

Minutes of: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 26 January 2021

Present: Councillor R Caserta (in the Chair)
Councillors T Cummings, R Gold, J Harris, K Leach, B
Mortenson, M Powell, S Smith, S Southworth, D Vernon,
R Walker, C Walsh

Also in Attendance: Councillor O'Brien – Leader of the Council and Cabinet
Member for Finance and Growth
Councillor Rafiq – Cabinet Member for Corporate Affairs and
HR
Councillor D Jones – Cabinet Member for Communities and
Emergency Planning
Lynne Ridsdale, Executive Director – Corporate Core &
Deputy Chief Executive
Lisa Kitto - Deputy Chief Finance Officer
Paul Lakin, Director of Economic Regeneration & Capital
Growth

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

Apologies for Absence:

OSC.01 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors D Jones and D Vernon declared personal interests in item 9, GM Police Representative Update, as retired Police Officers with Greater Manchester Police.

OSC.02 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

A question had been submitted in advance of the meeting by Mr Smith Lawrence relating to the Regeneration Update.

The Leader of the Council responded that there were no plans to slow the bringing forward of brownfield sites for development and reported on progress in respect of development plans in the borough. Reference was made to the Accelerated Land sales report submitted to Cabinet in November 2020.

In response to a supplementary question relating to the building of social housing on Bury MBC land, the Leader highlighted that the issues raised are addressed through the Council's Housing Strategy. Reference was made to previous and existing partnership and joint venture projects. An undertaking was given that as any future plans come forward, these plans will be fully discussed at Cabinet.

OSC.03 MINUTES

It was agreed:

That the minutes of the last meeting, held on 10 December 2020, be approved as a correct record.

OSC.04 MATTERS ARISING

In respect of Minute 06 of the last meeting, an update was provided on the Bellwin Scheme. The Leader reported that approval was still awaited from Government. With regard to the issue of design and discovery analysis it was reported that this work is underway through an agent. An undertaking was given to provide an update when a response is received.

In respect of Minute 09 of the last meeting, Agile working, Councillor Walker requested a timeline with regard to the promised further consideration by the Committee.

OSC.05 BURY 2030 UPDATE

Councillor Rafiq, Cabinet Member for Corporate Affairs and HR, provided an update on the progress of the development of the Bury 2030 Strategy, stressing the important role for all residents and Elected Members. The Council has led the development of the strategy with the consultation due to be completed at the end of January.

The Committee received a presentation setting out an update on Bury 2030 which included further context since the start of the consultation period relating to the current economic situation, the government's levelling up agenda; GMSF developments; and NHS re-organisation consultations. The presentation provided a summary of consultation feedback and the proposed final approach as a result of the responses received to date. It was reported that the Strategy would be finalised in early February 2021 with approval sought through the formal decision-making structures of the Council and partners. Outcome measures will be determined and look to be enabled through the Council, its partners and local Councillors.

Questions and comments were invited from Members of the Committee and the following issues were raised:

- With regard to the role of ward Councillors it was explained that the role will be re-designed going forward, recognising that it cannot be a one size fits all process and must be designed with Members. It was acknowledged that a defined role had not been able to be fully developed due to the emergency response.
- In response to questions concerning the future beyond the GMSF, the Leader explained that any future plans of GM Council's, excluding Stockport, would have to go through formal decision-making procedures.
- With regard to proposed changes in respect of Clinical Commissioning

Groups, the Leader explained that proposals were part of a national NHS re-organisation.

- In response to questions around the delivery of the strategy it was reported that there would be a detailed programme plan with timeline to allow for outcomes to be monitored. Contributions to the delivery of Bury 2030 will also be reflected in partner organisations strategies.
- Councillor Rafiq confirmed that issues, structures and staffing for the community hubs will be examined in due course.
- With regard to outcome measures, the Deputy Chief Executive referred to the evaluation measures set out in the report previously presented to Cabinet.
- In response to a question concerning the Uplands development, it was confirmed that the site was listed as a priority based on information provided by NHS property services.

It was agreed:

That the update be noted.

OSC.06 CORPORATE PLAN – UPDATE

The Committee received a report and presentation providing an update in respect of the Corporate Plan 2020-22. The Plan sets out key themes, principles and deliverables to support the Borough as it recovers from the local impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and looks to build a brighter future for residents, communities and businesses. The foundations from which new relationships, responsibilities and outcomes will emerge to support delivery of the Bury 2030 Strategy were outlined within the plan.

Questions and comments were invited from Members of the Committee and the following issues were raised:

- With regard to the issue of targets it was explained that a series of delivery plans, targets and outcomes, through the lens of Bury 2030, were in place along with developing key performance indicators. An undertaking was given to bring these to a future meeting.
- Councillor Susan Southworth highlighted the issue of long term Covid and suggested this would require a flexible approach to working patterns and practices going forward. The Chair suggested this matter be picked up as part of a planned update on the issue of agile working.
- With regard to the issue of District Parking Charges, the Leader explained that these are charges levied within other townships. It was explained that the idea had been looked at from a carbon neutral perspective but will not be pursued.

- The Chair suggested it would be useful to breakdown calls received by type as a means of managing staff resource to meet demands. Furthermore, the Chair raised the issue of the new Office 365 system as a means of monitoring staff activity.

It was agreed:

1. The report be noted.
2. That the Committee be kept regularly appraised in relation to the development of Agile Working, with updates to include the issues raised as part of the discussion set out above.

OSC.07 COVID RELATED GRANTS UPDATE

The Committee received a report from the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Growth setting out the position in relation to grants received and how they have been utilised. It was reported that the position on grants is fast changing with new announcements being made in response to different stages of the pandemic.

In response to questions from the Chair, the Leader clarified that whilst government funding was welcome, it was not sufficient to fill the gap to meet all funding pressures, including from income losses where only 75% of some fees, charges and collection funds could be re-imbursed.

During discussion of this item, the Leader explained how funding from the different schemes set out in the report had been applied to the provision of free school meals.

It was agreed:

The report be noted.

OSC.08 GREATER MANCHESTER POLICE REPRESENTATIVE UPDATE

Councillor David Jones attended the meeting in his capacity as the Council's representative on the Greater Manchester Police, Crime, Fire and Rescue Panel. Councillor Jones provided the Committee with a verbal update following a recent inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Policing which had highlighted serious failings around crime recording and the protection of vulnerable people.

Councillor Jones outlined the role of the Police, Crime, Fire and Rescue Panel in relation to scrutinising Greater Manchester Police and gave an overview in respect of the briefings they had received on the issue. An improvement plan had been drawn up which includes a new complaints line and improvements to the crime recording unit. It was reported that a further meeting of the Panel was scheduled for 29 January.

During discussion of this item, Members raised concerns about the level of oversight and scrutiny of the performance of Greater Manchester Police.

It was agreed:

The report be noted.

OSC.09 REGENERATION UPDATE

The Leader of the Council gave a presentation to the committee providing an overview of regeneration and growth aspects within the borough. The presentation set out details of the delivery of specific regeneration schemes within townships, including an update on the work across Greater Manchester and the One Public Estate programme.

It was agreed:

That the update be noted.

COUNCILLOR R CASERTA
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 6.30pm and ended at 9.15pm)