

COMMUNITIES & TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting: 10 June 2024

At: 6.00 pm

PRESENT

Councillor Joe Barratt (Chair) in the chair; Councillor Matt Wynne (Vice-Chair);
Councillors Jon Byrne, Angie Clark, Steve Gribbon, Dominic Hardwick, Tom Morrison,
Dan Oliver and Rachel Wise.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes (copies of which had been circulated) of the meeting held on 26 February 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair subject to the following amendment:-

- Agenda Item 10 – ‘20MPH Speed Limits’ – to the deletion of “It was important not to over-saturate roads with 20mph zones as it could result in drivers disregarding the signs” and to be replaced with “On roads where the 85th percentile speed is above 24mph, delivery of a 20mph limit should be considered alongside traffic calming measures”.

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 interests were declared:-

Personal Interest

Councillor

Interest

Dominic Hardwick	Agenda Item 4 – ‘Communities, Culture & Sport and Parks, Highways & Transport Services Portfolio Performance and Resources Reports: 2023/24 Annual Reports’ and Agenda Item 5 – ‘Portfolio Performance and Resources – Draft Portfolio Agreements 2024/25’ as an associate member of the Royal Naval Association, Hazel Grove, as a regular attendee at Norbury Parish Church, also known as St Thomas, Hazel Grove, as a member of the Hazel Grove Community Association and as a member of Hazel Grove Royal British Legion.
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Dan Oliver

Agenda Item 4 – ‘Communities, Culture & Sport and Parks, Highways & Transport Services Portfolio Performance and Resources Reports: 2023/24 Annual Reports’ as an employee of Greater Manchester Poverty Action.

Matt Wynne Agenda Item 6 – ‘CIC Board Annual Report’ as a member of Life Leisure

Officer Interest

Mark Glynn Agenda Item 4 – ‘Communities, Culture & Sport and Parks, Highways & Transport Services Portfolio Performance and Resources Reports: 2023/24 Annual Reports’, Agenda Item 5 – ‘Portfolio Performance and Resources – Draft Portfolio Agreements 2024/25’ and Agenda Item 6 – ‘CIC Board Annual Report’ as the Chair of the Totally Local Company Board and a member of the Life Leisure Board.

Paul Richards ‘Agenda Item 6 – ‘CIC Board Annual Report’ as a member of the Life Leisure Board.

3. CALL-IN

There were no call-in items to consider.

4. COMMUNITIES, CULTURE & SPORT AND PARKS, HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SERVICES PORTFOLIO PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES REPORTS: 2023/24 ANNUAL REPORTS

The Director of Place Management, Director of Development & Regeneration and Director of Strategy submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) presenting the Year-End Portfolio Performance and Resource Reports (PPRRs) for the Communities, Culture & Sport and Parks, Highways & Transport Services Portfolios. The Year-End Reports focussed on delivery of the portfolio priorities from October 2023 to March 2024. They included forecast performance and financial data (where this was available) for the portfolios, along with an update on the portfolio savings programmes.

The following comments were made/ issues raised: -

Communities, Culture & Sport

- Members asked about the roll-out of Open+ to libraries across Stockport and requested an update on the addition of library services including allowing residents to pay for services and use out of hours printing in libraries. In response it was reported that the roll out of Open+ had been positive with an increase in library usage since the Open+ pilot. All users had been automatically signed up to Open+. Furthermore, teething issues such as anti-social behaviour during Open+ hours had been dealt with swiftly. As to out of hours printing, it was reported that an order for printers was scheduled for the coming months.
- It was noted that the numbers of visitors to the borough’s museums, libraries and outdoor events was higher than the target figures and were almost at pre-covid levels.
- Members requested additional information and better connections with ‘Team Around the Place’ captains.

