

MINUTES OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING DATE Thursday, 28 June 2018

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors Matthew Tomlinson (Chair), Colin Coulton (Vice-Chair), Keith Martin, Barbara Nathan, Mike Nathan, Michael Titherington and Linda Woollard

CABINET MEMBERS: Councillor Karen Walton (Cabinet Member (Public Health, Leisure and Wellbeing) Member Champion (Older People)), Councillor Warren Bennett (Cabinet Member (Assets and Transformation)) and Councillor Phil Smith

OFFICERS: Jonathan Noad (Director of Planning and Property) and Darren Cranshaw (Assistant Director of Scrutiny & Democratic Services)

OTHER MEMBERS: Councillor Phil Smith

PUBLIC: 0

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors David Howarth, Sue Jones, Jim Marsh, Lizzie Mawson, Barrie Yates and Karen Walton.

2 Minutes of the Last Meeting

RESOLVED (Unanimously):

That the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 12 April 2018 signed as a correct record.

3 Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

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

RESOLVED (Unanimously):

That all outstanding matters arising be removed.

4 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5 Corporate Performance Report at the end of Quarter 4 (31 March 2018)

The Deputy Leader (Councillor Caroline Moon) and the Specialist Consultant (Joanne Platt) addressed the Committee and responded to its comments and enquiries relating to the Corporate Performance Report at the end of Quarter 4.

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

- ▶ The year-end performance position would be reported as part of an annual report being presented to the Full Council meeting to enable all Members to get an overview of how the Council was performing.
- ▶ With regards the decrease in business rates collect this was not felt to be a concern but further information would be provided to the Committee for the next meeting.
- ▶ It was felt that further information on the remedial action being taken to bring performance measures back on track be included in future reports.
- ▶ Concern was expressed that there was not yet a complete picture of statutory and mandatory training for staff. Whilst it was not reported because it was not complete, confirmation was given that statutory training requirements were being met.
- ▶ Clarification was provided on the number of jobs created by City Deal, which appeared low but was at a point in time and not the total created over the period of the City Deal. A strategic review of the City Deal had been commissioned and it was felt that more context would have been useful.
- ▶ Response times in the Gateway customer contact centre had increased with feedback that there were difficulties getting through. It was acknowledged that due to the implementation of the green waste scheme had increased the volume of calls and the service was undergoing re-structuring. Reassurance was provided that action had been taken and that the performance was now improving and would be reported in the next performance report.
- ▶ The definition of the number of visits to leisure and health facilities was queried as there was reference to football pitches, which would be difficult to calculate. The definition would be reviewed and disaggregated for the future.
- ▶ The number of empty properties brought back into use had worsened and due to the reductions made it was queried whether any additional work would be an effective use of resources.
- ▶ An update was provided on the current situation with the Cuerden Development site as reference had been made in the report to work starting at the site and the coverage of the IKEA withdrawal in the local media.
- ▶ As mentioned previously, following the delays with masterplans as a result of the City Deal which was outside the Council's control a review had been commissioned and would be received imminently and would be shared with Members.
- ▶ The shortfall in property income due to writing off debt was highlighted and the amount and process for writing off debt was queried. More detailed information would be provided to the Committee and future quarterly reports would include the amounts written off.

- ▶ It was confirmed that the report from the Local Government Association (LGA) peer review re-visit had been placed on CllrCONNECT and the Improvement Reference Group would be meeting to consider the feedback and develop an action plan.
- ▶ The employee vacancy rate appeared to be high when benchmarked against other organisations which raised concerns whether the Council had sufficient staff resources to deliver our corporate plan. It was reported that steps had been taken to respond to this, including recruiting to the vacant positions in the leadership structure, investing in staff and through shared services.
- ▶ Reassurance was provided that work had started as part of this year's corporate plan to review the leisure partnership contract, which is due to expire in 2021.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That:

1. Information on the reasons for the business rate decrease is to be provided to the Committee along with what steps are being taken increase collection rates;
2. concern was expressed at no information being available for statutory and mandatory training for employees and asks that further information be provided to the Committee;
3. welcomes the Cabinet Member's reassurance that call waiting times in Gateway would improve and looks forward to further information being provided in the quarter 1 performance report;
4. clarification be provided on the definition and methodology used for collecting the indicator on the use of leisure and health facilities;
5. consideration be given to our approach to empty properties and the scale of the issue assessed against the resources deployed;
6. further information be provided on the timescales for agreeing and implementing the Penwortham, Leyland and Lostock Hall masterplans and confirmation the resources are in place;
7. information be provided to the Committee on how much property rental income was written off and the process used;
8. the Scrutiny Committee considers the Peer Review re-visit report and actions taken in response;
9. welcomes the offer of providing examples of how we learnt from complaints in a case study format; and
10. the Committee places on record its appreciate to Joanne Platt for her support as Specialist Consultant and wishes her well for the future.

6 Worden Hall - progress update

The Cabinet Member for Assets and Transformation (Councillor Warren Bennett) and Director of Planning and Property (Jonathan Noad) addressed the committee and responded to its comments and enquiries relating to Worden Hall.

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

- ▶ As a result of the success of the Artisan Market in April holding more events and being commercial was being explored further.
- ▶ The delay in the consultants commencing their review of Worden Hall was as a result of procurement taking longer than originally thought. Reassurance was provided that the consultants would look at Worden Hall in the context of the wider Worden Park.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That:

1. the Committee welcomes the Cabinet Member's commitment to explore events for Worden Park in the future; and
2. looks forward to seeing the Cabinet report on future options for Worden Park in September 2018.

7 Scrutiny Matters

7a Verbal Update on Lancashire County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee

The Chair reported on the proceedings of the last Lancashire County Council Health Scrutiny Committee meeting.

7b Member Feedback on Meeting(s) and Training attended on behalf of Committee

It was reported that a workshop for the Committee had been arranged to discuss its future work programme. Committee Members were encouraged to attend.

The North West Strategic Scrutiny Network organised by North West Employers' Organisation would take place on 12 July 2018.

7c Cabinet Forward Plan

The Committee noted the Cabinet's forward plan.

Chair

Date