

MINUTES OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING DATE Thursday, 12 April 2018

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors Matthew Tomlinson (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 of the Council and Cabinet Member for Corporate Support and Assets)

OFFICERS: Darren Cranshaw (Assistant Director of Scrutiny & Democratic Services) and Andy Houlker (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

OTHER MEMBERS: Heather McManus (Chief Executive), Howard Anthony (South Ribble Partnership Manager), Councillor Mary Green, Councillor Michael Nathan, Councillor Alan Ogilvie and Councillor Phil Smith (Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Leisure)

PUBLIC: 0

50 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Carol Chisholm, Colin Coulton and Ian Watkinson.

51 Declarations of Interest

Councillors Michael Green, David Howarth and Matthew Tomlinson declared personal interests as elected members of Lancashire County Council, but were able under the Code of Conduct for Elected Members, to remain in the meeting and take part in the discussion and voting thereon.

52 Minutes of the Last Meeting

RESOLVED (Unanimously):

That the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 8 March 2018 be signed as a correct record.

53 Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

The Committee received an update of the progress made against matters arising from all previous meetings.

RESOLVED (Unanimously):

That all the outstanding matters arising be removed and those actions not already implemented be brought forward in the future.

54 Worden Hall - progress update

The Cabinet member for Corporate Support and Assets (Councillor Colin Clark) and the South Ribble Partnership Manager addressed and responded to the Committee's enquiries relating to an update on progress with proposals to bring Worden Hall back into use.

The South Ribble Partnership Manager provided an overview of activity which included the forthcoming Artisan Market and an outline of the timescale for tenders for consultancy work in respect of the use of Worden Hall and market. The prospective Consultants included those with specific experience in the heritage sector and show how Worden Hall could be adapted for use. It was planned that detailed proposals would be submitted in May with the Council intending to make a decision on their detailed proposals in June. There would be engagement with members, users and those interested in Worden Hall/Worden Park and hopefully be able to report back in September.

It was confirmed that proposals at Worden Hall would complement and not compete with those at the Civic Centre.

It was noted that at the moment the next scheduled event would be Leyland Festival in June.

RESOLVED (Unanimously):

That:

1. the Committee was encouraged that progress to date was in line with the previously indicated timescales;
2. the Committee looks forward to the Consultants' Brief being circulated to members of the Committee; and
3. the Committee requests that future updates include some information (such as bullet points) included on the agenda.

55 Scrutiny Matters

55a Verbal update on Lancashire County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee

The Chair indicated that the meeting was next week and he would circulate the minutes to members of the Committee.

55b Member feedback on meeting(s) and training attended on behalf of the committee

The Chair reported on the recent North West Strategic Scrutiny Network meeting which had been interesting and given ideas that could possibly be used.

55c Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan

The Chair reported that the Committee would soon be formulating its plan for 2018/19. This could include setting up a group to look at the Council's responsibilities to Air Quality Management Areas and provide an understanding on the process.

55d Cabinet Forward Plan

The Committee noted the Cabinet's Forward Plan.

56 Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED (Unanimously):

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.

57 Strategic Asset Review Study by Cushman and Wakefield

The Cabinet member for Corporate Support and Assets (Councillor Colin Clark) and the Chief Executive addressed the Committee and responded to its comments and enquiries relating to the Strategic Asset Review Study by Cushman and Wakefield.

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

- it was confirmed that following its production the Consultant's report had been used as part of the background information for the Council's property and asset review.
- the committee was informed that the portfolio holder and the other members of Cabinet were ambitious to maximise use of Council assets and generate income (reference to the Council's Investment Strategy) and that good progress had been made in the last two years.
- in respect of the lower condition/yield of the Middleforth Estate compared to other Council properties, due to a lack of strategic investment, this was still the case. However, a programme of works was in place to strategically review assets to ascertain whether to invest or to look at disposal.
- the gross yield from an asset was confirmed as the rental income against the value of the asset whilst net yield also took into account the costs of maintenance, insurance and such other costs to keep the asset.
- the findings for Worden Hall/Park differed because the Consultant's report was very high level, lessons had been learned and what was now being worked up was much more detailed and needed to complement operations at the Civic Centre.
- compared to the findings in the Consultant's report, opportunities at the Moss Side Depot had subsequently arisen from the Council's developing shared services agenda.

- in respect of the Council's Corporate Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), these drew information/pointers from many sources and the use of assets was key and included the Consultant's report and the Council developed that.
- it was confirmed that assets were one of the Council's resources working collectively for what was needed for the residents of the borough and a medium term resource strategy was being developed and would be brought to members.
- regarding the South Ribble Homes Build, this was a new venture looking forward at the use of land assets which the borough had a good supply of as a former new town area (negotiating with the Homes and Communities Agency) and could be used to fill the gap identified in the Housing Strategy.
- the committee was assured that following the recent management re-structure the Council would have the necessary skills, expertise and capacity to strategically manage and grow its property assets.
- the Leyland Town Centre Masterplan was mentioned in the Consultant's report and was included in this year's Corporate Plan and whilst not having information to hand on the current position and timescales this would be provided.
- in respect of moving forward with a Strategic Action Plan for the Council's approach to assets, the Committee was keen to have a future role in its development and monitoring and as no firm approach had yet been decided it was possible this could be subject to pre-scrutiny.
- clarity would be given as to whether the required essential maintenance works in the Consultant's report at Worden Hall had been carried out.

RESOLVED (Unanimously):

That

1. the Committee appreciated being provided with a copy of the Cushman and Wakefield Consultant's Report;
2. the Committee was encouraged that the Council had learned lessons on commissioning such reports and being less than effective in responding to it;
3. the Committee requests an update on the Leyland Masterplan;
4. the Committee welcomes the Strategic Asset Plan and suggests it is involved in its development and monitoring; and
5. the Committee welcomes the offer to provide clarity on whether the essential maintenance works had been carried out at Worden Hall.

Chair

Date