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- It was confirmed that funding for the Marple Communication Hub had included a matched contribution from the council. That scheme was due for completion in the winter of 2025-26
- Members commented on the success of the Town of Culture and expressed a wish to see its legacy develop across the borough.
- Members also commented that many of the heritage and culture events which took place across the borough were run by community groups, many of which were free.
- Members commented on the value of community activities for young people in engendering community pride and also noted the great progress made by the council in investing in its relationships with the voluntary sector. An independent State of the Sector report was requested.
- Members noted the performance measures for activity in young people had revealed that the numbers able to participate in 30 minutes of activity three times per week were low. Members commented on the importance of physical activity which impacts upon health and wellbeing now and in later life.
- It was reported that a number of initiatives were in place designed to increase activity such as badminton and litter picks. The intended message was that activity was for everybody.
- The quality of provision for football in some of the borough's pitches was not as good as it could be. It was agreed that, whilst improvement was required, a balance was to be struck between the provision of 3G pitches and environmental concerns.
- The numbers of residents registered with the Volunteer Hub did not capture the total number of volunteers; the State of the Sector report which had been produced at Greater Manchester level had identified 57,488 volunteers in Stockport who had volunteered 213,536 hours per week, valued at 105 million pounds per annum. The Volunteer Hub had been developed during the pandemic and was a good resource for people who were interested in becoming involved in volunteering.
- In relation to the GMI Community Safety Survey it was noted that the numbers of residents who felt a strong sense of belonging to their local community was higher than it had been the previous year. The data was based on a small sample and it was not possible to analyse the data in terms of different areas within the borough. Further perception surveys and analysis would be supported within the coming year.
- In terms of the statistics on crime and antisocial behaviour, it was reported that it was difficult to demonstrate trends due to system changes as well as changes in the reporting and recording of crime. The current statistics were a good benchmark for future years. Members requested that a survey of perceptions of safety on a ward, or even more granular level would be a welcome future piece of work.
- It was noted that funding for Safer Streets had come to an end and members requested an update on future funding. In response it was stated that the council had been underwriting key outreach projects in order to maintain the relationships which key workers had with young people. It was acknowledged that external funding sources were required for outreach work.
- Members requested an updated report on Interchange Park including data on instances of antisocial behaviour and how many times the emergency button had been used. It was reported that the police had successfully won a bid for an extra police resource in the evening in Stockport town centre for five days per week.
- The increase in the numbers of malicious and nuisance communications was noted. Those figures included social media and domestic abuse.

- Members requested that the numbers of incidents of anti-social behaviour reported by Stockport Homes, along with the numbers of community protection notices issued by Stockport Homes be brought to a future meeting of this Committee.
- The reported £37,000 capital works for CCTV followed a full review of the borough's CCTV which had taken place last year and the funds were earmarked for repairs to the current system.

Parks, Highways & Transport Services

- Members stated that the addition of bins at Interchange Park would be welcome.
- Members commented upon local transport issues, in particular the business case for Metrolink, improvements to Stockport train station and the need for improved capacity on public transport systems. It was reported that the council was making the case for the benefits which Metrolink would bring to Stockport, including that it would be critical for growth. The council had also made the case that Stockport was a great investment for Metrolink as Stockport train station was a national travel network. It was also reported that future-proofing for Metrolink had taken place.
- Members commented that formal interventions for fly tipping did not appear to have reduced the incidents of fly tipping. Members requested the council to consider issuing fixed penalty notices in response to environmental crimes. It was reported that incidents of fly tipping were considered on a case by case basis and the council was looking at a number of cases where prosecution was an option.
- Following a review of cemeteries and crematoria provision within the borough, the service had been brought under the control of Stockport Council. It was reported that local funeral services had more confidence in the crematoria run by the council and were satisfied that it could meet the needs of the borough.
- It was also reported that only one machine in the crematoria was operational, with two requiring repairs. The current capacity was 40 funerals per week, which was sufficient to meet needs within the borough. Crematoria machinery was expected to be back at full capacity by the end of June 2024 and the council had endeavoured to work closely with funeral directors and keep them up to date with service provision.
- It was reported that the council was in the process of identifying sites for electric vehicle charging points, however in some cases there were issues with the grid, or other technical reasons why identified sites could not be used. The council had also considered electric vehicle charging points outside of district centres, in residential areas with no off-street parking.
- Members stated that there was an increasing need for electric vehicle charging points in response to the rapidly growing number of people using electric vehicles and cited examples of other local authorities which had electric vehicle charging points at lampposts. In response it was stated that the use of lampposts would be kept in mind and stated that there was a need to balance electric vehicle charging with the requirement for on-street parking.
- The measures of street cleanliness contained within the report had been taken following visits from TLC.

