



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 25th OCTOBER 2017

PRESENT: Councillor J Oates (Chair), Councillors R Ford, S Goodall, A James, T Madge, S People, P Standen, M Summers and P Thurgood

CABINET Councillor D Cook

The following officers were present: Andrew Barratt (Chief Operating Officer) Ryan Keyte (Senior Legal Officer) and Janine Bryant (Scrutiny and Corporate Support Officer)

12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillor R Kingstone. Councillor S Goodall was nominated as a substitute for Councillor R Kingstone in accordance with rule 4.4.4 of the Constitution.

13 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the previous Corporate Scrutiny Committee held on the 21st June 2017 were approved and signed as a correct record.

(Moved by Councillor A James and seconded by Councillor S People)

14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor S People declared an interest as a Trustee of The Starfish Winter Nightshelter For The Homeless.

Councillor P Standen declared an interest as a Volunteer of The Starfish Winter Nightshelter For The Homeless.

15 2017/18 FORWARD PLAN

RESOLVED: Members examined the Forward Plan 2017/18 and discussed the following items -

- 1 Public Space Protection Orders (Renewal of Dog Control and Designated Public Place Orders)

Councillor S Goodall to forward information relating to this topic as it had been raised at the Infrastructure, Safety and Growth Scrutiny Committee.

- 2 Staffordshire Pilot for 100% Business Rates Retention in 2018/19

The Leader of the Council confirmed that this is a Pilot Scheme and Tamworth has registered an expression of Interest. This matter relates to economic generation and future finance with Cannock Chase District Council being accountants for the scheme. In response to Councillor Peale seeking clarification from the Leader of the Council regarding the proposal to work with Staffordshire LEP, Councillor Cook confirmed Tamworth Borough Council continues to be fully committed to the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP. Councillor Cook agreed with Councillor Peale that the Staffordshire LEP lacks Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP's track record.

- 3 The Council's Approach to Emergency Accommodation

Councillor J Oates has requested the briefing notes from the Portfolio Holder for Housing Services.

- 4 Tamworth Enterprise Centre Budget and Business Plan

A discussion around the success of the Centre and the function being clear that it is for businesses to grow and move on.

Do we have the correct kind of office space available to assist in this happening?

The Chief Operating Officer confirmed that the leases on the units within the Centre are on a flexible basis to ensure that the encouragement is for progression of the business and the offering of business advice.

- 5 Draft Base Budget Forecasts 2018/19 to 2022/23

Committee Members have confirmed that they would like to look at the Draft Housing Revenue Account budget along with this at the meeting in November.

16 WORK PLAN 2017/18

The Leader of the Council, Councillor D Cook and The Chief Operating Officer, Andrew Barratt attended the meeting to provide an update on two items of the work plan –

- Corporate Investment Strategy
- Post Creation of a Company

Corporate Investment Strategy

The strategy is a sustainability strategy enabling the Council to become more commercial 'surviving move to thriving'. Throughout the consultation stage it should enable a Governance structure to be developed not as a political election tool and will involve a cross party concept. The focus is to develop assets held and create regeneration within the area; this is currently being developed by Trowers & Hamlins.

- Redevelopment of areas within the Town
There would be specific criteria outlined which would for example include a specified financial percentage of return; capital growth; demonstrate a reduction of deficient. A full commercial assessment would be completed to ensure the viability of any proposed scheme under the Corporate Investment Strategy.
- Strategic land and property investment
Would identify sites around the Town that are strategic in nature that may be used to develop and fulfil a need for example for second generation offices; can we provide a different sort of housing. This would help to build up the Councils asset holding.
- Property Funds
How to structure investment through a property portfolio. The portfolio would be diverse in nature and spread throughout the country to ensure that any risk is spread and the growth and revenue return levels as of an acceptable level.

Post Creation of a Company

The opportunity for a Local Authority Trading Company is being explored, ideally to be set up by March 2018.

The Local Authority Trading Company would operate independently from Tamworth Borough Council. The Council would be sole shareholder of the Company receiving a dividend. Currently detailed legal support is being obtained

to ensure an informed Business Plan Process is developed for the Trading Company. The Company would be brought to account by the shareholder at and AGM where there would be a clear role for Scrutiny.

Councillor Cook and Andrew Barratt will provide a progress update at a Corporate Scrutiny meeting to be held at a confidential meeting in January 2018.

Thanks were extended to Councillor Cook and Andrew Barratt for attending the meeting.

Tenant Consultative Group was due to meet on a monthly basis with Councillor R Ford and Councillor P Standen being invited to attend. However, both Councillors had heard anything and when chased the group confirmed they would in future invite both Councillors. The three items that were on the Forward Plan under this group would be picked up and feedback provided for the next meeting.

RESOLVED: An Update on the Tenant Consultative Group would become a standard item on the Corporate Scrutiny Agenda.

Proposed by Councillor A James and seconded by Councillor S Peuple.

Working Group Feedback

Tamworth Borough Council Properties – Councillor J Oates advised that due to the change in the Executive management this matter was still to be progressed.

Quarterly Performance Report – the group met on 7th September and have a number of recommendations for development of the Quarterly Performance Report which the Chair has asked for in writing. There will be an additional meeting on the 15th November to examine the report prior to it going to Cabinet where the recommendations will be scrutinised in greater detail.

Local Infrastructure and Connectivity – It has been identified that future projects need to have a clear focus on connectivity and whilst speeds reported are relating to fibre, conventional broadband remains slow. A further meeting of the working party will be scheduled for further work to be completed.

Chair