

CABINET MEETING

Meeting: 18 March 2025

At: 6.00 pm

PRESENT

Councillor Mark Hunter (Leader of the Council) (Chair) in the chair; Councillor Mark Roberts (Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Environment) (Vice-Chair); Councillors Grace Baynham (Cabinet Member for Parks, Highways & Transport Services), Helen Foster-Grime (Cabinet Member for Communities, Culture & Sport), Keith Holloway (Cabinet Member for Health & Adult Social Care), Jilly Julian (Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources) and Wendy Meikle (Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education).

1. MINUTES

The Minutes (copies of which had been circulated) of the meeting held on 4 February 2025 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 was declared:-

Personal and Prejudicial Interest

Councillor

Interest

Mark Hunter

Agenda item 10 – ‘Proposal to consult on the expansion of the boundary of Stockport MDC (General Exception)’ as a Member of the Board of the Stockport Town Centre West Mayoral Development Corporation.

It was noted that the Standards Committee had approved a dispensation to enable those councillors who were members of the Board of the Stockport Town Centre West Mayoral Development Corporation and who would otherwise have a personal and prejudicial interest in the matter being discussed to take part in the debate and vote at the meeting.

3. URGENT DECISIONS

No urgent decisions were reported.

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Members of the public were invited to submit questions to the Cabinet on any matters

within its powers and duties, subject to the exclusions set out in the Code of Practice.

One public question was submitted where the questioner was not in attendance at the meeting and in accordance with the Code of Practice, the Chief Executive was requested to respond to the questioner in writing.

Scrutiny Review Final Reports

5. SCRUTINY REVIEW FINAL REPORT - STAR PROCUREMENT AND SOCIAL VALUE

The Cabinet received the final report of the Scrutiny Review into STAR Procurement and Social Value (copies of which had been circulated).

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources (Councillor Jilly Julian) stated that the Chair of the Scrutiny Review had been unable to attend this meeting of the Cabinet, however a summary of the Chair's comments were provided to the meeting

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- The contribution of the Director of STAR to the work of the Review Panel was acknowledged.
- The expansion of STAR to now include six local authorities was allowing the council to reap further benefits derived from economies of scale.

RESOLVED - (1) That the Director of Finance be requested to prepare a response to the STAR Procurement and Social Value scrutiny review and the recommendations contained therein for consideration by the Cabinet at a future meeting

(2) That the gratitude of the Cabinet be recorded for the excellent work undertaken by the Scrutiny Review Panel 'STAR Procurement and Social Value' and others involved in the Review.

6. SCRUTINY REVIEW FINAL REPORT - STOCKPORT CYCLING STRATEGIC REVIEW

Councillor John Byrne attended the meeting to present the final report of the Scrutiny Review into the Stockport Cycling Strategic Review (copies of which had been circulated) and to answer questions from the Cabinet.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- Thanks were extended to those community groups that engaged with and contributed to the review.
- Members were encouraged to watch the webcast of the question and answer session with the community groups.
- It was acknowledged that the report and its appendices were lengthy, however the Panel was keen to ensure that the documentary evidence that it considered would be readily accessible to members and the public in the future.

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- In the light of the subject matter for the review and the increased vulnerability of specific user groups, concern was expressed in relation to the fact that the Panel did not have any female representation on it. It was recommended that Group Leaders work together to ensure that scrutiny committees had a more equitable gender balance in the future.
- It was commented that planning and transport planning were inherently gendered because the vast majority of interconnected journeys tend to be made by women and these types of journeys needed to be taken into account rather than assuming that everyone had a straightforward A-B journey.
- The inheritance of a largely Victorian highway infrastructure with restricted widths significantly restricted the introduction of some of the potential interventions that may otherwise be considered desirable.
- There has been a recent year-on-year decline in cycling which meant the Council and its partners needed to go further to encourage take-up.

RESOLVED - (1) That the Director of Place Management be requested to prepare a response to the Stockport Cycling Strategic Review scrutiny review and the recommendations contained therein for consideration by the Cabinet at a future meeting

(2) That the gratitude of the Cabinet be recorded for the excellent work undertaken by the Scrutiny Review Panel 'Stockport Cycling Strategic Review' and others involved in the Review.

