the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

4. CALL-IN

There were no call-in items to consider.

5. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES 2023/24 YEAR END REPORT

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing a summary of progress in delivering the council's priority outcomes up to 31 March 2024, with a particular focus on the final quarter of 2023/24 (January to March 2024).

The report reflected the 2023/24 Council Plan, MTFP and Portfolio priorities. It included:

- An overview of corporate delivery and performance (including brief highlights from the seven individual Portfolio Reports).
- A detailed financial update, including, the outturn position on revenue and capital.

The following comments were made/ issues raised: -

- The work of the finance team was acknowledged, particularly in having steered the council through challenges involving difficult financial circumstances. The cross-party support from colleagues in relation to the council's finances was welcomed.
- The final outcome costs in the areas of Education, Children and Families had been greater than expected. The 2024/25 budget had recognised pressures on that portfolio and the council had invested in neighbourhoods and a preventative approach to ensure that the budget would be more sustainable in the future, for example by investing in the Drug and Alcohol Court and New Beginnings: Parent and Child Support which enabled children to remain with their families.
- Members commented that the numbers of residents participating in the vaccination programme had reduced and asked how people could be encouraged to get their vaccinations.
- Members queried whether the council could encourage private landlords to buy rental properties in order to increase the availability of rental properties.
- Members welcomed the airport dividend within the budget.
- The 'One Stockport' film demonstrated the aspiration and optimism of Stockport's residents, however, Members recognised that the council remained in a difficult financial position and that, unless the local authority was supported by central government, it was difficult to provide services and make progress.
- In terms of accommodation for looked after children, it was reported that work was underway to identify suitable properties and an update would be brought to the next meeting of this Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED - (1) That the key delivery and performance issues from the council's seven portfolios be noted.

(2) That the progress against delivering council priorities and capital schemes alongside budget outturns be noted.

(3) That the Cash Limit and Non -Cash Limit outturn positions for 2023/24 be noted.

(4) That the update to the council's positive investments be noted.

(5) That the Dedicated Schools Grant, Housing Revenue Account and Collection Fund outturn positions be noted.

(6) That the appropriations to/from reserves and balances during the period and the resulting reserves and balances position at outturn be noted.

(7) That the position for the 2023/24 Capital Programme be noted.

(8) That the adjustments of capital schemes during the quarter be noted.

(9) That the resourcing of the capital programme be approved.

(10) That the 2023/24 prudential indicators be approved.

6. PORTFOLIO PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES - YEAR END REPORT 2023/24

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) the portfolio priorities from October 2023 to March 2024. It included forecast performance and financial data (where this was available) for the portfolio, along with an update on the portfolio savings programme.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- The new system for personal development plans (PDPs) reflected low completion figures for PDPs. The new system had been co-designed with colleagues and was an intuitive system with an app which allowed staff to link to the training portal. It was anticipated that completion figures would improve in the coming year.
- Members welcomed the council's anti-poverty objectives as an important development and requested further information on the progress of that objective during the course of the municipal year.

RESOLVED - (1) That the Year-End Portfolio Performance and Resource Report be noted.

(2) That the progress against delivering key projects, priority outcomes, targets and budgets for 2023/24 be noted.

(3) That key areas of and responsibility for taking forward corrective action to address any performance or resource issues be noted.

7. PORTFOLIO PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES - DRAFT PORTFOLIO AGREEMENTS 2024/25

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) presenting the draft 2024/25 Agreement for the Finance and Resource Portfolio for consideration and comment by the Committee.

The following comments were made/ issues raised: -

- The free school meals project had been a single-year scheme which was approved at the 2022/23 Budget Council. The scheme had come to an end, however a programme

of communication with eligible families was underway which highlighted other forms of support.

