

## **STRATEGIC (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE**

**6 SEPTEMBER 2017**

### **PRESENT:**

Councillors Strachan (Chairman), A Yeates (Vice-Chairman) Mrs Barnett, Greatorex, Powell, Tittley and White.

(In accordance with Council Procedure Rule No.17 Councillors Pullen, Spruce and Wilcox attended the meeting).

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were received from Councillors Constable and Mrs Woodward (Vice-Chairman).

### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:**

There were no declarations of interest

### **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held 12<sup>th</sup> June 2017 were taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2017 be approved as a correct record.

### **WORK PROGRAMME**

Members considered the Work Programme. It was noted that a briefing paper on the Money Matters: 2017/18 Review of Financial Performance against the Financial Strategy for the first three months of 2017/18 had been sent.

**RESOLVED:** That the Work Programme be noted.

### **FIT FOR THE FUTURE: OUR APPROACH TO CREATING A COMMERCIAL COUNCIL**

The Leader of the Council introduced a report on the Council's desire to become more commercial to help meet the challenges faced by Local Government by refreshing the Fit for the Future Programme.

It was reported that many local authorities had already taken a more commercial approach in order to ensure their financial sustainability.

The Assistant Chief Executive presented the Committee with emerging thoughts as to the approach to creating a commercial council. It was noted that this presentation would be shared with all Members and Officers through a series of forthcoming events.

It was suggested that the council's approach to commercialisation will be based on three principles: investment, income and innovation.

Examples of what other councils had done was reported and it was asked if, based on these, there were any initial ideas. It was noted that there was learning from them including long and short term projects.

Potential opportunities around One Public Estate were queried, particularly on making better use of the council house site, and it was reported that OPE could provide opportunities in the long term but there were some challenges to overcome. . It was also reported that a draft submission had been prepared for consideration by the Staffordshire OPE partnership but before this could progress the Council's own needs had to be understood. However, officers were continuing to explore the potential for an OPE project.

The Committee asked of the potential of PSP (Lichfield) LLP and it was reported that development options on a number of sites were being explored and that if sites had the potential for redevelopment, business cases would be brought forward for approval.

The budget for this project was then discussed and it was noted that £200k had been earmarked. When asked it was noted that this was to provide additional officer capacity – particularly for project management - and not for direct investment.

The expectations of residents and deliverability was discussed by the Committee and it suggested that focus could be concentrated on areas where there had been less success like investment in affordable housing. It was also suggested that all areas should be considered as the financial pressure the Council will face is getting closer.

It was noted that this was a long term culture change as to how the Council operates and not a short term financial fix and this would contribute to sustainability.

Members noted that this was an initial report outlining thoughts and workstreams and that the Committee would be involved with more specific details and governance arrangements.

**RESOLVED:** That the report and issues raised within be noted.

## **CIVIC FUNCTION REVIEW**

The Committee received a report from the Chairman of the Civic Function Member Task Group, Councillor Tittley, on the meeting held to review the impact of changes made. It was reported that it was now 12 months since the Task Group had recommended different procedures and criteria when deciding which events the Council's Chairman could attend. It was reported that due to these changes, savings had been made.

It was reported that during the 12 month evaluation, issues had been considered further and additional recommendations were presented from the Task Group for the Committee to consider. These included a move away from social and charity type events and towards attendance at events which helped to promote and deliver the Strategic Plan. There was also a recommendation for the role to be a two year term to allow the Chairman to become familiar with the role as well as receiving training in chairmanship skills.

The Committee discussed the recommendations and felt that there was no need for the role of Chairman to be for two terms as there was scope in the Constitution to allow for the same Councillor to be voted to the post for a year more than once. Members also felt that training was provided via being Vice-Chairman albeit informally but this could be considered further. The Committee agreed that the Chairman's Car did not need to be reviewed by the Task Group in 2019.

The Committee agreed with the recommendation that the role should be a more representative one with emphasis being meeting the Strategic needs of the Council as well as reducing Charity work and events that could be carried out by Parish Council Chairmen.

**RESOLVED:** That the Strategic (O&S) Committee recommend to Cabinet that the following recommendations are considered and adopted:

1. That no nominated charity and charity events, including those of Burntwood Town Council and Lichfield City Council, are attended unless in very exceptional circumstances which are justified by the Chairman in writing and agreed by the Leader of the Council and/or Chairman of this Task Group. In normal circumstances, this role can be carried out by Parish equivalents; and
2. That the role of Chairman be a representative role and not a social one with emphasis on meeting the Strategic needs of the Council through networking opportunities and publicity. This would also link into the Commercialisation agenda of the Council. To achieve this, training should be provided to prospective Chairmen along with Chairing skills training to aid the role in Full Council meetings.

#### **UPDATE FROM THE INNOVATION MEMBER TASK GROUP**

The Committee received a verbal report from the Chairman of the Innovation Member Task Group, Councillor A. Yeates and it was noted that the group had met for an initial meeting and agreed their terms of reference and next steps. It was also reported that the first big issue they would work through was the use of IT to enable Garden Waste charging. It was noted that reports would be submitted to the Committee as and when required.

**RESOLVED:** That the information received be noted.

(The Meeting finished at 7.31 p.m.)

CHAIRMAN