

## **COMMUNITIES, REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES OF MEETING Thursday, 20<sup>th</sup> June 2019**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Meredith (in the Chair); Councillors: Besford, Hartley (substituting for Councillor Beswick), West, Winkler and Zaheer

**OFFICERS:** D. Bowler (Assistant Director – Place), S. Ayres, H. Chicot (Economy Directorate) and P. Thompson (Resources Directorate)

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Councillor Blundell (Cabinet Member – Regeneration, Business, Skills and Employment Portfolio) and D. Cooke (Rochdale development Agency)

#### **APOLOGIES**

1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Beswick, Angela Smith and Peter Williams.

#### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

2 There were no declarations of interests.

#### **MINUTES**

3 Resolved:  
That the minutes of the meeting of the Communities, Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, held 24<sup>th</sup> January 2019, be approved as a correct record.

#### **POST OFFICES**

4 The Committee received notes of a meeting that Members had held with representatives of the Post Office, on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2019, regarding the future operation of Heywood and Middleton Post Offices, further to the Notice of Motion considered and approved by the Council, in this regard, at its meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

Resolved:

That the notes of the meeting, held 6<sup>th</sup> June 2019 be noted.

#### **LOCAL WELFARE PROVISION - YEAR END REPORT**

5 The Committee scrutinised a report of the Director of Neighbourhoods report which detailed the applications received, successful awards and the annual spend of the Discretionary Crisis Fund. The report also detailed access to food banks in the Borough and reports on the performance and successes of the community projects funded by the local welfare provision budget

The Discretionary Crisis Fund received 1,448 applications in 2018/19; 49% of these were made via the telephone, with the remainder being submitted online. 65% of applications were successful and 29% were refused. 83 of the

applications were withdrawn or cancelled by applicants, or were pending a decision at the year-end.

In presenting the report the Committee was advised that there were no alternatives were considered in relation to the provision of the managed service. However due to an increase in both the cost of this provision and the items being awarded via the scheme, it was suggested that the Committee be consulted on a number of future options. Analysis of the new cost regime, against spend on awards over past few years, would mean on average that it would cost the Council approximately £47,000 - £50,000 more per annum to continue provision at the current level; albeit dependant on demand. Five options were therefore presented to the Committee:

- a. Option 1 – to continue with current provision levels
- b. Option 2 – to remove the option for applicants to be awarded cutlery/crockery and pans when resettling (237 households benefitted from this award in 2018/19)
- c. Option 3 – to remove the option for applicants with children to be awarded carpets when resettling (139 households benefitted from this award in 2018/19)
- d. Option 4 – to cease providing emergency help with household energy (709 households benefitted from this award in 2018/19)
- e. Option 5 – to limit funding to community projects grant funded via the Innovation Fund

The determination of the above options, for the future operation of the scheme was a function that had been delegated to the Cabinet Member for Planning, Development and Housing to determine.

Resolved:

1. That the annual report on the operation, during 2018/19, of the Discretionary Crisis Fund be noted and welcomed.
2. The Cabinet Member for Planning, Development and Housing be advised that his Committee, further to paragraph 4.33 of the submitted report, recommends that Option 1 (to continue with the current provision levels) be approved.

## **INTEGRATED PLACE WORK**

6 Further to the Committee's meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2018, members received a presentation, from the Director of Neighbourhoods (Integrated Place Project Lead Officer), which updated them on the Integrated Place Work project. The Integrated Place project involved a group of workers from different public services and third sector organisations who worked together in a particular area. The team was led by Rochdale Borough Council. The team includes a number of organisations (such as RBH, Police and the Fire and Rescue Service).

The team worked in a particular area for a period of time to support people who may need lots of different services at the same time. The idea was that, instead of having to access these services separately, it made more sense for all organisations to work together to help the person move on. An example

was a person that may need help with housing, health and relationships all at the same time. This could of course be confusing so the team would help to put those services in an order that made sense. They would also help the person to be more confident in asking for help or learning to do something.

The presentation generated a discussion at the meeting and numerous questions from Members. The Committee noted that projects had taken place in the Balderstone and Kirkholt and Spotland and Falinge Wards, which had proven to be highly successful. The project was due to begin operations on a Township level which would mean that it will be able to spread the work to other parts of the Borough in due course. In this regard it was noted that a project was soon to commence in the Darnhill area of Heywood Ward and a further project was to be started, at a date yet to be determined, in the Middleton Township. It was suggested that a follow up presentation/report be brought back to the Committee in due course to report on progress.