7. SCRUTINY REVIEW FINAL REPORT - DISTRICT AND LOCAL CENTRES - BEST PRACTICE AND BUILDING UPON IT

Councillor James Frizzell attended the meeting to present the final report of the Scrutiny Review into the District and Local Centres - best practice and building upon it (copies of which had been circulated) and to answer questions from the Cabinet.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- During the course of the review, the Panel heard from external partners that the borough was held up as an example of good practice in relation to its approach to district and local centres.
- The work of the district centre managers was highlighted as a significant positive development.
- Supporting the vibrancy and development of district and local centres did not have an easy fix and required enduring partnerships between businesses, landlords, the community and other groups.
- The Council was rightly proud of its interventions in Stockport town centre, however the vibrancy of its many communities and its districts was part of what made the borough a great place to live and work.

RESOLVED - (1) That the Deputy Chief Executive be requested to prepare a response to the 'District and Local Centres - best practice and building upon it' scrutiny review and the recommendations contained therein for consideration by the Cabinet at a future meeting.

(2) That the gratitude of the Cabinet be recorded for the excellent work undertaken by the Scrutiny Review Panel 'District and Local Centres - best practice and building upon it' and others involved in the Review.'

8. SCRUTINY REVIEW FINAL REPORT - UNDERSTANDING THE INEQUALITIES OF HEALTH OUTCOMES ACROSS THE BOROUGH

The Cabinet received the final report of the Scrutiny Review into the Understanding the Inequalities of Health Outcomes Across the Borough (copies of which had been circulated).

The Cabinet Member for Health & Adult Social Care (Councillor Keith Holloway) reported that the Chair of the Scrutiny Review (Councillor Wendy Wild) had been unable to attend this meeting of the Cabinet.

RESOLVED - (1) That the Director of Public Health be requested to prepare a response to the Understanding the Inequalities of Health Outcomes Across the Borough scrutiny review and the recommendations contained therein for consideration by the Cabinet at a future meeting.

(2) That the gratitude of the Cabinet be recorded for the excellent work undertaken by the Scrutiny Review Panel 'Understanding the Inequalities of Health Outcomes Across the Borough' and others involved in the Review.'

Key Decisions

9. ANNUAL RESIDENTIAL/ NURSING, HOME CARE AND OTHER CARE MANAGEMENT SERVICES FEE SETTING 2025/26 (H&ASC8)

The Cabinet Member for Health & Adult Social Care (Councillor Keith Holloway) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) outlining the commissioning proposals and 2025/26 fee setting for the most significant areas of externally commissioned service provision for adults with care needs.

It was commented that the report clearly articulated the challenges that the government's approach to increasing employer contributions for national insurance was having across the adult social care system.

RESOLVED - That approval be given to the fee setting approach, including fee uplifts, as detailed in the report.

10. PROPOSAL TO CONSULT ON THE EXPANSION OF THE BOUNDARY OF STOCKPORT MDC (GENERAL EXCEPTION)

The Leader of the Council (Councillor Mark Hunter) submitted a report of the Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration & Housing (copies of which had been circulated) detailing a proposal that the area covered by the Stockport Town Centre West Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) should be expanded, enabling it to become the delivery vehicle for housing led regeneration across the entirety of the town centre and further outlining the process for expanding the boundary of the MDC.

RESOLVED - (1) That the proposal for public consultation on the expansion of the MDC boundary to cover the east of the town centre be endorsed.

(2) That it be noted that a paper will be submitted to GMCA to request that the Mayor of Greater Manchester go out to consultation in April and May 2025 on the proposal to designate the east of the town centre as a Mayoral development area.

(3) That that the process that must be followed under the legislation to designate an area of land as a Mayoral development area be noted.

11. CHILDREN'S THERAPIES COMMISSION (CF&E16)

The Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education (Councillor Wendy Meikle) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing an overview of the current commissioning arrangements for Speech and Language therapy and Occupational Therapy for SEND children in Stockport and highlighting the need to recommission the current services.

RESOLVED - (1) That it be confirmed in principle that the council enter into the procurement process as referred to in this report and enter into the future contract once a provider has been chosen following the procurement process.

(2) That authority be delegated to the Director of Education, Work and Skills in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education and the Assistant Director for Governance to agree to the terms of the contract to be awarded; and

(3) That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director for Governance to enter into any documentation required to give effect to the procurement process and contract award or any related legal agreements arising of the project as a whole.

12. TREASURY MANAGEMENT QUARTER 3 REPORT 2024/25 (F&R43)

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources (Councillor Jilly Julian) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing an update on the operation and effectiveness of the Council's Treasury Management function for quarter three of.

RESOLVED – (1) That the report and treasury activity be noted.

(2) That approval be given to any necessary changes to the prudential indicators.

