

BUSINESS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 19 September 2017

Present: Councillor M Sullivan (Chair)

Councillors P Hackett J Stapleton
RL Abbey W Ward
E Boulton KJ Williams
G Ellis S Williams
D Mitchell G Wood

Deputies: Councillors S Foulkes (In place of J McManus)
P Stuart (In place of A Leech)
I Lewis (In place of T Pilgrim)
B Berry (In place of J Hale)

16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that no further apologies had been received other than for Councillors John Hale, Anita Leech, Julie McManus and Tracey Pilgrim, all of whom had deputies standing in for them.

17 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST / PARTY WHIP

Members were asked to consider whether they had any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or any other relevant interest in connection with any item(s) on this agenda and, if so, to declare them and state the nature of the interest.

Members were reminded that they should also declare whether they were subject to a party whip in connection with any item(s) to be considered and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of the whipping arrangement.

Councillor Jean Stapleton declared a personal interest in respect of an item of urgent business on Resident Parking as she lived in a controlled parking area.

Councillors Jerry Williams and Pat Hackett also declared personal interests in the matter of urgent business by virtue of them living in a Resident Parking area.

18 MINUTES

Members were requested to receive the minutes of the Business Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings held on 4 and 18 July, 2017.

Resolved – That the minutes of the meetings held on 4 and 18 July, 2017, be approved.

19 **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS - RESIDENT PARKING SCRUTINY REVIEW**

The Chair agreed to consideration of this matter as an item of urgent business in view of the need for a response prior to the next scheduled meeting of this Committee.

He stated that the Resident Parking Scrutiny Review which had been endorsed by this Committee on 4 July, 2017 and referred to the Cabinet had been deferred at the last minute by Cabinet at its meeting on 4 September, 2017. He had since been told it was pulled due to 'due diligence'.

David Armstrong, Assistant Chief Executive, informed the Committee that the item had been deferred by the Cabinet to a future meeting because the Cabinet had requested some answers to questions from the Parking Services Team to help them in reaching an informed decision on the matter. It was not unusual for items to be deferred by the Cabinet when they asked for further information.

The Chair then drew the matter to a close stating that the Committee had now had a response to the matter, whether the Committee liked the response or not.

20 **COMMERCIALISATION UPDATE**

The Committee received a presentation from Stuart Bellerby, Commercial Approach Programme Lead, who gave an update on the Council's commercial approach. The project outcomes delivered so far, included:

Phase 1

- Cabinet had agreed vision & principles
- Project launched within Transformation Programme
- Work streams created Strategy, Customers and Markets, Culture and Support to Succeed.

Phase 2

- Review of the largest income generators within Council
- Review of income recovery with recommendations for service improvement
- Support /challenge on fees and charges – working with finance could amount to a maximum additional £650,000 anticipated for 2017-18
- Intranet site established including draft commercial approach toolkit
- 2 In-house e-learning modules established to support staff development

The next steps for the project would include:

- Establishing a Commercial Board and Governance
- Finalising a Commercial Strategy
- Challenge and support for income generation within budget setting process for 2018/19 and beyond
- Further development of staff training and support
- Development of a Business to Business (B2B) approach
- Member engagement and training

Responding to Members' comments, Stuart Bellerby's and Nicola Butterworth, Assistant Director: Commissioning Support's comments included the following:

- There was a large training programme which would include senior leadership and they were attending various departmental management team meetings.
- Best practice from other Authorities was being learnt from but there was also a need for a culture change and new mind set within Wirral Council.
- Up to 50 ideas had come through by way of the intranet site for the new ideas board. 10 to 15 of these ideas the Council was already carrying out; some ideas had been looked at but could not be implemented due to current lack of capacity. They were currently looking at 4/5 of these ideas and developing business cases for them.
- Additional fees for a faster than standard service was also being looked at for some areas as happened in Registrars for the issuing of duplicate birth, marriage and death certificates.
- Having a more commercial and business-like approach would create opportunities for the Council, it was not about privatising the Council.
- They acknowledged the importance of tourism for income generation for the Council and it was understood that the subsidy was being reduced over time. Mr Bellerby did not think there was a Council linked theatre across the country without subsidy.

The Chair challenged this assertion and commented upon the need for the Floral Pavilion Theatre to stand alone and indeed to generate income.

Mr Bellerby responded that he was going on the information he had been provided with and that he and Nicola were not there to run everything as that was the service manager's role.

Another Member commented that if comparisons were going to be made there was a need for them to be like for like.

The Assistant Chief Executive commented that the Floral Pavilion Theatre was a superb facility, not just a theatre but also a conference centre and the

Council was endeavouring to give greater autonomy to the Floral to enable it to increase income.

Responding to a further comment, Nicola Butterworth acknowledged the need to engage with local community groups, including Friends Groups and that although they had started the engagement process with Council staff they would look to expand this.

Resolved – That the officers be thanked for their presentation and that it be noted.

21 **UPDATE ON LIVERPOOL CITY REGION DEVELOPMENTS**

Rose Boylan, Policy and Strategy Manager, introduced a report and gave a presentation setting out a brief overview of latest developments at the Liverpool City Region (LCR), including activity underway to implement the City Region devolution deal. A snapshot of some of the recent activity and developments was included under the headings of, Economic Growth and Skills, Business and Brexit portfolio, Transport portfolio and Health, Adults Services and Children's Services portfolio.

