

COMMUNITIES & TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting: 14 October 2024

At: 6.00 pm

PRESENT

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

1. MINUTES

The Minutes (copies of which had been circulated) of the meeting held on 2 September 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 interests were declared:-

Personal Interests

Councillor

Interest

Jon Byrne

Agenda Item 6 – ‘Annual Report – Armed Forces Covenant’ as his son attended the Sea Cadets.

Dominic Hardwick

Agenda Item 5 – ‘Adoption of the 2024 Playing Pitch Strategy and Update on Local Football Facilities Plan’ as a member of Stockport Rugby Club.

Agenda Item 6 – ‘Annual Report – Armed Forces Covenant’ as a member of the Stockport Armed Forces Community Organisation Steering Group, as an associate member of the Royal Naval Association and as a member of the Hazel Grove Royal British Legion.

3. CALL-IN

There were no call-in items to consider.

4. LOCAL ELECTRIC VEHICLE INFRASTRUCTURE (LEVI) FUND MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING REPORT

The Director of Place Management submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing details about The Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund which was intended to create a commercial offer for residents without private off-street parking to

have access to electric vehicle charging on residential streets near their homes to allow for on-street charging.

The Cabinet Member for Parks, Highways and Transport Services (Councillor Grace Baynam) attended the meeting to respond to councillors' questions.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- In response a question relating to the allocation of funding for this scheme, it was stated that the funding allocated to the council was considered sufficient.
- Members welcomed the recently installed EV charging point at Ashbrook Road, North Reddish.
- Railway stations were cited as potential locations for EV charging points.
- It was noted that EV charging points in other local authorities were sponsored, thereby providing a source of income for the council.
- Stockport would be working with TfGM in order to align its approach with the rest of GM.
- The guidance for the installation of on-street EV charging points would include information on the siting of the charging points in relation to trees and dropped kerbs.
- The council's guidance was intended to be an agile document, reflecting the fast-changing nature of the technology.
- The scheme was intended to provide EV charging points for private homes without driveways. It would be necessary to balance the provision of EV charging points with the risks associated of cables crossing pavements.
- It was estimated that by 2035, 75 per cent of vehicles would be electric.
- The procurement process would highlight those areas of the borough where on-street parking was required.
- The results of procurement for on-street and commercial EV charging would be reported to a meeting of this Scrutiny Committee in early 2025.
- Certain areas of the borough, such as Edgeley, had lots of terraced housing stock. This position was replicated across Greater Manchester and nationwide. It provided an opportunity for joint working, shared good practise and adopting a solution which had been trialled elsewhere and shown to work.
- In terms of design, it was important not to clutter pavements. To that end the council intended to ensure that pedestrians were given priority on the pavement and to consult with appropriate user groups.
- The siting of EV charging points would be negotiated with GM.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

5. ADOPTION OF THE 2024 PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY AND UPDATE ON LOCAL FOOTBALL FACILITIES PLAN

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing details about the Playing Pitch Strategies (PPS), summarises the supply (pitch provision) and demanding (participation data) of pitches for football, rugby, cricket, hockey and lacrosse and providing a sound basis on which to develop policy and make informed decisions for sports development and investment.

The Cabinet Member for Communities, Culture & Sport (Councillor Frankie Singleton) attended the meeting to respond to councillors' questions.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- Members commented that facilities including changing rooms and toilets which were required to support girls' football teams.
- An analysis of pitch supply and ancillary provision was required.
- The DEFRA report on rubber crumb was expected to come to this Scrutiny Committee in the Spring of 2025. This would provide clarity on what materials should be used for the borough's pitches.
- Members requested a list of unused pitches with consideration being given to bringing unused pitches back into use.
- The shared pitch facility in Trafford and Manchester formed one part of the overall playing pitch strategy. In terms of accessibility to that pitch, it was reported that junior clubs played at grounds across Greater Manchester and were used to travelling to multipitch hubs.
- The fees for hiring the shared pitch facility were intended to fund maintenance of the facility.
- Community use of school playing pitches was part of the planning process to ensure that commitments were made for the community use of pitches.
- Members expressed concern about the provision of new housing and schools in terms of the consequential increase in demand for playing pitches. It was noted that, in some instances, new housing developments had reduced playing pitch facilities. In response it was stated that the playing pitch strategy identified the future demand for playing pitches.
- It was noted that development applications which affected the provision of sports pitches involved consultations with stakeholders such as Sport England and, where appropriate, elite sporting bodies. It was common for recommendations to be made to mitigate for the loss of sporting facilities which might not necessarily replace like for like facilities.
- The Local Football Facilities Plan was due to be reviewed, following the production of the playing pitch strategy.
- Members requested that the full playing pitch strategy report be brought to the next meeting of this Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED - (1) That the findings of the PPS and that the Cabinet Member for Communities, Culture & Sport and the Cabinet Member for Parks, Highways & Transportation Services will be recommended to formally adopt the PPS be noted.

(2) That the commencement of the Local Football Facilities Plan (LFFP) refresh be noted.

6. ANNUAL REPORT - ARMED FORCES COVENANT 2023/24

The Assistant Director for Legal & Democratic Governance submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) setting out the work and support undertaken during the municipal year 2024/24 in furtherance of the Armed Forces Covenant.

Amanda Peers (Chair of the Stockport Armed Forces Covenant (SAFCO)) and Moz Perkins (Secretary of SAFCO) attended the meeting to support the discussion and respond to councillors' questions on this item.

