

**MINUTES OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**MEETING DATE** Monday, 27 November 2017

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Councillors Matthew Tomlinson (Chair), Colin Coulton (Vice-Chair), Michael Green, David Howarth, Susan Jones, Keith Martin, Barbara Nathan, Michael Titherington, Karen Walton and Linda Woollard

**CABINET MEMBERS:** Councillor Colin Clark (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Support and Assets)

**OFFICERS:** Darren Cranshaw (Scrutiny & Performance Manager) and Andy Houlker (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

**OTHER MEMBERS AND OFFICERS:** Councillor Clifford Hughes MBE (Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Housing), Councillor Paul Wharton, Mark Gaffney (Director of Neighbourhoods, Environmental Health and Assets), Denise Johnson (Director of Development, Enterprise and Communities) and Heather McManus (Chief Executive)

**PUBLIC:** 0

**25 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Chisholm and Watkinson. Councillor Michael Green also took this opportunity to apologise that he would have to leave the meeting early for another engagement.

**26 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**27 Minutes of Previous Meetings**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee meetings held on 30 August 2017, 6 September 2017 and 6 November 2017 be confirmed as a correct record.

**28 Corporate Performance Report at the end of Quarter 2 (30 September 2017)**

The Committee considered the report of the Interim Corporate Improvement Manager which provided an overview of performance against the Council's Corporate Plan 2017/18 at the end of the half year point of 30 September 2017 and details of the corporate risks and controls in place to mitigate risks in the Corporate Risk Register.

The report set out the details of the 34 performance indicators and 27 corporate plan activities and a commentary on the performance made against each indicator and activity.

During the discussion, the Committee's comments/enquiries included the following areas:

- the new approach/style of the report and that the language/terminology used be appropriate for intended audience/readers
- performance indicators and targets - questions around how they were chosen, measurable, stretching enough and possible new ones
- complaints to the Local Government Ombudsman - had seen a national increase and the Council had learned lessons from the cases
- time taken to answer phone calls in Gateway – longer time/more explanation being given to callers to inform and reduce need to call again
- property and investment performance – it was acknowledged that it was disappointing and had not achieved the forecasted level of return on investment and confirmation of occupancy information at the Momentum Business Park. An assurance was sought of skills/capacity/expertise of staff and, the report of Cushman and Wakefield used as part of proposed property investment strategy going forward and options being looked at were requested
- resident 'participation' in the neighbourhood plans/projects – this had never been measured just by attendance at meetings alone and as social media was a major one of the measures clarification be provided on this
- risk strategy, risk management and risk register – clarity was sought on how it worked, compiled, ratings calculated (likeliness/impact), and appropriate language for intended audience
- proposed frequency of staff feedback temperature checks was questioned in view of the results of the recent staff survey and if other methods were in hand information be provided

RESOLVED:

(1) That subject to the comments in resolution (2) below the

- (a) performance at the end of Quarter 2, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report be noted;
- (b) corporate risks and controls in place to mitigate risks identified in the Corporate Risk Register, as set out in Appendix 2 of the report be noted; and
- (c) arrangements in place to report performance to the Cabinet, Scrutiny Committee and Council as detailed in paragraph 4 of the report be noted.

(2) That the Committee expresses the following comments, that

- (a) the new approach be welcomed but with emphasis on the use of plain English terminology;
- (b) the Committee looked forward to more rigorous and ambitious performance indicators/targets being introduced and being part of that process;
- (c) the report by Cushman and Wakefield be provided to the Committee with an explanation of how it influenced the Council's current thinking on assets and investment;
- (d) updated occupancy information be provided to the Committee regarding units at Momentum Business Park;

- (e) better clarification be provided on the term residents 'participating' in the Council's neighbourhood plan/projects;
- (f) a Member Learning Hour be held to give members a better understanding of the Council's Risk Strategy, Risk Management and Risk Register; and
- (g) more thought be given to the frequency of temperature checks relating to staff feedback and information be provided on any other methods being used to measure feedback.

## 29 Safeguarding - 6 month update

Further to Minute No. 44, of the meeting held on 14 March 2017, the Committee considered the report of the Director of Development, Enterprise and Communities which provided a six monthly update on the safeguarding activities undertaken to the end of September 2017. The report also included details of the Lancashire Safeguarding Board's feedback on the Council's self-assessment of safeguarding activity, completed on 31 March 2017. This was included as Appendix A of the report and the progress made on the Safeguarding and Prevent Action Plan as at 14 October 2017 was set out in Appendix B of the report.

The Committee considered a number of recommendations set out in paragraph 4 of the report for inclusion in the Council's Section 11, Children Act 2004 self-assessment of safeguarding activity, which would need to be submitted to the Lancashire Safeguarding Board in March 2018.

During the discussion, the Committee's comments and matters raised included the following:-

- lack of member take up of the MILO online safeguarding package – this was felt to be confusing and not user friendly and if it didn't meet members' needs there was an offer to look at other methods of training
- aspects of the self-assessment were rated amber – it was felt that Lancashire County Council's criteria/methodology did not take account of the different role/responsibilities of a district council and these had been challenged;
- Adult Safeguarding Strategy – being developed but at the moment working with (and challenging) the County Council and it was not clear if this could stand alone or be combined with that for Children & Young People
- Member Learning Hour – as this was a different aspect of safeguarding and with increasing relevance with an ageing population, there was an offer of a session on adult safeguarding
- Member Champion – in view of the discussion and safeguarding's importance and impact on all aspects of council activity it was suggested there be a Member Champion for Safeguarding.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Committee appreciated and noted the actions taken since the reporting of the Section 11 Children Act 2004 self-assessment for 2017 to the Lancashire Safeguarding Board; and
- (2) the Committee:
  - a) recommends re-empathise that ALL Members of the Council need to complete the safeguarding training through the MILO online package;

- b) recommends that in addition to (a) above, based on comments during the meeting other methods of providing safeguarding training for members be explored;
- c) is encouraged that this Council now felt confident to challenge the County Council on the self-assessment ratings;
- d) looks forward to the development of an Adult Safeguarding Strategy
- e) requests a Member Learning Hour be provided on Adult Safeguarding; and
- f) requests that the Cabinet considers creating a Member Champion for Safeguarding.

