

**OVERVIEW SCRUTINY GROUP  
9TH APRIL 2018**

PRESENT: The Chair (Councillor Bebbington)  
Councillors Bradshaw, Capleton, Gerrard, Jones, Seaton and  
Sutherland

Chief Executive  
Head of Finance and Property Services  
Head of Neighbourhood Services  
Head of Planning and Regeneration  
Neighbourhoods and Partnerships Manager  
Team Leader Regeneration and Economic Development  
Democratic Services Officer (NA)

APOLOGIES: Councillor Taylor

The Chair stated that the meeting would be recorded and the sound recording subsequently made available via the Council's website. She also advised that, under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, other people may film, record, tweet or blog from this meeting, and the use of any such images or sound recordings was not under the Council's control.

94. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Group held on 12th March 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed.

95. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY AND PERSONAL INTERESTS

No disclosures were made.

96. DECLARATIONS OF THE PARTY WHIP

No declarations were made.

97. QUESTIONS UNDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PROCEDURES 11.16

No questions had been submitted.

98. PLANNING AND REGENERATION SERVICE RESTRUCTURE

A report of the Head of Planning and Regeneration was considered seeking approval for the revised service restructure (item 06A on the agenda filed with these minutes).

In considering the report it was noted the Section 151 Officer had commented that in their opinion the risk assessment understated the financial risk associated with the report. The funding for the restructure was based on a predicated

additional fee income to cover the costs but if there was a shortfall in the income it would lead to a budgetary overspend. This could lead to a 'major' impact to the Council. The Head of Planning and Regeneration explained that the level of fee income previously had been and therefore provided some reassurance to the risk identified in the Section 151 Officer's comments.

The Head of Planning and Regeneration then gave the following responses to issues raised:

- (i) It was confirmed for the Group that there would be four new posts created which could be split between more staff.
- (ii) The report explained the service issues including those from the employment market. Job profiles had been re-written to make the roles appealing to applicants and there were more career opportunities for junior roles to increase retention in the service. It was anticipated that this would reduce the reliance on agency workers, although there would always be a need for specialist roles which may be filled by agency workers on a temporary basis.
- (iii) Within the service existing roles had been regraded and staff had the option to move to alternative roles to retain them. This offered them more opportunities and responsibility.
- (iv) There was an option to contract out some elements of work such as planning applications but there was some caution to doing this as there could be a loss of quality to the work completed and other processes such as Councillor "Call in". It was expected that the revised structure would be able to deal with the current level of activity but would be regularly reviewed.
- (v) The staff affected had been consulted as well as the workplace unions and the general consensus was positive.

**RESOLVED** that the Cabinet be informed that the Group supports the recommendations as set out in the report of the Head of Planning and Regeneration.

#### Reason

Having considered the report and asked questions of the Head of Planning and Regeneration on the matter, the Group concluded that it would be appropriate for the Cabinet to approve the recommendations set out in the report.

#### 99. LOUGHBOROUGH TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN

A report of the Head of Planning and Regeneration was considered seeking approval for the refreshed master plan for Loughborough town centre (item 06B on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Head of Planning and Regeneration and the Team Leader for Regeneration and Economic Development attended the meeting to assist with consideration of the item and gave the following responses to issues raised:

- (i) The masterplan expected that there would be ongoing commercial investment from the private sector and public investment to create partnership working.
- (ii) Although the masterplan did not reflect all the consultation responses from the public in most cases the weight of public opinion had been taken into account. For example concerns over the lack of parking had influenced how much development was proposed. Some responses referred to matters outside the scope of the masterplan.
- (iii) The masterplan was described as a strategic document that explained the vision for the area. The details such as cycling, car parking and future use of Southfields offices would be included in the implementation plan.

**RESOLVED** that the Cabinet be informed that the Group supports the recommendations as set out in the report of the Head of Planning and Regeneration. The Group expressed the view that more detailed matters should progress as quickly as possible and would like the Cabinet to ensure that the issues are addressed and that members are consulted on further plans.

#### Reason

Having considered the report and asked questions of the Head of Planning and Regeneration and the Team Leader for Regeneration and Economic Development on the matter, the Group concluded that it would be appropriate for the Cabinet to approve the recommendations set out in the report.

#### 100. ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2018/19 – 2022/23

A report of the Head of Finance and Property Services was considered setting out the new Asset Management Strategy (item 06C on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Head of Finance and Property Services attended the meeting to assist with consideration of the item and gave the following responses to issues raised:

- (i) There were some typographical errors listed in the report which were acknowledged and would be corrected.
- (ii) The meaning and purpose of operational and investment assets was defined for the Group with the operational assets being ones used currently by the Council and the investment assets being those from which a financial return was expected.
- (iii) The surplus assets were being reviewed and no decisions had yet been made as to their future.

