

BUSINESS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 27 March 2018

Present: Councillor P Hackett (Vice-Chair in the Chair)

Councillors	RL Abbey	D Mitchell
	E Boulton	J Stapleton
	G Ellis	W Ward
	A Leech	KJ Williams
	I Lewis	S Williams
	J McManus	G Wood

Deputy: Councillor C Muspratt (In place of M Sullivan)

Apologies: Councillor T Pilgrim

52 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Pat Hackett welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that apologies had been received from Councillor Mike Sullivan who had a deputy standing in for him and also from Councillor Tracey Pilgrim.

53 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.

No such declarations were made.

A Member referred to the fact that a number of items had been withdrawn from this agenda due to the meeting being in the pre-election restrictive period and had noted that the meeting for March 2019 would be in the same period.

The Scrutiny Officer responded that this had been identified as an issue and once Committees had been constituted in May the matter of moving this particular committee meeting, scheduled for later in March, 2019 would be looked into.

54 **MINUTES**

Members were requested to receive the minutes of the Business Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 23 January, 2018.

Councillor Dave Mitchell requested feedback in respect of minute 45, 'Minutes', and the issue of officers attending meetings to present reports.

In response, the Scrutiny Officer informed the meeting that it had been agreed that the financial monitoring report would be the first item on the agenda after procedural items and that it was important for officers to attend meetings to respond to questions.

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 January, 2018, be approved.

55 **FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT QUARTER 3 2017/18**

Jenny Spick, Senior Manager, Financial Planning and Policy, introduced the report of the Director of Finance and Investment which set out the Council's revenue and capital monitoring position for 2017/18 quarter 3. 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 underspend on revenue of £4.2m.

Jenny Spick gave a presentation to the Committee which included further details on:

- The 2017/18 forecast outturn
- The 2018/19 budget
- Business Rates Overview of Income Source
- Basics of a Government Fair Funding Review

Responding to comments from Members, Jenny Spick stated that with regard to debts secured against properties in respect of social care activities she would come back with these figures as to the level currently. The Business Rates retention pilot could last until the nationwide, full Business Rates Retention Scheme became operational and £68m was in the Council budget through this scheme. Under the previous funding system the Council would have received approximately £37m through Business rates with the remainder being made up of Rate Support Grant, Section 31 Grants and Better Care funding. Work was being undertaken across the Liverpool City Region to monitor the effects of the pilot and what the differential would have been with the previous system. With regard to all the assets held by the Council she reported that no issues had been raised by the external auditors and the Audit and Risk Management Committee received regular reports.

Responding to comments on the capital programme, Paul Satoor, Director of Corporate Resources and Reform, informed the meeting that thermal mapping was an IT system used by the highways service to target those areas most in need of gritting. The money for Eureka, the National Children's Museum would be to support the funding application to bring forward the development proposed for Seacombe Ferry.

A Member referred to the four savings options rated as red and the fact that they had been largely mitigated by the use of contingency funding; he queried how much more contingency funding was available and suggested that answers should be provided by the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council.

Resolved –

- (1) That the quarter 3 revenue forecast underspend of £4.2 million be noted.**
- (2) That the performance of the capital projects and amendments to the capital programme within this area be noted.**
- (3) That a copy of the presentation be circulated to the Committee.**

56 **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). A wide range of activity continued and the report highlighted a small extract of these, including those within the portfolios of Economic Growth and Culture which Wirral had the lead for. The report and presentation expanded on the following areas:

- LCR Culture Strategy
- Tackling Violence against Women and Girls
- LCR Skills Strategy
- Funding to improve City Region's Key Route Network

With regard to the culture strategy, she informed the meeting of the huge economic impact generated by expenditure on culture in the LCR. A Boroughs of Culture initiative had been launched with Liverpool and St Helens being this year's boroughs and Wirral becoming the Borough of Culture in 2019.

Rose Boylan also referred to the new collective approach to end violence against women and girls, building on the range of existing good practice taking place across the LCR. Also, an LCR Skills Strategy had recently been agreed and she highlighted the key outcomes of this.