Decision:

1. That the presentation be noted and welcomed,
2. That the Integrated Place Project Lead Officer be invited to attend a future meeting of the Committee, to report on progress in relation to the Integrated Place Work Project, particularly after projects have commenced in Heywood and Middleton.

#### **ECONOMY DIRECTORATE PLANS 2018-19: QUARTER 4 PERFORMANCE UPDATE**

7 The Committee scrutinised the progress at the end of Quarter 4 (1st January – 31st March 2019) towards achievement of the targets contained in the Economy Directorate Plan 2018-19.

In accordance with the Council's performance management framework, progress toward targets contained within Directorate Plans are to be reported to relevant Overview & Scrutiny Committees at the end of each quarter.

66.67% (6) of the actions included in the Directorate Plan 2018-19 were still ongoing. One further action had passed the action deadline date and was yet to be completed.

The Portfolio Holder (Regeneration, Business, Skills and Employment) presented the report and updated the Committee on regeneration projects that were ongoing or in preparation across the Borough. The Portfolio Holder reported that he had recently held 'walk about' sessions in Heywood and Middleton and that information on these would be presented to the appropriate Township Committee in due course.

Resolved:

That the Quarter 4 (1st January – 31st March 2019) progress towards achievement of the targets contained in the Economy Directorate Plan 2018-19 be noted.

## **NEIGHBOURHOODS DIRECTORATE PLAN 2018-19: QUARTER 4 PERFORMANCE UPDATE**

8 The Committee scrutinised the progress at the end of Quarter 4 (1st January – 31st March 2019) towards achievement of the targets contained in the Neighbourhoods Directorate Plan 2018-19.

In accordance with the Council's performance management framework, progress toward targets contained within Directorate Plans are to be reported to relevant Overview & Scrutiny Committees at the end of each quarter.

55.6% (10) of the actions included in the Directorate Plan 2018-19 were still ongoing. A further 38.9% (7) of the actions had passed their due date and were not fully complete.

The Committee was updated on the development of the Junction 19(M62) link road, which was a major infrastructure project that would bring many new jobs to the Borough. In this regard a planning application was due to be presented to the Council's Planning and Licensing Committee in the autumn of 2019.

Resolved:

That the Quarter 4 (1st January – 31st March 2018) progress towards achievement of the targets contained in the Neighbourhoods Directorate Plan 2018-19 be noted.

## **COMMUNITIES, REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20**

9 The Committee considered a Work Programme for the ensuing Municipal Year. In considering topics and issues for future meetings it was suggested that Rochdale Boroughwide Housing be invited to the next scheduled meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2019 to discuss their Lettings Policy, amongst other housing issues that may be of concern to Committee Members); that representatives of Greater Manchester Police/Rochdale Safer Communities Partnership be invited to the Committee's meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> November to discuss anti-social behaviour, the progress of Public Space Protection Orders and other matters appertaining to policing in the Borough and that that meeting of the Committee receive a report/presentation regarding the arrival of Dippy the Dinosaur, who is due to arrive in Rochdale, for a four month stay in February 2020. Also it was requested that at the meeting, scheduled to be held on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2020, a report/presentation detailing the progress and current situation of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework be submitted.

The Chair suggested that the Committee establish an 'Energy Study group' to examine, amongst other things the possibility of the establishment of an energy company for Greater Manchester; to examine the current provision of renewable energy supplies for domestic and commercial customers across the Greater Manchester footprint; to assess the statutory basis on the powers available for local authorities to intervene; to determine if the current arrangements that apply (in terms of energy provision) are fit for purpose; to assess if there is scope for improvements to that provision via the provision of

cheaper and renewable sources of power; to recommend appropriate remedial action (including the establishment of a local authority run energy company if necessary); and to give consideration to the establishment of a local authority controlled energy companies.

Decision:

1. That the Committee's Work Programme 2019/20, incorporating the additions detailed above be approved;
2. The Committee establish an Energy Study Group to examine the current provision of renewable energy supplies for domestic and commercial customers across the Borough and the wider Greater Manchester footprint.