

PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING, 29th SEPTEMBER, 2021

Present – Councillors Bagnall (Chairman), Ayub, Brady, Eckersley-Fallon, Finney, Hartigan, Heslop, Hill, Ismail, McKeon, Peel, Sanders (as deputy for Councillor Weatherby), Sherrington, Walsh and Zaman.

Also in Attendance

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| Councillor Mrs Fairclough | Executive Cabinet Member Environmental Regulatory Services |
| Councillor Haslam | Executive Cabinet Member Highways and Transport |
| Councillor Muslim | Executive Cabinet Member Environmental Services Delivery |
| Mr. G. Brough | Director of Place Development |
| Mr. J. Dyson | Director of Place Services |
| Mr. A. Bolan | Head of Service, Regulatory Services |
| Mr. P. Mykytiuk | Regulatory Services |
| Ms. M. Horrocks | Head of Economic Development |
| Mr. I. D. Mulholland | Deputy Democratic Services Manager |

(Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillors Ismail and Weatherby and Warren as Executive Cabinet Member)

Councillor Bagnall in the Chair.

8. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Place Scrutiny Committee held on 24th August, 2021 were submitted.

Resolved – That the minutes be agreed and signed as a correct record.

9. THE COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received a report which set out details of the updated Committee work programme for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

Resolved – That the work programme be approved.

10. TRADING STANDARDS

Mr. Jon. Dyson, Director of Place Services, Mr. Andrew. Bolan, Head of Service, Trading Standards and Mr. Philip Mykytiuk, Regulatory Services, gave a presentation on Trading Standards and illicit tobacco.

The meeting was informed that illicit tobacco was cheap, easily available and was a global problem and included four types – illicit white, counterfeit, genuine cigarettes smuggled in without duty paid and non – UK hand rolling tobacco brands.

The vast majority of illicit tobacco was smuggled in via container ships and was more attractive to organised criminals. The gangs behind this trade also had strong links to people trafficking, money laundering, child exploitation, narcotics and in some cases terrorism.

Members were informed that illicit tobacco was sold via boot sales, pubs and clubs, under the counter at retail premises, private (fag) houses and via Facebook.

The harm caused included –

- Lost duty;
- Serious and organised crime;
- Lost business;
- Damage to community cohesion; and
- Damage to health (Makes it easier for existing smokers to smoke more and harder to quit).

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In terms of the combatting of the problem, the meeting was informed of targeted days of enforcement which were based on a multi-agency approach.

Members were advised of the success of licensing review hearings in relation to the seizure of illicit tobacco. In terms of the future, a new strategy of intensified activity was planned.

Members in their discussions referred to –

- The statistics on smoking and correlation to areas of deprivation;
- Smoking cessation programmes;
- Enforcement matters and boosting enforcement capacity / resource;
- Deterrents from HM Government and any financial incentives for the Council from HM Government;
- Smoking addiction; and
- Police involvement.

Resolved – That Messers Dyson, Bolan Mykytiuk be thanked for their detailed and informative presentation and that the position be noted.

11. DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION GRANT FUNDING

Mr. Gerry Brough, Director of Place Development and Ms. Michelle Horrocks, Head of Economic development gave a presentation on development and regeneration grant funding.

Members were advised of the grants submitted in 2020/21 broken down by capital and revenue and the same for 2021/22.

Some examples of the grants were given-

- Future High Streets Fund – Farnworth (£13.272M);
- Towns Fund (£22.9m);
- Levelling Up Fund (£40m);
- Horwich Loco Works Housing Infrastructure Fund Grant;

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- The Brownfield Land Fund; and
- Public Sector Decarbonisation scheme – background.

Members were advised that Place development had secured a total of £75.371 m during the past two financial years, i.e (£14.076 and £61.295) and applications for a further £46.170m had been submitted. The application process was often long and difficult and required commitment of a substantial amount of effort, staff time and external input.

Members in their deliberations referred to –

- Heat from waste and grant issues;
- Heat from water and grant issues;
- Wasting energy;
- The per centage of grant we received compared with what was applied for;
- Possible scheme overlap;
- Decisions around areas to include in the bids;
- Grants being spent on what the bid was for;
- Monitoring and reporting on schemes and officer resource;
- Congratulations on the presentation and the work involved;
- Matters around competitive bidding;
- The impact of funds and opportunities;
- The Council's capital programme not being big enough;
- Town centre regeneration schemes funded from outside the Council; and
- The usefulness of having this grant information.

Resolved – That Gerry Brough and Michelle Horrocks be thanked for their detailed and informative presentation and that the position be noted.

12. MEMBERS' BUSINESS

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

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- Executive Cabinet Member Deputy Leader held on 20th September, 2021;
- Member Strategic Housing and Planning held on 14th September, 2021;
- Executive Cabinet Member Environmental Services Delivery held on 21st September, 2021;
- Executive Cabinet Member Highways and Transport held on 20th September, 2021; and
- Executive Cabinet Member Regeneration held on 1st and 20th September, 2021.

Resolved – That the minutes of the various meetings be noted.

(The meeting started at 6.00pm and finished at 8.03pm)

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