Rose Boylan also referred to the LCR Mayor's 100 Day Plan, which was structured around five thematic pillars: Ambitious; Fair; Green; Connected; and Together. The presentation also referred to the newly completed Mersey Gateway Bridge, scheduled to open in the Autumn and the LCR Cultural programme for 2018, which would see the return of the Tall Ships in May 2018 and the return of the Giants in October, 2018.

The Chair declared an interest as retired military and in respect of the LCR Mayor signing the Armed Forces Covenant, commented upon the treatment of veterans as a national disgrace, with many former armed forces personnel being alcoholics, drug addicts, in prison or homeless.

Members expressed support for the work of the LCR, in particular the commitment to continue to engage with the Welsh Government on cross border rail connectivity; partnership working with the NHS and the scoping of proposals for affordable transport for apprentices.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

22 **LIVERPOOL CITY REGION COMBINED AUTHORITY - OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE UPDATE**

The Chair introduced a report which gave an overview of the work of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview & Scrutiny Committee. The report gave details of appointments to the Overview and Scrutiny

Committee for 2017/18 and of the scrutiny induction day held on 19 July and a summary of the key actions / outcomes from the meeting on 26 July.

The Chair informed the Committee that Councillor Anita Leech, had resigned from the LCR Scrutiny Committee and that she would be replaced by Councillor Gillian Wood, subject to the matter being reported to Council.

The Chair reported that the Metro Mayor, Steve Rotheram had been to the first meeting of the LCR Scrutiny Committee since his election and it was his intention to attend every meeting. The Committee had agreed a work programme which included a first piece of work around spatial development for an LCR approach to brownfield sites and greenbelt, this would not diminish in any way what each Council and Planning Committee did in each of the constituent authorities. The Scrutiny Committee of 20 Members would be split into two to undertake other pieces of scrutiny work including, Welfare Reform and Universal Credit and Air Quality Control.

Mike Lester, the Scrutiny Officer, confirmed that all final scrutiny reports would be circulated to this Committee's Members.

During this item, Councillor Warren Ward declared a personal interest by virtue of his partner working for the Department for Work and Pensions.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

23 **2017/18 QUARTER 1 WIRRAL PLAN PERFORMANCE**

David Armstrong, Assistant Chief Executive introduced a report which provided the 2017/18 Quarter 1 (April – June 2017) performance report for Wirral Plan pledges under the Business theme. The Quarter 1 report was included as Appendix 1 to the report, and provided a description of the progress in Quarter 1 that included available data in relation to a range of outcome indicators and supporting measures.

Responding to comments from Members, David Armstrong stated that some indicators were annual because they were reported from outside organisations such as the UK Commission for Employment and Skills. The improvement in the employment rate in Wirral and the number of jobs created was the result of work by the Council and the Wirral Chamber of Commerce. The figures for the reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents was reducing compared to the previous quarters of the last two years.

A Member congratulated the small number of staff in the Tourism team who had undertaken tremendous work in increasing visitor numbers to the borough.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

24 **FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT QUARTER 1 2017/18**

Jenny Spick, Senior Manager, Financial Planning and Policy, introduced the report of the Assistant Director: Finance which set out the Council's revenue and capital monitoring position for 2017/18 quarter 1. The report gave details of key issues within the business theme, progress on the implementation of savings and income and debt. There was a current projected overspend of £100,000 which would be balanced out by an underspend in treasury management.

Responding to a comment from a Member, David Armstrong referred to the shortfall in car parking income of £0.1 million which was due to delayed implementation of the increased tariffs and charging at country parks, the delay being due to the great level of scrutiny this matter had received.

Responding to a comment from a Member, Jenny Spick stated that the £225,000 in the capital programme for webcasting was the budgeted figure for the scheme at the moment.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

25 **POLICY INFORM: BUSINESS**

The Chair introduced a report on the September Policy Inform Briefing paper which provided an overview of ongoing and recent national legislation, bills presented to Parliament and emerging policies.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

26 **BUSINESS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE REPORT**

The Committee considered a report from the Chair which explained the process of developing a scrutiny work programme for the new municipal year. A dedicated work programme planning session had taken place on Monday 4 September for the Chair and Party Spokespersons of the committee to consider future items for the work programme.

The Chair suggested that in connection with receipt of an annotated version of the Road Safety Manager's report, from Ian Campbell, Chair of the Wirral Pedestrian Association, pre-decision scrutiny should be undertaken on the Road Safety Strategy. Further items added to the work programme included:

- Pre-decision scrutiny on the Commercial Strategy
- Universal Credit, and;

- Further briefing sessions on Wirral Waters.

Councillor Ian Lewis, at this point, declared a personal interest as he attended meetings of the Wirral Pedestrian Association. Councillor Lewis also reported that he had attended meetings with Councillors Tony Norbury and Paul Stuart and the Manager of Job Centre Plus, Deborah Veevers, who had offered to attend a meeting with the Committee.

Resolved – That the suggestions made be incorporated into the Committee’s work programme.

27 **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

The Chair allowed Councillor Eddie Boulton to address the Committee concerning the issue of utility companies digging up roads and the fines imposed when they took longer than agreed to complete their work. He had asked for the figure for fines imposed in 2016/17 and for where the money had been spent at the previous meeting of the Committee.

The Assistant Chief Executive agreed that he would look into this matter and supply an answer in writing.

Prior to the meeting concluding the Chair reminded Councillor Abbey of the need to remain seated until he had formally closed the meeting.