General Items

13. 2024/25 Q3 BUDGET MONITORING UPDATE

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources (Councillor Jilly Julian) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing an update on the revenue budget forecast outturn for the period to the end of December 2024 (Quarter 3) which also provided an update on the Dedicated Schools Grant, Housing Revenue Account, Collection Fund, Reserves and updates to the Capital Programme.

RESOLVED - (1) That the cash limit and non-Cash Limit forecast outturn positions for 2024/25 as at Quarter 3 be noted.

(2) That the Dedicated Schools Grant, Housing Revenue Account and Collection Fund forecast outturn positions for 2024/25 as at Quarter 3 be noted.

(3) That the update on Reserves be noted,

(4) That the forecast position for the 2024/25 Capital Programme be noted.

(5) That the changes to the Capital Programme and re-phasing of schemes during Quarter 3 be noted.

(6) That the 2024/25 Capital Programme Prudential Indicators be noted.

14. STOCKPORT ATTENDANCE STRATEGY

The Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education (Councillor Wendy Meikle) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing details of a proposed Stockport Attendance Strategy which was a celebration of the strong ambition that children and young people of Stockport would grow up happy, healthy, with confidence, surrounded by love, care, kindness and belonging and which was underpinned with the knowledge that being in school has multiple benefits for children and young people learning wellbeing and overall development.

RESOLVED – That the Strategy be endorsed and approval be given to the Stockport Attendance Strategy.

15. GMCA DECISIONS

The Leader of the Council (Councillor Mark Hunter) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) setting out decisions taken by the GMCA at its meetings on 31 January and 7 February 2025.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

16. TO CONSIDER RECOMMENDATIONS OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

- (i) Call-in of executive decision CAB519 - Independent Review of Stockport's Housing Management Arrangements

A recommendation of the Economy, Regeneration & Climate Change Scrutiny Committee was submitted (copies of which had been circulated) inviting the Cabinet to reconsider its previous decision (CAB519) in relation to the 'Independent Review of Stockport's Housing Management Arrangements'. The Scrutiny Committee considered the call-in of this decision at its meeting on 6 March 2025, the outcome of which was included within the agenda for this meeting.

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The Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Environment (Councillor Mark Roberts) reported that the report had originally been considered by the Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 23 January 2025, where concerns had been expressed in relation to the proposed disestablishment of the Member Committee whilst other structures were designed and implemented. The Cabinet, in considering the views of the Scrutiny Committee, had subsequently agreed to amend its decision in the light of those concerns to retain the Member Committee in the short term.

It was stated that notwithstanding this change to the proposed recommendation, the decision was nonetheless called-in. The call-in had focussed on the matter of retaining the Member Committee and had requested changes to its format and terms of reference.

The Cabinet Member stated that in the light of the concerns raised by the Scrutiny Committee, it would be appropriate for the Cabinet to reconsider its original decision with a view to reinstating the recommended approach of disestablishing the Member Committee at this stage and requesting that the Annual Council Meeting establish a Task & Finish Group with representation from each political group with a terms of reference to consider and make recommendations in relation to the appropriate scrutiny and decision-making structures in relation to the Stockport Homes Group.

RESOLVED – That the referral by the Economy, Regeneration & Climate Change Scrutiny Committee of the call-in of executive decision CAB519 be noted and that the Cabinet gives approval to the amendment of its original decision of 4 February 2025 to disestablish the Member Committee in line with the original recommendation contained within the report submitted to the last meeting of the Cabinet, subject to the inclusion of a further resolution to request that the Annual Council Meeting establish a Task and Finish Group with a terms of reference to consider and make recommendations in relation to the appropriate scrutiny and decision-making structures in relation to the Stockport Homes Group.

It was then

RESOLVED - (1) That the findings of the independent review be accepted.

(2) That authority be delegated to the Director of Place Management in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Finance and Resources and for Economy, Regeneration and Housing to develop a joint action plan to address the recommendations of the report including dialogue and discussions with the Board and Chief Executive of Stockport Homes Group.

(3) That authority be delegated to the Director of Place Management in consultation with Cabinet Members for Finance and for Economy, Regeneration and Housing to progress the draft priority actions to include dialogue and discussions with the Board and Chief Executive of Stockport Homes Group.

(4) That authority be delegated to the Director of Place Management and Assistant Director for Governance in consultation with Cabinet Members for Finance and for Economy, Regeneration and Housing to undertake all actions necessary to establish the Cabinet Sub-Committee for Housing and disestablish the Member Committee.

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(5) That the Annual Council Meeting be recommended establish a Task and Finish Group with a terms of reference to consider and make recommendations in relation to the appropriate scrutiny and decision-making structures in relation to the Stockport Homes Group.

The meeting closed at 7.34 pm