A package of £25m funding to support 15 highway schemes that would make improvements to the city region's Key Route Network (KRN) had recently been approved. This was made up of the strategic highway routes that were vital to growth in the LCR, including specific Wirral Schemes: Kingsway Tunnel connectivity; Wirral Waters Safety Upgrade and A41 Corridor Improvement.

Responding to comments from Members, Rose Boylan stated that she did not have the detail as to the Wirral Waters Safety Upgrade but would supply more information on this in writing. The figures for the impact of culture on the City Region were robust figures widely agreed and accepted. With regard to the A41 corridor improvements she would find out the exact focus of where these would be.

In respect of apprentices Paul Satoor, Director of Corporate Resources and Reform, stated that he would find out further information on the apprenticeships from the Wirral Metropolitan College. He also informed the Committee that the Wirral Growth Company planned to source local trade and develop apprentices. Rose Boylan confirmed that Wirral Council did pay the living wage to all apprentices. She also stated that organisations, voluntary and community groups wishing to get involved in the LCR initiative to end violence against women and girls could do so through herself.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

57 **LIVERPOOL CITY REGION COMBINED AUTHORITY SCRUTINY PANEL -
VERBAL UPDATE**

Councillor Gillian Wood gave a brief verbal update on the work of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

A copy of the Spatial Development Strategy Scrutiny Review report had been circulated to members of the Committee. A review panel had looked at the processes and what was needed for the LCR Planning Team to deliver the Spatial Development Strategy, including how it could be delivered within the existing governance and available resources.

Councillor Wood gave a brief overview of two scrutiny reviews which were currently underway on 'Air Quality' and 'Welfare Reform and Universal Credit' and both these reports would be circulated when they had been completed and presented to the Combined Authority.

During this item Councillor Warren Ward declared a personal interest as an employee of the Department for Work and Pensions.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

2017/18 QUARTER 3 WIRRAL PLAN PERFORMANCE

Carl Gurnell, Team Leader – Performance and Scrutiny, introduced a report which provided the 2017/18 Quarter 3 (October - December 2017) performance report for Wirral Plan pledges under the Business theme. The Quarter 3 report was included as Appendix 1 to the report, and provided a description of the progress in Quarter 3, including available data in relation to a range of outcome indicators and supporting measures.

He highlighted the Wirral Ways to Work Programme which had hit a significant milestone having engaged over 3,500 participants since its start in April 2016, supporting 1,664 participants back into employment or training up to 31st December 2017. The possibility of extending this to 2020 was now being looked at. With regard to the proposed Eureka Merseyside project at Seacombe he reported that it had not progressed any further with Northern Culture Fund monies but the LCR was looking at alternative funding options.

Carl Gurnell referred to the performance indicator on jobs created, which for quarter 3 was below target though the Wirral Chamber of Commerce had expressed confidence in meeting / exceeding the year-end target by March 2018. The performance indicator on those killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents had slipped to amber rating in quarter 3, however this figure was still provisional, and as an update was not available in time for this meeting, it would be confirmed in quarter 4.

A Member queried the validity of statistics from a public satisfaction survey for public transport if the same people weren't asked each year. Carl Gurnell responded that a reputable organisation was procured to undertake this survey and the results were statistically accepted.

Responding to a Member's comment the Chair reported that the Council's receipt of the National Transport Award for the 'Mind Your Business' project was being publicised.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

BUSINESS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE REPORT

The Committee considered a report from the Chair which explained the process of developing and managing the scrutiny work programme for the municipal year.

Following consultation with senior officers, it was agreed that a number of items considered for this committee's agenda would be deferred to the new municipal year in light of pre-election restriction considerations. These included reports on the outcomes of the Liverpool City Region business

delegation to China in October 2016, the management of camper vans and a presentation on the recommissioning of highways services.

The report updated the Committee on current work programme items, including, Universal Credit and pre-decision scrutiny on the Council's Commercial Strategy.

An appendix to the report listed items awaiting scheduling in the new municipal year.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

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CHAIR'S THANKS

Councillor Hackett, as this was the last meeting for this municipal year, thanked all the officers and Members of the Committee and wished Councillor Eddie Boulton the best of luck for the future as he was not standing for re-election.