The Cabinet Member for Communities, Culture & Sport (Councillor Frankie Singleton) also attended the meeting to respond to councillors' questions.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- Members congratulated all those involved in the accreditation of Stockport Council with the Gold Award by the Ministry of Defence for its ongoing support for veterans and their families.
- Members also congratulated SAFCO for raising more than £2,000 for local charities during Armed Forces Day 2024.
- The Chair of SAFCO reported that the organisation was run by volunteers using their own time and that the operational work was intended to benefit members of the SAFCO community. The organisation had made considerable progress over the past four years, working with people who had a particular interest in the armed forces. That perspective had made a difference to the service.
- Members welcomed the report and noted the references to healthcare, jobs and those who work with veterans with brain injuries and those who were autistic.
- SAFCO took account of the housing needs of veterans. Stockport Homes were on the Covenant's steering group and work with housing officers was ongoing in order to ringfence housing for veterans across Greater Manchester. As a result, Stockport was performing better than other parts of the UK in looking after the housing needs of veterans.
- The next step for the organisation was to map provision for veterans across the borough; a report would be submitted to Area Committees annually to update on local provision.
- SAFCO was still in the process of being incorporated as a charitable organisation. There remained some requirements to fulfil include producing 12 months' accounts.
- Next year, 2025, would be the centenary of the Stockport War Memorial and Art Gallery. SAFCO intended to celebrate that centenary alongside the VE and VJ day celebrations.
- SAFCO was engaged in succession planning and engaging young people in the Covenant. All branches of the cadets had a voice within the organisation. Cadets were also involved in the Armed Forces Day parade which helped raise their profile. The Normandy Veterans Association worked on curriculums with schools.
- There was an issue with the recruitment and retention of leaders within the organisation; some were at or past retirement age. The Covenant encouraged any interested parties to join the organisation. A key priority was to train new standard bearers.
- Members suggested that school groups could be invited to visit projects run by armed forces groups, such as the beehives installed by Project RECCE.
- As part of the World War One Centenary Commemorations a project had taken place which had brought together the stories of fallen soldiers named on war memorials into a book. This project had funding and support from the council. It was suggested that this project could be replicated for war memorials across the borough to enable residents to engage with the work of SAFCO.

- The support of ward councillors to bring unused land, such as that behind Pear Mill, into use for cadets, was welcomed.
- Veterans breakfast clubs were non-political events; nonetheless members were welcome to join the clubs to engage with veterans in their community.
- Members suggested that SAFCO could present to a full Council meeting in the run up to Armed Forces Day.
- Representatives of SAFCO were thanked for their work for the armed forces.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

7. STOCKPORT'S EDI ACTION PLAN: UPDATE

The Executive Director of Corporate and Support Services submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing an update on the Council's ongoing commitment to advance equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) within the organisation and in our communities.

The Cabinet Member for Communities, Culture & Sport (Councillor Frankie Singleton) attended the meeting to respond to councillors' questions.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- Members noted that many of the council's staff had been particularly affected by the riots which had occurred during the summer of 2024. It was suggested that the work should take place to identify which colleagues of colour and faith had been most affected in order to ensure that the support provided was specific and relevant.
- Members welcomed the council's clear message: that Stockport Council was a safe place for everyone.
- The public health objectives related to the specific needs of communities were noted, along with the meaningful engagement around the design of services.
- The importance of language was noted. The previously named Pallet of Colour group was now known as Global Majority. Those Global Majority colleagues had told council colleagues that they felt unsafe at the time of the riots. On the Monday following the riots many colleagues had been frightened to travel to work or out into the community to visit residents' homes as part of their duties. There had been an increase in racist abuse within the community.
- To support colleagues, open check-ins had been held to facilitate conversations about the impact of the riots and offer practical support. It was acknowledged that the council's response was not always right; some line managers had not been proactive and this would form part of an ongoing learning exercise.
- In the past month the council had offered inclusive masterclasses for those with management responsibilities.
- The importance of staff surveys was recognised in ensuring that the council was listening to staff and taking action when required.
- Going forward the EDI Action Plan would benefit from the inclusion of members of the council's networks. One example of collaboration was working with schools on prevention and inclusion.

- Under Equality Objective 3, 'Understand our diverse communities and their specific needs' it was important to recognise that there were disparities within Area Committee areas and that averages could hide those differences.
- The council was looking at three areas in order to measure the success of the EDI Action Plan. Those were the council's role as a place leader, how it worked with communities and making Stockport a fair and inclusive borough.
- It was important to consider how inclusive the council was as an organisation. The composition of the council's workforce mirrored that of the borough, however most of its senior leaders were white.
- Gender and ethnicity pay gaps along with health and education inequalities were used to measure the inclusivity of the workforce. Other factors, such as how staff were feeling, were more difficult to measure.
- The underlying theme of this work was meaningful engagement.
- Members requested that this work be communicated through as many channels as possible.

RESOLVED – That the plans, progress and achievements made in the past twelve months with regard to EDI and the ambition to be a more inclusive borough be noted.

8. 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:-

- Playing Pitch Strategy Report;
- Impact of Equity Networks;
- The Community Response to Southport and Incidents which Followed, with an invitation extended to the Race Equality Partnership to attend the meeting;
- The Re-Design of Neighbourhood Services;
- The GM Strategy on Utilities Works;
- Review of Path Barriers.

The meeting closed at 7.36 pm