### **30 Worden Hall - update**

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Neighbourhoods, Environmental Health and Assets which outlined the proposed action to be taken with regard to the review of Worden Hall and its ongoing use. It would involve officers working with industry specialists to identify potential uses / expressions of interest in the hall for a commercial operation to complement the parkland in which it was set.

The report indicated that as the project developed, the impact on the budget position would be fully assessed. The financial implications of any proposals for the future use and arrangements for the hall would be reported to the Cabinet for consideration.

During the discussion the matters/issues raised by the Committee included the following:-

- vision for Worden Hall including activity and proposals – was an important valuable asset which would be developed through engagement of specialists with expertise in this area (with a track record of developing similar properties). The findings would ultimately be reported to Cabinet for a member decision on the way forward
- time taken and consultant's report – it was acknowledged that other issues had previously had been the Council's priority. However, the current investment in the Green House would widen options for use and the Council was moving forward mindful of the findings in the consultant's report. Whilst the Council needed to move proposals/ideas forward there needed to be a robust business case/plan in place
- holding large events in Worden Park – this had been explored with organisations in this field. However the Council would have to cover the financial risk of any event(s) until established/successful and only then would such an organisation be prepared to take it over

**RESOLVED:**

That whilst noting the report, the Committee:

- (1) expressed concern at the length of time taken so far in providing proposals/schemes to be brought forward for Worden Hall and its Conservatory;
- (2) welcomed the proposed overall vision stating what the council wanted; and
- (3) requested a progress report on Worden Hall to each subsequent meeting of the Committee.

### 31 Proposals for Banqueting Suite

The Director of Neighbourhoods, Environmental Health and Assets submitted a report outlining proposals for soft marketing testing to be undertaken to consider various opportunities and establish which local enterprises within our community are interested in operating the use of the Banqueting Suite at the Civic Centre, Leyland.

As part of the proposal, officers would prepare a business model setting out how the Council could work with an external provider to run the facilities on a more commercial footing with the potential for income generation being a key driver. The overall budget implications and financial risks would be assessed as part of this exercise and be submitted to the Cabinet in due course for consideration.

During the discussion the matters raised by the Committee included the following:-

- Vision – conscious of the lack of attraction of the facility and an officer group had done a lot of good work in a short time to see how it might be improved to attract bookings/events including widening/attracting interest. There was also building re-configuration in the context of new organisations taking office space in the Civic Centre. It was no longer just the suite area but the whole of the ground floor. A report on ideas/proposals would be considered by Cabinet in due course
- Community Use – this would encourage the building to be used as a hub for various group. However, it was felt the charging policy needed to take account of community/charitable groups and have a reduced booking/usage charge
- Member involvement in the process was confirmed and a report could be brought to this Committee before consideration by Cabinet

RESOLVED: That the Committee

- (1) thanked the officer group for its work and looked forward to seeing proposals for the Banqueting Suite as a priority;
- (2) recommended that serious consideration be given to implementing a reduced charge for bookings by community/charity groups; and
- (3) agreed to set up a task group to look at the work to date and how members can be involved before any proposals are considered by the Cabinet

### 32 Scrutiny Matters

- a) Verbal update on Lancashire County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee – the Chair reported the recent meeting had focused on winter preparedness. Although there was no representative from the hospitals, the ambulance service was present and explained its plans to address the winter period.
- b) Feedback on the workshop that looked at the Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme – this had been a successful workshop identifying topics for the Committee to look at as part of its work programme. Following the earlier discussion above, the Committee had changed its focus for a task group from Worden Hall to the Banqueting Suite.
- c) Member feedback on meeting(s) and training attended on behalf of the Committee – the Chair and Councillor Titherington had attended a recent meeting of the North West Scrutiny Network.

### **33 Exclusion of Press and Public**

RESOLVED:

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business as it involved the discussion of information defined as exempt from publication under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, 'Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) 'and in which the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing it.

### **34 Land at Wesley Street / Station Road**

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Neighbourhoods, Environmental Health and Assets. This provided an update on a number of issues in relation to the purchase of the previous McKenzie Arms site at Wesley Street / Station Road, Bamber Bridge, which had previously been approved by the Council on 18 July 2012.

The Committee saw itself helping the Council learn lessons from past events and for it to reflect on future proposals of a similar nature. To that effect it was suggested a protocol be produced on advice to councillors. It was accepted that officer advice had to be clear and transparent. Negotiations were currently in progress and in due course a report would be prepared for members which would provide clear/transparent information on what the proposal for the site meant to the Council.

RESOLVED: that

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) the Committee looked forward to the development of a protocol on advice to councillors;
- (3) it be noted that a further report regarding the disposal of the site will be submitted to the Cabinet in due course; and
- (4) the Committee requested a report on the position/progress on this site in 12 months.

Chair

Date