

Minutes of: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 10 March 2020

Present: Councillor R Caserta (in the Chair)
Councillors T Cummings, J Harris, N Jones, B Mortenson,
M Powell, L Smith, S Smith, Susan Southworth, R Walker
and C Walsh

Also in attendance: Councillor Tariq, Cabinet Member for Children and Families
Councillor Black, Cabinet Member for Corporate Affairs and
HR
Councillor O'Brien – Cabinet Member for Finance and
Housing
Paul Lakin, Director of Economic Regeneration & Capital
Growth
Karen Dolton, Executive Director – Children and Young
People
Sarah Bruce – Assistant Director, Children and Young People
Lisa Kitto – Deputy Chief Finance Officer
Carole Shannon Jarvis – Associate Chief Finance Officer,
Bury CCG

Public Attendance: One member of the public was present at the meeting.

Apologies for Absence: Councillor K Leach

OSC.1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted by Councillor K Leach.

OSC.2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were declared at the meeting.

OSC.3 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No public questions were submitted prior or at the meeting.

OSC.4 MINUTES

It was agreed:

That the Minutes of the last two meetings held on the 30th January 2020 and 11th February 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

OSC.5 BURY AND RADCLIFFE MARKETS UPDATE

Councillor Black, Cabinet Member for Corporate Affairs and HR provided an overview of work done so far and the imminent completion of work being done by Leeds University.

Councillor Harris confirmed that she had recently been appointed to fill the vacancy on the cross party task group looking into this matter.

Members of the committee raised queries about Council support to the markets and the valuable role they play, the recent success of Radcliffe Market being noted as an area of improvement. The importance of not relying on past reputation and improving the offer was stated; also any changes should consider local needs and not be based on a purely academic study.

Paul Lakin confirmed that future offers for the market would be carefully considered and local needs considered. It was noted that there were good occupancy levels at the market, past investment in the food hall was paying dividends, and data was available to demonstrate the benefits from coach trips and other visitors. Therefore, at the present time calls for rent reductions could not be justified without further benchmarking.

However, it was noted that there are periods during the day when there are lulls in footfall, such as after 3pm and work needed to be done to look at initiatives to increase customers during this early evenings.

Members of the committee also referred to the previous budget reports when carry over of underspend of £900k was noted. More detailed figures were asked for at the next meeting.

It was agreed:

A further report with more details on investment and subsequent benefits be presented to the meeting of the 31 March 2020.

A report on Radcliffe Regeneration be presented to the committee on 31 March 2020, as referred to at the January meeting.

That the report be noted.

OSC.6 COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER UPDATE

Councillor Tariq, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People introduced the report looking at the framework for the transfer of buildings.

It was noted that there is a particular distinction from the asset transfer of the libraries to community groups, in that organisations taking over the management of the Children's Centres needed to be able to demonstrate an ability to deliver services.

It was recognised that organisations wishing to take on this responsibility had to be able to provide a structured business case and demonstrate a good quality offer to service users.

Members of the committee raised concerns about the short timetable for this work and asked if any lessons had been learned from last time. The need to due diligence on any decision made was stressed.

Karen Dolton confirmed that we are in the soft market testing stage, so if bids were not received by the deadline or if these were not of a high enough standard, the timescales can be pushed back to help the market to be sufficiently developed. It was also confirmed that the provision of services is similar to that expected at the Sedgley hub which has recently been transferred to the Jewel Foundation. Bids are expected from organisations and schools, particularly those where the buildings are located on or adjacent to school grounds.

It was agreed:

The report be noted and that an update on progress be presented to the September meeting of the committee once recommendations had been to Cabinet.

OSC.7 BURY INTEGRATED COMMISSIONING FUND

Councillor O'Brien, Cabinet Member for Finance and Housing introduced this paper for information on how the CCG and Council are working together. He stressed that while the two budgets have to remain separate, the section 75 powers allow them to work closer together, such as in the case of the Better Care Fund, which is important as decisions made by one organisation can have impact on the other.

Members of the committee raised queries about if the auditors had had any concerns about finances; if there were any risks identified as the report states these are 'negligible'; and of the liabilities each party involved has. A question was also raised as to why other authorities had stipulated guaranteed efficiencies from this way of working, when this did not seem to be the case here.

It was confirmed that the auditors did not have any concerns; that risks were stated as 'negligible' as it is impossible to say that there are none in any transaction; and it was confirmed that while the two organisations are working in partnership they are each legally responsible for the balancing of their finances and publishing their own sets of accounts. It was also stated that steps are in place to work as efficiently as possible, for example the establishment of the Corporate Core has and will bring efficiencies. The joint working has been operational since last October, when the Strategic Commissioning Board was established, however, it is too early to identify the overall impact on savings and efficiencies at this stage.

It was agreed:

That the report be noted.

OSC.8 URGENT BUSINESS

No urgent business was reported.

COUNCILLOR R CASERTA
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 6.00pm and ended at 7.30pm)