

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING, 23rd NOVEMBER, 2017

Present – Councillors Silvester (Chairman), Pickup (Vice-Chairman), Allen, L. Byrne, Gibbon, Harkin, Haslam, Haworth (as deputy for Councillor Kellett), Hornby, Mistry, Newall, Walsh and P. Wild (as deputy for Councillor Parkinson).

Also in Attendance

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| Councillor Peel | Executive Cabinet Member Environmental Services |
| Councillor Burrows | Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services, Police and Community Services |
| Councillor Chadwick | Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways |
| Councillor Sherrington | Cabinet Member for Anti-Poverty and Housing |
| Councillor Watters | Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion, Voluntary Sector, Community Services and Skills |
| Mr. J. Morrissy | Interim Assistant Director Projects, Policy and Public Sector Reform |
| Mr. J. Lord | Bolton at Home Chief Executive Officer |
| Mr. M. Russell | Head of Service (Neighbourhoods) |
| Mr. I. D. Mulholland | Principal Democratic Services Officer |

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Kellett and Parkinson.

Councillor Silvester, Chairman

(The Committee stood in silent tribute in memory of the late Councillor Whitehead who had recently passed away and was a member of this Scrutiny Committee)

18. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 26th September, 2017 were submitted.

Further to minute 16, Roads, members referred to the progress of the works taking place at the Moses Gate junction.

Resolved – That subject to the deletion of the words, part of Chorley New Road in the discussions points to minute 16 and the insertion therefor of, part of Chorley Old Road, the minutes be agreed and signed as a correct record.

19. THE COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Borough Solicitor submitted a report which set out the work programme for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

The Chairman proposed that an additional item be included for the April, 2018 meeting –

Trees and foliage overhanging, blocking or obstructing footpaths, highways and private property. A presentation to include the following –

The powers which the Council had in order to ensure that adopted and un-adopted footpaths and highways were kept clear from non-Council foliage and / or trees blocking or obstructing footpaths and highways and also the Council's responsibility when the Council owned foliage and / or trees overhangs private property. Also included would be information from Bolton at Home on the matter and issues concerning gardeners blowing leaves onto the pavement.

Resolved – That the work programme with the additional item concerning trees and foliage, as referred to above, be approved.

**20. DEPARTMENTAL PERFORMANCE UPDATE,
QUARTER ONE, 2017/18**

The Director of Environmental Services submitted a report which provided an update on the departmental quarter one performance position for 2017/18.

Additionally, it incorporated Housing Services as part of the portfolio. Furthermore, it also included the internal departmental position.

Members in their deliberations referred to –

- The number of customers who had been assisted back into paid work from the Deane UCAN Centre compared to the number from Halliwell UCAN;
- Matters concerning Community Safety and how the Police justify the level of policing in each ward in the Borough;
- The cited increase on fly tipping material collected;
- The positive reduction in sickness absence in the Waste and Fleet Management Division;
- Food ratings for outlets and the display of those;
- Matters concerning the hate Crime statistics and the cited rise of 68 % in quarter one in Bolton compared to the same period in 2016/17 and apparently the way the statistics had been calculated had changed resulting in a rise across Greater Manchester;

Resolved – (i) That the report be noted.

- (ii) That members of this Committee be furnished with additional background information regarding the number of customers who had been assisted back into paid work from the Deane UCAN Centre compared to the number from Halliwell UCAN.

- (iii) That members of this Committee be apprised of information concerning Community Safety and how the Police justify the level of policing in each ward in the Borough.
- (iv) That members of this Committee be notified of an explanation of the hate Crime statistics and the cited rise of 68 % in quarter one in Bolton compared to the same period in 2016/17 together with information on an apparent change in the way the statistics had been calculated resulting in a rise across Greater Manchester.

21. GMCA – HOUSING, PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - ROLE, REMIT AND REGULARITY

The Principal Democratic Services Officer explained to the Committee that the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) had various Scrutiny Committees and one of those was the Housing, Planning and Environment Scrutiny Committee which was indeed similar to the remit of this Committee.

He indicated that, following consultation with the Chairman, it had been agreed to include on this agenda details of the role, remit and regularity of the GMCA Scrutiny meeting and in future it would be useful to include the item on future agendas so members could be kept informed of discussions and decisions at the Combined Authority level.

He further explained that members had, prior to the meeting, been provided with an e-mail link to various background documents regarding the work of the GMCA Scrutiny Committee and also that the role and remit and work programme documents had been tabled to aid understanding and discussions.

He also indicated that Councillor Sherrington was the Council's nominated representative on this GMCA

Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Sherrington went on to explain additional background information and details of the matters that had been discussed at recent meetings which included the spatial framework and proposals for a London style transport smart card in Greater Manchester.

Resolved – (i) That the position be noted and at future meetings Councillor Sherrington be invited to give an update on the work and discussions at the GMCA Housing, Planning and Environment Scrutiny Committee.

(ii) That members of this Committee be provided with details of a link to the agendas and reports regarding the GMCA Housing, Planning and Environment Scrutiny Committee.

22. PARKS, COUNTRY PARKS AND CONSERVATION AREAS

Mr. Malcolm Russell, Head of Service – Neighbourhoods, gave a presentation on parks, country parks and conservation areas which included –

- The state and management of the Borough's parks;
- The refurbishment of the play equipment;
- The availability of outside funding – grants from the lottery, green space, sports, charities; and
- The state of public footpaths in parks, country parks and conservation areas and how they were maintained.