RESOLVED - (1) That the Year-End Portfolio Performance and Resource Reports 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 any performance or resource issues be addressed.

(4) That any significant issues or changes be fed back to the Cabinet alongside the Corporate Performance and Resource Report.

(5) That areas of strong performance and good practice be shared.

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

The Director of Place Management submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) presenting the draft 2024/25 Agreements for Communities, Culture & Sport and Parks, Highways & Transport Services Portfolios for consideration and comment by the Committee.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

Communities, Culture & Sport

- Members welcomed the anti-poverty strategy as the number one priority. Further information related to inequality across the borough and the percentage of houses in fuel poverty was requested. It was reported that information on neighbourhood profiles would be brought to Area Committees in September 2024.
- Members reported on the success of the Match My Project scheme and commented on the support provided.
- It was reported that there was no rigid data gathering for digital access referrals. Members requested qualitative data for the levels of engagement with the family hub model in order to assess its efficacy.
- The use for the reserve earmarked within the Medium Term Financial Plan for leisure would be reported to a future meeting of this Scrutiny Committee.
- The Manchester Metropolitan University report on partnership working, antisocial behaviour and youth justice would also be considered at a future meeting of this Scrutiny Committee.
- Members requested that poverty stigma and poverty proofing for schools be added as measures of performance.

Parks, Highways & Transport Services

- Members referred to 'Priority 4: Well-maintained, clean and accessible public spaces in neighbourhoods' in relation to fly tipping and requested that more information be presented to the Scrutiny Committee in the coming municipal year about the work undertaken by the council to tackle fly tipping and the consequences faced by perpetrators. Members also requested further updates on the gully-cleansing programme during this municipal year.
- It was reported that the council was working with the Greater Manchester Police on Operation Avro, the aim of which was to stamp down on criminal activity related to fly

tipping. The council was also working with residents who struggled to access waste facilities. It was reported that, in relation to fly tipping, Stockport compared favourably with neighbouring areas.

- Members welcomed the focus on accessibility at rail stations, in particular the planning application for the addition of lifts at Reddish North Station.
- It was noted that this year's council target for additional miles of 20mph speed limits in residential areas was one mile and members expressed concern at the low target figure. In response it was stated that decisions on 20mph speed limits were delegated to Area Committees and that the council hoped to exceed its target.
- Members queried whether the funding for public rights of way included the removal of barriers to access for non-standard bicycles or wheelchair users. In response it was reported that Stockport was one of the first councils in the country to create a policy related to accessible public rights of way. It was the council's policy to remove inaccessible A frames across the borough and this was taking place as funding allowed.
- Members requested information on how many of the borough's playgrounds included accessible play equipment.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

