

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

15 JUNE 2022

PRESENT:

Councillors M Wilcox (Chair), Norman (Vice-Chair), Cross, Eagland, Evans, Ho, A Little, Robertson, Mrs Tranter and A Yeates

(In accordance with Council Procedure Rule No.17 Councillors Cox, Eadie, Pullen and Strachan attended the meeting).

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Grange, Leytham and Silvester-Hall. A tribute and thanks was made to Councillor Leytham for his 12 months service as previous Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interests.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record.

4 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee received the Terms of Reference to remind all members of the purpose of this committee and to ensure everyone understood the remit. The only comment was to ensure the Task Group notes reported back to this Overview & Scrutiny Committee who would then discuss/debate and report back as a group whether to take those actions forward.

5 HEALTH MATTERS

The Chair explained that he had attended the first Staffordshire County Council's Health & Care Overview and Scrutiny committee meeting in June and as a number of concerns had been received around the maternity facilities at The Samuel Johnson Hospital in Lichfield not being used whilst certain parts of the facilities at Burton Hospital were under redevelopment, he had raised this as an issue for the Lichfield residents. As a result, the item is back on the agenda for the August meeting for a full report to be provided as to what are the issues and what is the likelihood of it coming back in to use. Concerns had been expressed that it is only a midwife-led unit but it was agreed that as long as there were straight forward births this facility was valuable – it would mean less distance to have to travel whilst in labour and the facility was purpose built with two birthing pools and had not been used to the extent it should have been. "Transformation" was queried and the chair agreed to find out more and report back.

Also, in respect of the George Bryan Centre the word "transformation" was used and members were concerned about the lack of mental health provisions in this area. It was noted that the meeting had been rescheduled from 30 May again and members wanted their concerns about

the lack of mental health provisions noted; especially in schools. CAMS were in schools but not as effective as it should be and a lot of children particularly since the pandemic were suffering and this issue had to be revisited. It was agreed that there was a drive at the moment for education providers to increase the amount of mental health first aiders but it had been noted that there were a lot of mental health first aid courses being offered which did not meet the appropriate training gold star and this was a fear. The chair agreed to query why this item had not been rescheduled.

The Work programme 2022/23 was considered and it was noted that the role of the community hospitals was under consideration for 2021/22, what transformation is happening with regards to these, are they going to be looking at community hubs, can further information be attained? The Women's Health Strategy was also noted for 2022/23 and it was asked if this would include the menopausal issues which needed to be looked at very carefully now.

RESOLVED:- That the information given be noted.

6 CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE SIX MONTH REVIEW

The Committee received a verbal report on the corporate peer challenge six month review where a stocktake had taken place following the Corporate Peer Challenge which took place in November 2021. Assessments and interviews had taken place and they had looked at how we had progressed the plan and an Action Plan summary with tracking was discussed. In summary, the report was very complimentary and comforting with only a couple of actions to work on throughout the rest of the year. The Leadership had been complimented having applied a programme management approach and the set-up of the BABC programme.

- The 9 recommendations in the plan were revisited and it was noted that there was only one outstanding item which related to the project management alignment. It had been recognised that we had a couple of ways we run projects and these needed to be standardised. This is currently being worked on and training on the use of programme management skills is envisaged for September.
- The SPI (social progress index) data sets were discussed again which would look at wellbeing/educational data district wide and be able to compare data ward to ward which would be a foundation stone for the next strategic plan. Concern was raised as to the understanding of this data and it was requested that a form that is more understandable be used in future. It was confirmed that member training would be offered in order to achieve the understanding of this data and how to and not to use this data.
- Sufficient capacity for the Being A Better Council programme was discussed again and as two new Assistant Directors would be in post in August it was envisaged this would significantly increase capacity and give a robust platform to deliver the programme. Some roles would be consolidated and a number of roles would be exited from the establishment but all changes were hoped to be implemented by the end of September. The Chief Executive was asked to return at this time to provide an update and this was agreed.

RESOLVED:- The Committee received a report and Action Plan on the corporate peer challenge six month review.