- In relation to STAR procurement, it was reported that the scheme added demonstrable social value to the borough, with tangible results. It was also reported that there was an advantage in being able to shape the STAR programme in terms of innovation and future direction as many areas of its work had been piloted in Stockport. Data on the social value of STAR would be reported to a future meeting of this Scrutiny Committee.
- Members welcomed the funding for children's homes within the capital programme which would benefit children as well as the finances of the local authority.
- The council worked closely with third sector organisations to deliver the Housing Support Fund. Third sector organisations were a gateway to support which residents found less institutional and intimidating than approaching the council directly and this approach enabled the council to directly impact those residents who most needed support.
- The improvement in levels of staff sickness was welcomed.
- Members noted the progress made in terms of staff retention and it was reported that staff turnover at a healthy level and work was ongoing to improve staff retention in social care. The staff survey had found that 80 per cent of council staff were motivated to make a difference in the community.
- The council was proud to be a real living wage accredited employer.
- Members queried the council's proposed future investment in its leisure estate, in particular the Grand Central Life Leisure facility. In response it was reported that Grand Central required improvement and that funding options were being explored through the CIC. All necessary steps would be reported to this Scrutiny Committee.
- Members commented that the Grand Central facility was important, with a proud history of producing sports medallists. It was, therefore, vital to invest in Grand Central.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

8. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES CONTAINED IN THE CONSTITUTION

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing an update on the revisions agreed by the Joint STAR Committee on 15 April 2024 to the council's Contract Procedure Rules to include current legislation for Health Care Services (Provider Selection Regime) Regulations 2023.

It was confirmed that it would not be necessary to amend the constitution when a new member joined STAR procurement.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

9. TLC ANNUAL REPORT

The Director of Place Management submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) which outlined Totally Local Company's performance during the first year of its operation since the new Board was appointed.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- The number of green initiatives, for example reducing emissions were also noted, along with other green projects such as the increased use of solar panels.
- Members also commented that they had received lots of positive feedback from residents on the services provided by TLC, along with the positivity and helpfulness of TLC staff.
- Members commented positively on the retention of apprentices at TLC.
- Members also noted the positive information related to staff sickness levels, wellbeing and turnover. The use of agency staff was low, although it varied according to season, with higher numbers employed during the summer in parks, green spaces and for green bin collections. Overall the numbers of agency staff used were between five and seven per cent.
- It was reported that TLC had an excellent relationship with trades unions, including GMB and Unison. Regular meetings took place with unions and they had played a significant role on the transformation project related to refuse and recycling and the development of the business strategy.
- There had been better than expected financial results for TLC and it had been able to return its in-year benefit to Stockport Council. The financial results had been achieved due to some costs being lower than expected as well as the reduction in inflation.
- TLC's success over the previous year were attributed to a strong alignment between Stockport Council and TLC including a shared strategic vision.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

10. WI-FI & LOCAL AREA NETWORK (LAN) SYSTEM REPLACEMENT

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) seeking approval and authorisation to commission a capital scheme that enabled the replacement of the existing Local Area Network (LAN) and WiFi system.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

11. PRODUCTIVITY PLANS

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) setting out that, earlier this year, the local government finance settlement announced that all Councils would be asked to produce productivity plans. On 16 April 2024 all Councils received a letter from the minister for Local Government setting out the guidance for completion and submission of these plans.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

12. SCRUTINY REVIEW TOPIC SELECTION 2024/25

A representative of the Assistant Director for Legal & Democratic Governance submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) which outlined the Scrutiny Review process, provided a framework within which they should be undertaken and supported Scrutiny Committee Members with the selection of Scrutiny Review topics for the 2024/25 municipal year.

RESOLVED – (1) That ‘STAR procurement and social value’ be selected for the 2024/25 Scrutiny Work Programme

(2) That Councillor Carole McCann be nominated to Chair the proposed scrutiny review panel and other members of the review being Councillors Jake Austin, Christine Carrigan and Alex Wynne.

13. SCRUTINY REVIEW WORK PROGRAMME

A representative of the Assistant Director for Legal & Democratic Governance submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) setting out planned agenda items for the Scrutiny Committee’s next meeting and Forward Plan items that fall within the remit of the Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Assistant Director for Legal & Democratic Governance be recommended to programme the following items into the Scrutiny Committee’s work programme for the 2024/25 Municipal Year:-

- Match My Project.
- Voter ID.
- Personal Development Plans (PDPs).

Item including information 'Not for Publication'

14. FLEET MANAGEMENT LOAN FACILITY

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) making a recommendation for a new loan facility for fleet at Totally Local Company Ltd (TLC). This new loan, along with consideration of leasing will enable the Environmental Services Strategy which was currently being devised.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- Members commented that the priority was gully cleansing and environmental responsibility.
- The operational efficacy of the vehicles had been considered, including environmental considerations.

(NOTE: Appendices to this report contained information ‘Not for Publication’ that had been circulated to members of the Scrutiny Committee only).

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.22pm.