6. CIC BOARD ANNUAL REPORT

The Director of Regeneration and Development submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) outlining Life Leisure's performance during its second year of operation as a Community Interest Company (CIC) wholly owned by the Council. It also detailed how Life Leisure continued to take great strides to deliver against the strategic aims of the ONE Stockport Active Communities Strategy by using physical activity to profoundly affect not just the physical, but also the mental and social wellbeing of Stockport residents. The report also described the challenges and successes it had experienced within its second year of trading.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- Members welcomed the report and thanked the team for their work.
- It was noted that Life Leisure worked in alignment with the wider council ambitions on the neighbourhoods and prevention agenda.
- The increase in membership of Life Leisure, post pandemic was noted.
- In terms of the investment required in some of Life Leisure's ageing facilities, particularly Grand Central, members queried whether investment was needed to create carbon neutral facilities or for the sustainability of the site. In response it was stated that a further report on improvements to Life Leisure facilities would be presented to a future meeting of this Scrutiny Committee.
- Members commented positively on the staff retention figures at Life Leisure which was currently at 91.6 per cent, and that 76 per cent of its staff were Stockport residents. This was an achievement given that the leisure sector was one which normally had a high staff turnover.
- Life Leisure had carried out a staff survey and took note of the views of its staff. It had developed its values with its staff, including the concept of 'Love Life Leisure'.

Furthermore, the fact that many of Life Leisure's staff lived within the neighbourhoods where they worked had enabled them to deliver services at a local level.

- Members welcomed the introduction of solar panels which had helped to heat swimming pools and to cut costs. Life Leisure was looking at other sources of renewable heating.
- The employment of an Inclusion Officer at Life Leisure had enabled it to understand communities and create the opportunity to provide different types of activities. One example was the provision of adaptable bicycles which enabled those who had been underserved in activities to participate.
- In determining what activities and facilities were offered at each Life Leisure location, the local communities' needs were considered. For example, gym equipment varied between Life Leisure sites.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

7. VISION ZERO STRATEGY: REDUCING INJURIES AND DEATHS ON OUR ROADS

The Director of Place Management submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) which set out a GMCA approved a draft strategy to reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured (KSIs) on GM roads, which was badged as Vision Zero. The key aspiration was to reduce traffic-related injuries and deaths on our roads to zero by 2040.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- Members welcomed the report and its goal to reduce the number of KSIs on Greater Manchester roads to zero. Members considered that this strategy gave the borough an opportunity to be a leader in creating safer streets. This strategy was also seen as a starting point for a culture change, particularly in terms of Members reporting road safety concerns to the Highways team.
- Members requested further information on when safety performance indicators were likely to be published and what those indicators were likely to be. Further information was also requested on the funding of the scheme and its delegation.
- In response, it was stated that a further report on this strategy was scheduled for completion in November 2024.
- Members requested clarity on the process for requesting speed cameras or junction protection measures from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority or Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM).
- It was reported that TfGM had requested updated guidance from Central Government on the installation of speed cameras.
- Members commented that the aim of zero KSIs on GM roads might not be achievable due to the number of variables which it would not be possible to legislate for, including factors such as the weather and age of drivers.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

8. 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.

The following comments were made/ issues raised: -

- Trains and rail performance was suggested as a scrutiny review topic, with a particular focus on how service cancellations affected the economy and residents' lives.
- Community power, the Localism Act and neighbourhood plans was suggested as a scrutiny review topic, with a particular focus on routes to community power, community assets, how communities can engender change and how residents can create a Community Interest Company (CIC).
- The topic of walking and cycling was suggested as a topic, particularly in the light of new walking and cycling schemes and the Vision Zero strategy.

RESOLVED – (1) That 'Stockport Walking and Cycling Strategic Review' be selected for the 2024/25 Scrutiny Work Programme

(2) That Councillor Joe Barratt be nominated to Chair the proposed scrutiny review panel and other members of the review being Councillors Jon Byrne, Dominic Hardwick and Matt Wynne.

9. SCRUTINY 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:-

- Antisocial behaviour at Stockport Interchange, inviting a representative from Greater Manchester Police to address the Scrutiny Committee.
- The Manchester Metropolitan University report on antisocial behaviour to be circulated to the Scrutiny Committee.
- The operation of taxis within the borough registered with other local authorities. The accessibility of hackney cabs in the borough.
- A report on gritting and grit bins.
- Objects and vehicles located on public highways such as caravans and skips.

The meeting closed at 9.11pm.