7 COUNCILLOR COMMUNITY FUND

The Committee received a report on the Councillor Local Community Fund detailing the scheme after its first year, a summary of a survey undertaken which highlighted the key issues, future actions and key benefits and outcomes. The Task Group meeting notes were also considered. The key issues and comments were highlighted as:-

- Delays in some administration at Community Foundation meaning list of balances not always up to date;
- Councillors not clear that if they are trustees and have non-pecuniary interests they should seek officer advice and/or cabinet member's approval;
- Some organisations should be precluded i.e. parish councils/public funded bodies;
- Reporting mechanism to ensure no Councillor goes over maximum fund amount; possible warning in red.
- IT issues – emails going in to junk folder;
- The system is limited to 6 Councillors, is there not potential to open it up to more?
- Could we do a sample?

Discussions took place about the underspend which was currently at £933.72 and donations to We Love Lichfield was discussed, as well as leaving it in the LDC pot. However, it was agreed to look at the total underspend at the end of the two year pilot scheme and evaluate it again. It was agreed that the first year had gone well, and all officers involved were congratulated and the Community Foundation as it showed that a small amount of funding can make a difference to very local activities and groups can add to funding already raised locally.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That Cabinet agree to continuing the pilot Councillor Local Community Grant Scheme for a second year;
- (2) That Cabinet agree to delegate authority to the Cabinet member for Community Engagement and the Head of Regulatory Services, Housing and Wellbeing to make any minor changes to the pilot scheme if improvements are identified in particular a request that the Community Foundation should not authorise any overspends by any member irrespective of the amount;
- (3) Members be encouraged to use the scheme;
- (4) Training session/briefing paper be prepared for councillors relating to declarations of interests.

8 ECONOMIC PROSPERITY STRATEGY, ACTION PLAN

The committee received a Report on Economic Prosperity Strategy and Action Plan and were asked for comments. The Action Plan covers a 12 month period to align timescale wise with the Council's future Strategic Plan and Appendix 1 details the action plan's interventions, Appendix 2 the key economic data on Lichfield District's economy and Appendix 3 provided the findings of local businesses on economic impact and the committee commented on the following key areas:-

- LDC chooses to take this strategy it is not a statutory responsibility and so no input from any other parish to date but we would like to work with any parishes.
- Lichfield BID was discussed as they would be looking to rebalot this year and if it comes back it would assist; if it did not LDC would need to look at it and listen to businesses to get their views on board.
- Do we need to look at light manufacturing industry?
- The word wage doesn't appear once in the documents – can we encourage businesses locally that there is immense value in the workforce? Can we add in how there are ways businesses interact with employees?
- Can we offer incentives for new businesses; try and encourage council premises perhaps?

- Very ambitious plan; access to finance – using finance we have to make sure we can signpost new businesses; critical to prosperity of district.
- Need more of a specific target to capture if Visit Lichfield website is successful – cannot just measure clicks on website. Need to work with partners to capture more real information – perhaps itinerary/package discount code.
- Lichfield time travellers – excellent innovation – could be positive – would like to see this extended as will appeal to younger demographics – videos – diversity of Lichfield history – work with partners to extend outside of city centre?

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the Committee notes the content of the action plan and the above observations were made;
- (2) That the committee monitors and evaluates the progress of activities against the action plan.

9 WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD PLAN

The work programme and forward plan were considered by the Committee. Going forward it was agreed to hold a pre-scrutiny meeting once the papers had been published a week or so before the O&S committee meeting – informally on zoom only – this meeting would go through the agenda items and give an opportunity to ask for any additional information in advance of the committee meeting.

It was also agreed to hold an additional Budget December meeting to start looking to help the portfolio holder and see if there are any different areas to explore.

Additional items for Work Programme 2022-23:-

Local Council Tax Support scheme – (Sept or Nov meeting)
 Action Plan – Planning Service
 Procurement (2023 meeting)
 Dual Waste Recycling Review – await 3 months for data – need to encourage recycling
 Biodiversity – ask Climate Change Task Group – end of civic year

10 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That, as publicity would be prejudicial to public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business, which would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972

IN PRIVATE

11 NOTES FROM TASK GROUPS

The Committee received the notes from the last Lichfield City Masterplan Task Group. This item was held in private as it included confidential information.

RESOLVED:- That the notes be received.

(The Meeting closed at 8.30 pm)
 CHAIR