



## **MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 7th FEBRUARY 2019**

**PRESENT:** Councillor J Oates (Chair), Councillors M Summers, C Cooke, R Ford, S Goodall, Dr S Peale and B Price

**CABINET:** Councillors D Cook and R Pritchard

The following officers were present: Stefan Garner (Executive Director Finance), Matthew Bowers (Assistant Director Growth & Regeneration), John Day (Corporate Performance Officer) and Jo Hutchison (Democratic and Elections Officer)

### **50 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor T Jay and Councillor P Standen

### **51 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14th November 2018 were approved and signed as a correct record.

*(Moved by Councillor S Peale and seconded by Councillor M Summers)*

### **52 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

**RESOLVED** under Procedure Rule 9.1.3 that the agenda item on the Quarter 3 Performance Report 2018/19 be brought forward to item 53.

*(Moved by Councillor J Oates and seconded by Councillor Dr S Peale).*

### **53 QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE REPORT 2018/19**

The Leader of the Council provided the Corporate Scrutiny Committee with a performance and financial health-check. The report would be considered by

Cabinet on 21st February 2019. The Leader invited questions from the Committee.

The Committee discussed the following areas and requested further clarifications as set out below:

- The underspend recorded in the General Fund in respect of the Assistant Director Finance and Assistant Director Assets. It was reported that work continued regularly in all areas to identify underspends and non-budgeted income and in order to address clarifications sought on the Q2 Quarterly Performance Report an additional table had been introduced to the Q3 Report to record significant variances. This table highlighted that non-budgeted income derived from additional lease income, fees and charges income, grant income, GBSLEP returned levy, and additional interest.
- Corporate Scrutiny Committee noted that changes had been made to the report to reflect previous comments raised by the Committee and thanked the Knowledge and Performance Manager;
- Clarification be circulated to members of the Committee on the reasons for the housing evictions recorded in the Q3 Report;
- The impact of Universal Credit on the rent arrears figures for Council tenants and the costs of the transition arrangements implemented to support the transition and the extent to which any arrears would impact the Council's funds to maintain its housing stock;
- Clarification to be circulated to members of the Committee on how the Discretionary Housing Payments were being utilised, and whether there was any linkage to size and occupation of housing stock;

**RESOLVED that**

Corporate Scrutiny Committee endorsed the Q3 Performance Report for 2018/19 and its presentation to Cabinet;

The Leader of the Council and the Knowledge and Performance Manager left the meeting.

**54 CHAIR'S UPDATE**

The Chair reported and the Committee agreed that members of the Committee had received written updates on the following matters which were raised at the 14 November 2018 meeting:

- the Customer Portal;
- Quarter 2 Performance Report 2018/19.

**55 RESPONSES TO REPORTS OF THE CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Chair reported to the Committee on the recommendations of this Committee which were made to Cabinet at its meeting on 29 November 2018:

- Festive Ward Grants Scheme – Cabinet considered and agreed the Committee's recommendations, in particular to ensure that there was sufficient flexibility in the scheme to enable small groups to access grants. It was further reported that a briefing note from the Partnership Funding

Officer on the outcome of the 2018 scheme would be circulated to members for information;

- Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy – Cabinet agreed to investigate the establishment of a self-financing inspection scheme to regulate HMOs.

## **56 CONSIDERATION OF MATTERS REFERRED TO THE CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FROM CABINET**

None.

## **57 2018/19 FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee considered the Forward Plan for 2018/19.

## **58 TOWN CENTRE UPDATE**

The Chair introduced the Assistant Director, Growth and Regeneration and the Portfolio Holder for Assets and Finance who had been invited to attend the meeting to provide an update on the Town Centre Strategy and on Town Centre Assets.

The Assistant Director Growth and Regeneration reported that in November 2018 Cabinet approved the production of a Town Centre Strategy and a programme management approach to the delivery of town centre activities and projects and a budget associated with that.

It was reported that certain projects were already underway, such as in the Enterprise Quarter with the Tamworth Assembly Rooms and at the Castle. It was further reported that new projects were starting to go through the project management approach, with Executive Leadership Team management and Scrutiny Committee oversight.

The Assistant Director, Growth and Regeneration reported that consultation was underway on a Design Supplementary Planning Document. This document would provide design guidance to those who would be considering activity which would result in physical change within the built environment.

Engagement activity on the development of the town centre had started with a video from the Leader of the Council which had reached more than 15000 people on Facebook.

Councillor Ford joined the meeting.

The Committee discussed and sought clarifications in the following areas:

- In terms of the consultation on the town centre regeneration, as well as promotion via Facebook there activity on other social media platforms, and there was also an article in the Tamworth Herald. The intention was to direct consultation traffic to the Tamworth Borough website and the area where members of the public could share their ideas;
- The level of engagement on the more technical consultation on the Design Supplementary Planning Document;

- It was reported that currently desktop work only was underway on the Gungate project and the Council was not yet ready to consult externally on this project. It was expected that a report on progress made with the desktop assessment, and what the opportunities could be, would be available in June 2019.

The Committee thanked the Assistant Director, Regeneration and Growth for his update, who then left the meeting.

The Portfolio Holder for Assets and Finance provided an update on the Council's assets in the town centre and the asset management strategy and the financial capital asset strategy. It was reported that currently work was underway to assess the Council owned assets in the town centre and how these related to our wider financial strategies. At the moment work in this area was in development and at a planning phase, and it would not be until later in the year that there would be sufficient information available on which to make some decisions.

It was reported that work would be undertaken to look at all Council owned assets individually, and as a wider overall picture for the authority. Some work had already been undertaken on vacant properties and options. Once there was an overall picture of the state of all assets and the opportunities available for all properties and costs associated, it would be possible to consider the best solution for the authority. This would then be looked at in terms of the wider town centre strategy. It was clarified that the asset management strategy would be looking at all Council owned assets and not just those within the immediate town centre.