Mr Russell, by way of background information, explained that local authorities had managed parks for over 150 years and were important to local community wellbeing, cohesion and quality of life. He did though highlight the increasing funding pressures and incremental reductions to the service and available resources since 2010.

The presentation also focused on-

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- The management of the various assets which included buildings and bridges, barriers, walls and railings, car parks, paths, gullies and culverts, statues, furniture and memorials, woodlands, wetlands and water bodies;
- Community led activities and events;
- Maintenance matters and the effect of significant resource reductions;
- Equipped play areas including establishment of and funding;
- Capital funding projects which included the Queen's Park heritage lottery project, Moss Bank Park Café, Greenspace Improvement Programme (sport and recreational activities) and Access to Nature; and
- Matters around access to grants.

In Conclusion Mr. Russell explained that parks and green spaces were important to local communities but with an increase in resources being very unlikely there was the possible need for different management approaches or rationalisation of provision of the most expensive facilities. He did though highlight the work to grow and support greater community involvement and work with partners.

Members in their deliberations referred to –

- Green prescriptions – using the Council's facilities;
- Use of brighter flowers in parks;
- The possibility of a Friends of Farnworth Park group;
- Background information on green prescriptions - the activities and groups using the facilities;
- The Community Empowerment Fund background information;
- Section 106 monies and use of in Bolton; and
- Working in partnership and the positive benefits to the parks.

Resolved – (i) That Mr Russell be thanked for his detailed presentation and that the position be noted.

(ii) That members of this Committee be informed of information regarding green prescriptions in terms of the activities and groups.

23. HOUSING MATTERS

Mr. Jon. Lord, Chief Executive Officer of Bolton at Home gave a presentation on the state of the housing stock in Bolton, the safety standards regime and the frequency of checking including both social housing associations and private landlords.

Mr. Lord informed the Committee of matters concerning the Asset Base which included –

- There were 17,635 social housing dwellings and in 2016/17, 130 were lost through right to buy;
- 236 of current base were managed by others;
- 224 owned by private landlords, managed by Bolton at Home as social housing;
- 92 owned by Bolton at Home but let to Bolton Council e.g. network homes for vulnerable adults.

Mr. Lord advised of matters concerning the condition of properties including-

- There were 22 individual properties with structural issues which were monitored; and
- 1,284 non- traditional build properties which were subject to long term monitoring due to their limited lifespan and a further 1,161 non- traditional build properties required appraisal to assess their long term future.

The Committee was further informed of health and safety

matters regarding gas, electric, asbestos, water safety and fire safety.

Mr. Lord went onto outline the Bolton at Home's response to the Grenfell fire. He advised members of the following –

- Immediate renewal of fire risk assessments to all high rise;
- Budget committed to minor works that were required;
- Working with GM Fire and Rescue Service to assure safety of high rise;
- Immediate electric checks within all high rise;
- Assessment of numbers of vulnerable customers within high rise and sheltered properties;
- Communications with customers;
- Major incident planning; and
- Development of policy and protocols for complex buildings.

He also explained that Bolton at Home was working with GM housing providers in terms of –

- Sharing knowledge and information relating to cladding and cladded buildings;
- Common approach to fire risk assessments;
- Procurement framework for all things fire;
- Development of stay safe rather than stay put policy;
- Development of customer communication including shared info-graphics;
- Working with GM Fire and Rescue Service to enable identification of high risk buildings prior to arrival;
- Enable GM Fire and Rescue Service to be aware of vulnerable customers on arrival at scene; and
- Joint approach to manage leaseholder safety and compliance.

Mr. John Morrissy, Interim Assistant Director Projects, Policy and Public Sector Reform went onto outline to the Committee matters around Housing Standards. He explained that Housing Standards carried out a variety of proactive and reactive housing inspections of privately rented properties. Also referred

to was how concerns were raised, inspections and landlord liaison.

The meeting was also informed that advice and guidance on best practice was offered to both landlords and tenants, landlord forums were usually held twice a year and issues concerning the options available if landlords refused to co-operate.

Members in their discussions referred to –

- The demolition of properties and the effect on adjoining properties;
- Access to premises for inspections including those who were vulnerable;
- Fires in social housing and the combatting of;
- The building of new social housing and the quantity;
- The lease management scheme and the benefits;
- Use of sprinklers in flats;
- Properties with asbestos;
- Shared ownership schemes; and
- The effect of right to buy and right to acquire.

Resolved – That Mr. Lord and Mr Morrissy be thanked for their joint detailed presentation and that the position be noted.

24. MEMBERS' BUSINESS

The minutes of various meetings relevant to the remit of this Committee were also submitted, viz –

- Executive Cabinet Member for Environmental Services held on 16th October and 13th November, 2017; and
- Environmental Services and Waste Policy Development Group held on 6th November, 2017.

Further to the minute 26, Speed Warning Signs, Executive Cabinet Member Environmental Services, members sought clarification on the details of the funding allocation.

Resolved – (i) That the minutes of the various meetings be noted.

(ii) That members of this Committee be notified of details of the funding allocation in respect of the recent Executive Cabinet Member Environment decision regarding, Speed Warning Signs.

(The meeting started at 6.00 p.m. and finished at 8.10 pm.)