

Minutes of: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 5 September 2023

Present: Councillor D Vernon (in the Chair)
Councillors R Bernstein, C Birchmore, N Bayley, N Boroda,
D Green, G Marsden, E Moss, M Rubinstein and S Haroon

Also in attendance: Councillor R Gold (Cabinet Member for Finance and Communities) and Councillor E O'Brien (Leader and Cabinet Member Strategic Growth), Chris Hill, GMP, Kate Waterhouse, Executive Director of Strategy and Transformation, Chris Woodhouse, Strategic Partnerships Manager, Robert Summerfield, Assistant Director of Regeneration Delivery

Public Attendance: No members of the public were present at the meeting.

Apologies for Absence: Councillor A Arif and Councillor T Pilkington

OSC.1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Pilkington and Cllr Arif.

Councillor Haroon attended as a substitute for Cllr Arif.

OSC.2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

OSC.3 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

OSC.4 MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

OSC.5 MINUTES

That the minutes of the meeting held on 04th July 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

OSC.6 COMMUNITY SAFETY UPDATE

Councillor Gold Cabinet Member for Communities and Finance provided a brief overview of the report including recent work of Operation 'revoke' which tackles organised crime in Moorside.

Chief Superintendent Chris Hill updated the Committee on the following key priorities for Greater Manchester Police in Bury:

- Road safety

- Domestic abuse
- Drug dealing
- Serious crime of robbery and vehicle crime

Members were informed that If people are able to tell the police where and when people are offending the Police will target them. Since May, Greater Manchester Police have worked with local communities and Councillors to make seventy seven arrests, one hundred and twenty two stop and searches, execute thirty two warrants and seize thirty eight vehicles. Drugs within communities are a real issue and drugs worth a street value of over one million pounds and over a hundred thousand pound in cash has been taken off the streets. Operation revoke is a good example of working together. Other areas of good practice is Operation AVRO where the Police get all units across the force to come into a specific area; the recent operation resulted in fifty people being arrested and a number of cars seized.

Other area of good practice outlined were:

- Best bar none, where a team come in to the area and look at safety and compliance including measures in place to support safety as well as the purple flag certificate.
- Road safety, the police are increasing the road policing unit with the whole unit being based at Whitefield policing station so will start and finish shifts in bury.
- Problem solving policing – A targeted approach has taken place in Kay Gardens

Chief Superintendent Chris Hill also stated he will be going on a walk for one hour every Monday night for the next three months with Councillors so if you would like to participate to contact him.

Members were then invited to ask questions, Councillor Bernstein asked how can we push partnership further to deliver more and what aspirations do we have. In response Councillor Gold advised a 'Safer Streets' bid has been submitted and will be a future aspiration for the Borough. There is also a new serious violence scheme and will be discussed. In addition the centralisation of STH back into the Council will align anti-social behaviour issues. Chief Superintendent Chris Hill advised that quality and standards of behaviour are continually monitored and there is a GMP scrutiny and governance.

Councillor Birchmore asked what is being done to help the elderly population feel safer in the evenings. In response members were informed that work is being done to improve public perception of the police through quick response times, quality assurance checks and connecting people with community assets to support them and maintaining safe spaces.

Councillor Moss questioned what support is available for children under the age of five who are recognised as victims of domestic violence. Members were informed that the family safeguarding model and early years are also present in the family's life and it is picked up.

Councillor Vernon sought assurance of the involvement of senior officers in the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and the reason of a general review of the process. Members were informed that the group is Chaired by GMP Detective Sargent of Inspector and the review is to align to a Greater Manchester process with a GMCA review to be completed in November 2023.

Discussions took place regarding anti-social behaviour incidents and the partnership working between the Council, Sixtown Housing and Greater Manchester Police. Members were informed that a Council Officer is based at the police station to encourage collaborative working along with CCTV being utilised jointly.

