

PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Monday 3rd July 2023

PRESENT – Councillor Suleman Khonat (in the Chair) Councillors Sidat, Taylor, Khan S, Khan Z, Brookfield, Marrow and Russell.

ALSO PRESENT – Executive Member for Growth and Development – Quesir Mahmood, Officers – Martin Kelly, Martin Eden, Simon Ross and Phil Llewellyn.

RESOLUTIONS

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Councillors Jim Smith and Katrina Fielding.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 13th March 2023

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13th March 2023 were submitted for approval.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting held on 13th March 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to the amendment of the following – Brian Taylor to be listed as Chair, not Vice Chair, and Councillors Sidat and Brookfield to be included as present at the meeting.

3. Declarations of interest

No Declarations of interest were made by Members of the Committee.

4. Work Programme 2023/24

The Committee received a presentation from Cllr Quesir Mahmood and Martin Kelly on the main priorities and portfolio objectives for Growth & Development, which were highlighted as:

- Delivery of Growth & Infrastructure Programmes and Projects
- Strategy Development & Partnerships
- Development/Delivery of Councils Asset Review/Strategic Asset Management Plan
- Climate Change
- Place Marketing
- Highways
- Cross Service Opportunities
- Combined County Authority & Devolution Opportunities.

Members of the Committee made a number of comments relating to the presentation, in particular in relation to the importance bus services, and

residents feedback, with Councillor Mahmood advising of ongoing discussions relating to the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and also innovative ticketing, where one ticket would be accepted for a journey using different operators.

Councillor Mark Russell indicated that he felt recommendations relating to the 2019 West Blackburn Transport Assessment had not been implemented, and Martin Kelly agreed to discuss this further with Cllr Russell outside of the meeting.

The condition of the Borough's roads was discussed, and the potential for utilising a greater share of Government funding in the event of a Combined County Authority was highlighted.

In terms of the Town Centre Masterplan, progress was slow as there were delays at Government level, but the former Thwaites site would be prioritised, and the Skills Campus needed a plan and funding.

HMOs and the negative perception of homeless people were also discussed, and in particular, issues with landlords from outside the Borough were highlighted, and where there were problems, there was a need for extra Licensing powers and use of Article 4 Directions across the Borough.

Martin Eden then delivered a presentation on on the main priorities and portfolio objectives for Environment & Operations, which were highlighted as:

- Plant 10,000 trees
- Implement a tree strategy for the Borough
- Purchase electric & alternative fuel vehicles and develop fleet strategy for alternative fuels
- Continue to work with residents to increase recycling and to reduce food waste.
- Continue to increase volunteering opportunities for residents of the Borough.
- Undertake regulation and enforcement within the top 25 most fly-tipped areas of the Borough.
- Consult on new Selective Licensing Area, and designate if appropriate.

Members then discussed the presentation, in particular, highlighting issues relating to fly tipping and dog fouling, with Martin Eden advising of 25 cameras that moved around the Borough to catch fly tippers, and the forthcoming recruitment of a dog enforcement officer. It was suggested that the Council could advise residents of reputable waste disposers who could collect bulky waste, rather than people using unlicensed operators who may then fly tip.

Members also discussed issues with old trees that were not dying, and also discussed plans for collecting food waste, which under the Environment Act, Councils would be responsible for from 2025.

The Chair thanked Cllr Mahmood and Martin Kelly and Martin Eden, who then left the meeting.

The Committee discussed its Work Programme for 2023/24, and agreed that one key issue would be focussed on each meeting.

Cllr Mark Russell stated that as previously agreed, a report on Infrastructure should have been submitted to this meeting. The Chair advised that the first meeting of each cycle focussed on Portfolio priorities, and that was the key focus today. Following discussion, it was agreed that at the next meeting on 14th August, a report on Highways Infrastructure be submitted, with particular focus on the roads themselves, ie. road condition/pot-holes, traffic lights etc.

The second item, for the following meeting, would be Environmental Crime, in particular fly-tipping and dog fouling.

The third work programme item, to be discussed at the last meeting of 23/24, would be selected at the meeting on 14th August 2023.

Members agreed that rather than presentations, reports should be submitted with the agenda, so they could properly consider these ahead of meetings.

RESOLVED – That Work Programme for 2023/24 be agreed.

Signed:

Date:

Chair of the meeting
at which the minutes were confirmed