Further clarity was sought on the criteria which would be applied in making decisions on the future of such Council assets. It was reported that once there was clarity on the condition of all assets, the opportunities and a complete set of information available on all the assets, the criteria could be established. It was further reported that the broader government agenda on town centres had also developed and any decisions would be undertaken in this different environment.

The Portfolio Holder for Assets and Finance reported that he expected that the review of assets would be completed by December 2019, and according the Committee requested a further update from the Portfolio Holder at that time.

The Committee thanked the Portfolio Holder for his update.

## **59 PROGRESS UPDATE ON TAMWORTH ASSEMBLY ROOMS**

The Report of the Executive Director, Organisation and Assistant Director, Operations and Leisure in respect of the Assembly Rooms project was considered by the Committee.

The Portfolio Holder for Assets and Finance left the meeting.

## **60 WORKING GROUP UPDATES**

### **60.1 Support for Members Working Group**

The Chair tabled a report on the Member Support Working Group which included recommendations from one of the three sub-groups which comprised this Working Group.

It was reported that the member induction sub-group had concluded its work and that it proposed that the following recommendations be made to Cabinet:

1. At signing of the declaration newly elected and returning members will receive an up dated list of officers and details of their responsibilities.
2. At the earliest opportunity post local election existing members will receive an up dated list of officers and details of their responsibilities
3. At signing of the declaration newly elected and returning members will receive "First point" of contact details
4. At the earliest opportunity post local election existing members will receive "First point" of contact details
5. Contact details of officers and information how and who to escalate issues with will be circulated to all members in full at the start of the municipal year.
6. Updates from cabinet members and senior officers highlighting key projects of the year, risks and challenges against their corporate plans will be presented to all members at the earliest opportunity post the Council's AGM
7. Where scrutiny receives reports, papers must be updated with the latest information. Including cabinet papers as appendices.
8. the supply of paper to members be removed from the constitution and printed copies of reports to be administered on a case by case assessment.

It was reported that the remaining two sub-groups; on ICT support to members and Information exchange with members were ongoing.

**RESOLVED** that the following recommendations from Corporate Scrutiny Committee be made to Cabinet:

1. At signing of the declaration newly elected and returning members would receive an up dated list of officers and details of their responsibilities.
2. At the earliest opportunity post local election existing members would receive an up dated list of officers and details of their responsibilities.
3. At signing of the declaration newly elected and returning members would receive "First point" of contact details.
4. At the earliest opportunity post local election existing members would receive "First point" of contact details.
5. Contact details of officers and information how and who to escalate issues with would be circulated to all members in full at the start of the municipal year.
6. Updates from cabinet members and senior officers highlighting key projects of the year, risks and challenges against their corporate plans would be presented to all members at the earliest opportunity post the Council's AGM.
7. Where scrutiny receives reports, papers must be updated with the latest information. Including cabinet papers as appendices.

8. the supply of paper to members be removed from the constitution and printed copies of reports to be administered on a case by case assessment.

*(Moved by Councillor J Oates and seconded by Councillor Dr S Peaple)*

## **60.2 Webcasting Council Meetings Working Group**

The Chair reported that work remained ongoing within this Working Group. It was reported that the working group did not consider that live webcasting would be supported on a financial basis.

## **61 CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PLAN**

The Committee considered the Work Plan and agreed the amended Work Plan as follows:

### **Corporate Scrutiny Work Plan**

<b>Work Plan 2018 - 2019</b>	
<b>DATE</b>	<b>SUBJECT</b>
<b>Quarter 4 - TBC</b>	<b>Quarterly Performance Reports;</b>
<b>13<sup>th</sup> March</b>	<b>Update from Housing Team on items in Perf Report, including:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Impact on lettings policy</b></li> <li>• <b>Discretionary Housing Payments</b></li> <li>• <b>Hardship Grant and Hardship Fund</b></li> <li>• <b>Disabled Facilities Grant position</b></li> </ul>
<b>Ongoing / 13<sup>th</sup> March?</b>	<b>Tenants Consultancy Group – Ongoing Updates after any meeting.</b>
<b>13<sup>th</sup> March</b>	<b>Constitution Review</b>
<b>13<sup>th</sup> March</b>	<b>Live Streaming/Webcasting Council Meetings – Working Group (JO, MS, PS, CC, RF, SP)</b>
<b>13<sup>th</sup> March</b>	<b>Support for Members – Working Group – 2 remaining sub-groups (JO, MS, PS, CC, RF, SP, TJ, SG, BP)</b>
<b>TBC / mid 2019</b>	<b>Garage Sites</b>
<b>June 2019</b>	<b>Festive Ward Grants – review of 2018 scheme</b>
<b>June 2019</b>	<b>Customer Portal – update on progress</b>
<b>June 2019</b>	<b>Town Centre Strategy update</b>
<b>TBC</b>	<b>Gungate Site – Working Group (JO, RF, SG, CC (provisional) and Labour Group to nominate two attendees).</b>
<b>TBC</b>	<b>Isolation – Working Group (TJ, JF and RB from H&amp;W Scrutiny and JO, SP and CC from Corporate Scrutiny)</b>
<b>TBC</b>	<b>Review of senior management restructuring</b>
<b>November 2019</b>	<b>Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy – 12 month update</b>
<b>December 2019</b>	<b>Asset Management Review update (including town centre) – Councillor R Pritchard to be invited</b>
<b>TBC</b>	<b>Corporate investment strategy</b>

<b>Upcoming Corporate Scrutiny Committee Meetings</b>
Wednesday 13 <sup>th</sup> March 2019

---

Chair

DRAFT