In conclusion the Chair summarised that this update has now been received by the Committee three times and its reassuring to see the plan and development of work

It was agreed:

1. To thank Kate Waterhouse, Executive Director of Strategy and Transformation, Chris Woodhouse, Strategic Partnerships Manager, Chief Superintendent Chris Hill and Councillor Gold, Cabinet Member for Communities and Finance for their hard work and the update.

OSC.7 PRESTWICH REGENERATION

Councillor Birchmore left the meeting at 20:25.

Councillor O'Brien, Leader of the Council provided an update on Prestwich Regeneration programme.

Cllr Moss asked several questions regarding the car parking proposed within the Prestwich regeneration plan. In response members were informed that pre-planning advice is being sourced from the team and the level of parking will be subject to discussions with stakeholders. The suggestion of allocation of EV Charging points will be demand led. In addition it members were informed around 30% of the parking will be earmarked for residents.

Members had further discussions regarding the proposed car parking, its location and height. In conclusion members were informed the proposed parking is the most appropriate and efficient place to hold the parking required for the area when considering proximity to residential land, height and total spaces. Members also discussed the opportunity to provide residents with permits for the car park to avoid under utilisation in evenings and none-busy times.

Further discussions took place regarding funding and the communication plan for the stages of each development phase. Members requested that when the BGI Business Plan with all strategies is produced it should be circulated to the Committee.

It was agreed:

1. Councillor Vernon thanked the leader and Robert Summerfield for the report and update.

OSC.8 WHITEFIELD REGENERATION

Councillor O'Brien, Leader provided the Committee with a brief update on Whitefield Regeneration. In summary the Committee were informed that Whitefield has been put forward for the taskforce and will be followed up with the place making programme, the aim of this is to provide practical solutions to support the high street.

Discussions took place regarding land on the former Whitefield Town Hall site. In conclusion members were informed that land is difficult to influence as it is not Council owned.

Members discussed the issue on Whitefield not having much land that is Council owned and therefore how the Council can maximise the park land.

It was agreed:

1. The Leader be thanked for his update.
2. A further update to be brought to the committee as things progress.

OSC.9 MILLGATE CENTRE AND ESTATE JOINT VENTURE

Councillor O'Brien, Leader gave the Committee an overview of the current position of the Mill Gate Centre in Bury. The Leader advised there is a big push to acquire the Mill Gate in partnership with Bruntwood. Members were informed of the assets positives and the risks involved.

Key dates highlighted to the Committee are:

- public consultation October 2023 Public / Stakeholder Consultation period (6 weeks) – statutory timescale. November / December 2023
- Request for endorsement of final SRF- following stakeholder feedback/review and amendments including further design development. March 2024

Members were informed that footfall within the Mill Gate continues to outperform regional and national comparatives and the year to date is within 0.5% of pre-covid levels. This compares to a national average of minus 15%.

It was acknowledged there is more work to take place and a further update should be brought back in the next municipal year.

OSC.10 GREATER MANCHESTER DEVOLUTION AND TRAILBLAZER DECISION

Councillor O'Brien, Leader provided an overview of the proposals for a further tranche of devolution to Greater Manchester which was published by Government on March 15th 2023.

The Leader advised that a lot has been negotiated and a key issue will be negotiating with Government departments and getting officials to release control over programmes in exchange for delivering local innovation and flexibility which can be proven to deliver better value for money for the taxpayer.

Key areas of the current decision are:

- 1 Single settlement
- 2 Skills devolution
- 3 Devo around brownfield housing

Councillor Bernstein stated the work is an exciting opportunity but questioned if the Council will be able to shape and see key issues for the people of bury. In response the Leader advised we can put in place processes for how work is developed and managed.

Councillor Boroda stated that Devolution has had a positive impact as people are living around a year longer however the pandemic has had a negative impact.

Councillor Vernon advised the report states funding for large scale economic development provided by DLUCH has at times remained unspent or returned. Can examples of this be given and how would this have been better dealt with if devolved. In response the Leader advised we have secured retention of extra funding for bus rates and further funding can be made available last minute under specific restraints.

OSC.11 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

COUNCILLOR D VERNON
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 7.07 pm and ended at 10.15 pm)