

MINUTES OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING DATE Tuesday, 11 February 2020

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors David Howarth (Chair), Michael Green (Vice-Chair), Jacky Alty, Will Adams, Matt Campbell, Colin Coulton, Chris Lomax, Jim Marsh, Colin Sharples, Stephen Thurlbourn, Matthew Trafford and Karen Walton

CABINET MEMBERS: Councillor Paul Foster (Leader of the Council and Leader of the Labour Group), Councillor Michael Titherington (Deputy Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member (Health, Wellbeing and Leisure) and Deputy Leader of the Labour Group), Councillor Aniela Bylinski Gelder (Cabinet Member (Community Engagement, Social Justice and Wealth Building)), Councillor William Evans (Cabinet Member (Planning, Regeneration and City Deal)), Councillor Susan Jones JP (Cabinet Member (Environment)) and Councillor Matthew Tomlinson (Cabinet Member (Finance, Property and Assets))

OFFICERS: Gary Hall (Interim Chief Executive), Dave Whelan (Shared Services Lead - Legal & Deputy Monitoring Officer), Darren Cranshaw (Assistant Director of Scrutiny & Democratic Services), Jennifer Mullin (Director of Neighbourhoods and Development), Rebecca Heap (Senior Community Works Officer) and Charlotte Lynch (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

OTHER MEMBERS: Councillor Colin Clark, Councillor Derek Forrest (Member Champion (Armed Forces)), Councillor Mary Green, Councillor John Rainsbury, Councillor Margaret Smith (Leader of the Opposition and Leader of the Conservative Group), Councillor Phil Smith, Councillor Caleb Tomlinson and Councillor Gareth Watson

PUBLIC: 0

35 Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mal Donoghue.

36 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Michael Green declared a personal interest in Item 5 as he was a signatory on the call-in request.

37 Cabinet Agenda Item 9 - Strategic Review of Community Involvement, including My Neighbourhoods Final Report

At the commencement of the meeting, the Chair explained the role of the Scrutiny Committee and how it had powers to call-in a Cabinet decision before it was implemented. The Scrutiny Committee would look at whether the decision made complied with the Council's decision-making process. If the Committee believed that this had not been complied with, it could then refer the matter back to Cabinet for reconsideration.

The Leader of the Conservative Group, Councillor Margaret Smith, and Councillors Gareth Watson and John Rainsbury were invited by the Chair to explain the reasons for making the call-in request on behalf of those who had signed the request.

Councillor Margaret Smith requested that the Scrutiny Committee refer the decision to implement the recommendations of the Community Involvement Member Working Group back to Cabinet. It was felt that the decision did not maintain the principles of openness and transparency, that there had not been sufficient consultation, and that it constituted a key decision.

There were concerns among those who had signed the call-in request that the implementation of recommendations made by the working group would have clear budget implications over £100,000 and would affect more than two wards within the borough, thereby constituting a key decision.

Councillor Margaret Smith informed the Committee that she did not believe there had been adequate consultation. It was her opinion that members of parish councils and My Neighbourhood Forums had not been appropriately represented. The Committee were informed that Councillor Smith had not been consulted in her capacity as Leader of the Conservative Group despite reference in the report that all group leaders would be consulted regarding the recommendations.

The Leader of the Council, members of the Cabinet, the Director of Neighbourhoods and Development, Jennifer Mullin, and the Assistant Director of Scrutiny and Democratic Services, Darren Cranshaw, were in attendance to answer questions of the Committee.

Confirmation was provided by officers that this was not a key decision as it did not meet the £100,000 value threshold as outlined in the Interim Section 151 Officer's comments. Furthermore, as the report was high-level, it was not felt that the decision would have a significant effect on residents in two or more wards. Any individual recommendations would be developed further and formal approval sought from Cabinet or Council as appropriate.

Although the Strategic Review of Community Involvement including My Neighbourhoods Final Report had been included on the Forward Plan initially as a key decision, members were informed that this was a contingency at the beginning of the working group's review. As recommendations became clear and confirmed, it was felt that the report did not constitute a key decision at the time of publication.

In response to queries regarding consultation undertaken around the recommendations, the Cabinet Member for Community Involvement, Social Justice and Wealth Building, Councillor Aniela Bylinski Gelder, clarified that the working group was formed of representatives from all political parties. Councillor Bylinski Gelder, the Leader of the Council and the Assistant Director of Scrutiny and Democratic Services also met with Chairs and clerks of each parish council and

member and staff workshops were held in November 2019. The Member Working Group had also been made up of existing and previous parish and town councillors. Councillor Bylinski Gelder had also attended meetings of Leyland My Neighbourhood Planning Forums to gain the views of colleagues.

In addition to this and other consultation, the Working Group also utilised consultation data already conducted some months earlier by South Ribble Partnership when developing the Community Strategy.

RESOLVED: (Yes: 6 No: 6)

That the decision taken by Cabinet on 22 January 2020 relating to the Strategic Review of Community Involvement, including Final My Neighbourhoods Report, stand.

The motion was carried using the Chair's casting vote.

Chair

Date