- (iv) The Council had adopted a more commercial approach to dealing with assets and commercialisation would form part of the investment strategy. The decision on how commercialised the Council would become would be a matter for Cabinet and their view on direction.
- (v) The Council had already approved its Housing Asset Management Strategy and there were management processes in place to ensure alignment between both strategies.

**RESOLVED** that the Cabinet be informed that the Group supports the recommendations as set out in the report of the Head of Finance and Property Services.

#### Reason

Having considered the report and asked questions of the Head of Finance and Property Services on the matter, the Group concluded that it would be appropriate for the Cabinet to approve the recommendations set out in the report.

#### 101. MEMBER GRANTS POT SCHEME

A report of the Head of Neighbourhood Services was considered on the establishment of a Member Grants pot scheme in Charnwood (item 06D on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Head of Neighbourhood Services and the Neighbourhoods and Partnerships Manager attended the meeting to assist with consideration of the item and gave the following responses to issues raised:

- (i) Similar schemes had already been adopted by other local authorities and were reported anecdotally as working well, particularly where the arrangements were simple.
- (ii) The Group was informed that it was one of the leader's priorities to increase empowerment for members to enable them to do more for their ward residents.
- (iii) The Group was advised that members would be fully informed on the criteria guidelines for operating the scheme to ensure that they were confident to advise prospective applicants.
- (iv) The proposed scheme would operate with the same guidelines as the current grants scheme. Any money allocated would need to be spent within 12 months and could be re-allocated if it became available again.
- (v) It was considered that the scheme would work well for smaller projects that needed less money than was available through the current grants

scheme and some of the Group felt that it would be beneficial for members to be able to do more for their residents.

**RESOLVED** that the Cabinet be informed that the Group supports the recommendations as set out in the report of the Head of Neighbourhood Services.

#### Reason

Having considered the report and asked questions of the Head of Neighbourhood Services and the Neighbourhoods and Partnerships Manager on the matter, the Group concluded that it would be appropriate for the Cabinet to approve the recommendations set out in the report.

### 102. OVERVIEW SCRUTINY GROUP PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY – CABINET RESPONSE

A report of the Cabinet was considered setting out its responses to the recommendations of the Group on pre-decision scrutiny items (item 7 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The acting Chair noted his concern that the strength of the Group's feelings and comments about the proposed Crowdfunding scheme had not been fully recorded in the minutes. He was advised that the Chair of the Group did make the Group's feelings clear when attending Cabinet meetings and reporting their recommendations.

**RESOLVED** that the Cabinet's responses to the Group's recommendations be noted.

#### Reason

The Group was satisfied that it added value where appropriate and welcomed the Cabinet's consideration of the Group's views and recommendations as part of its decision making process.

### 103. WORK PROGRAMME

A report of the Head of Strategic Support was considered, to enable the Group to consider its work programme and forthcoming Key Decisions and decisions to be taken in private by the Cabinet in order to schedule items for pre-decision scrutiny and to provide an opportunity for members of the Group to raise suggestions on issues for scrutiny (in addition to pre-decision scrutiny) which fell within the Group's remit, for scheduling by Scrutiny Management Board (item 8 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Group considered the report (and further information on the forthcoming Key Decisions and decisions to be taken in private by the Cabinet provided by the Chief Executive at this meeting) and agreed to schedule items for pre-decision

scrutiny prior to the next Cabinet meeting, but that the following pre-decision scrutiny items should be added to its work programme at this stage:

- Corporate Enforcement Policy – May 2018
- Planning Enforcement Policy – May 2018
- Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy – May 2018
- Housing Acquisition Policy – May 2018

**RESOLVED** that the Group's current work programme be noted and updated following this meeting, in accordance with the decisions taken during consideration of this item and at this meeting and any items of pre-decision scrutiny that require changing due to their reprogramming by the Cabinet.

### Reason

To ensure effective and timely scrutiny, either to provide Cabinet with advice prior to it taking a decision or to ensure that the Council and external public service providers and partners were operating effectively for the benefit of the Borough.

### NOTES:

1. No reference may be made to these minutes at the Council meeting on 30th April 2018 unless notice to that effect is given to the Democratic Services Manager by five members of the Council by noon on the fifth working day following publication of the minutes.
2. These minutes are subject to confirmation as a correct record at the next meeting of the Group.