

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

22 MARCH 2017

PRESENT

Councillor M. Young (in the Chair).

Councillors R. Bowker, C. Boyes, K. Carter, M. Cordingley (Vice-Chairman), Mrs. P. Dixon, N. Evans, J. Holden, D. Hopps and D. Western.

Also Present

Cllr Miss L. Blackburn	- Deputy Executive Member for Children's Services
Cllr Mrs L. Evans	- Executive Members for Transformation & Resources
Cllr J. Lamb	- Executive Member for Communities & Partnerships
Cllr B. Shaw	- Deputy Executive Member for EGEI
Ms Saadia Khan	- Co-Opted Member for Education Matters Only

In attendance

Joanne Hyde	- Corporate Director, Transformation & Resources
Nikki Bishop	- Chief Finance Officer
Richard Roe	- Director of Growth & Regulatory Services
Anne Birch	- Interim Director Standards, Quality & Performance
Peter Forrester	- Head of Governance
Alison Milne	- Head of Service - Access and Inclusion
Paul Helsby	- Programme Assurance Lead
Jo Cherrett	- Chief Operating Officer, Trafford CIC
Emma Thomas	- Head of Development, Trafford Leisure
Chris Gaffey	- Democratic and Scrutiny Officer

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor S. Adshead.

35. MINUTE SILENCE

The Chairman led the Committee in observing a minute's silence to remember the victims of the Westminster attack which occurred earlier that day.

36. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2017, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

37. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

38. EXECUTIVE RESPONSE TO THE BUDGET SCRUTINY REPORT

The Committee received a report of the Executive Member for Finance and the Chief Finance Officer providing a formal response to the Scrutiny Committee's recommendations in relation to the 2017/18 Draft Budget Proposals.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

39. HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT - DBS CHECKS

The Committee received a report of the Executive Member for Children's Services providing clarity on the DBS check process in place for drivers in relation to the Home to School Transport Service.

Members welcomed the recognition that the Council bore the responsibility for ensuring driver DBS checks had been undertaken, but had slight concerns that the 'spot-check' system would mean that not all drivers would be checked each day. Members were advised there would be serious consequences for contractors that were found to have not undertaken the necessary steps to check their drivers. It was noted that Passenger Assistants (PA) bore the responsibility for ensuring children were safe on their journey to school, not the driver. The service were looking to employ a 'floating PA' to perform the required spot checks on site with the driver, allowing them to cross reference drivers' IDs with the records held in the office.

Members thanked the Officers for the report and felt more assured following the recent progress made.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

40. BUSINESS RATES RETENTION: PRESENTATION

The Committee received a presentation of the Chief Finance Officer, providing Members with an update on current business rates collections and the upcoming adoption of the 100% Business Rates Retention pilot scheme, which would begin on 1 April 2017.

The Chief Finance Officer advised of the additional funds set aside to cover an unprecedented level of business rates appeals. It was noted that 58% of the borough's business rates base were currently being appealed. A substantial portion of this was due to a large number of appeals by Trafford Centre businesses claiming footfall had been reduced due to the roadworks on the M60. Members were advised of the new appeals process coming into effect from 1 April 2017. The new 'check, challenge and appeal' system should reduce the amount of speculative appeals lodged, and would hopefully ensure that only genuine appeals were considered in future. It was noted that the Council would have achieved its business rate collection target if it had not been forced to set aside so much for potential pay outs on these appeals.

It was confirmed that the 100% business rates retention pilot scheme would be undertaken at no financial detriment to the Council, and it was expected that between £15m - £20m of additional business rates would be retained at a GM level. It was also noted that the Public Health Grant and the Revenue Support Grant would cease to be received by the Council, with the 100% business rates retention taking its place. When discussing local incentives, it was noted that individual authorities would be the ones to lose out on the business rates they did

not collect. Individual Local Authorities part of the collective scheme would not lose out if other members had a poor collection rate.

RESOLVED: That the presentation be noted.

41. PHYSICAL ACTIVITY VISION: PROGRESS UPDATE

The Committee received a report of the Executive Member for Communities and Partnerships providing an update on Trafford's Physical Activity Vision. To accompany the report, Members were shown three video clips to demonstrate how the Trafford Community Interest Company (CIC) were committed to promoting a healthy lifestyle and how communities could help themselves in adopting this lifestyle.

The Committee discussed the progress of the Physical Activity GP Referral Scheme launched recently, specifically targeting those who needed signposting to physical activity by a GP. The scheme would see patients being referred for 8 weeks unlimited physical activity at Trafford CIC for a nominal fee of £20.00. It was noted that outcomes should be assessed after the scheme had been operating for a significant period of time, and it was suggested that an update be brought to the Committee in 12 months' time. Members were advised of the importance of GP buy in for the scheme to be successful, as well as the challenge of influencing behavioural changes. Work was ongoing on a new IT system in an attempt to record data and outcomes, as well as work on creating a mobile app demonstrating how exercise could positively affect patients' ongoing health conditions.

Some Members raised concerns relating to the perceived imbalance of investment within the borough, highlighting the closure of William Roe Golf Course and the amalgamation of two leisure centres in the North of the borough, whilst the South of the borough would be receiving a large investment in the extending of the Altrincham leisure centre. The Executive Member for Communities and Partnerships did not accept this assertion, stating that following the investment each town centre would have a high quality leisure centre. Scrutiny Members were referred back to the report which was brought to the Committee in November 2016, which provided details of the planned investment in each of the centres.

Members discussed the Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) and the potential this had for bringing in a significant amount of additional funding. It was noted that a variety of sports were covered as part of the strategy, including football, rugby, cricket, hockey, garden bowls and tennis.

The Committee thanked Officers for the report, and looked forward to a further update during the 2017/18 municipal year.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted.

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- 2) That a progress update on the Physical Activity GP Referral Scheme be brought to the Committee in 12 months' time.
- 3) That a further update on the Physical Activity Vision as a whole be added to the 2017/18 Scrutiny work programme.

42. ANNUAL DELIVERY PLAN 2016/17 - Q3 PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Committee received a report of the Executive Member for Transformation and Resources providing a summary of performance against the Council's Annual Delivery Plan (ADP), 2016/17, covering the period between 1 October 2016 and 31 December 2016.

Members were advised that the ADP format was currently under review, with a new process expected to be in place for the 2017/18 financial year. The proposed changes to the ADP would be considered at the Executive meeting on 27 March, 2017.

The Committee discussed the performance indicator relating to the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, as a number of residents had raised concerns about its effectiveness. Members were advised that One Trafford Partnership were aware of the concerns raised with the reporting system, and work would continue on resolving these issues.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

43. TASK & FINISH GROUP REVIEW: EDUCATION, HEALTH & CARE PLANS (EHCP)

The Committee received a report of the Task and Finish Group setup to review the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) process in Trafford. The Chairman thanked all Group Members who were involved with the review for their valued contribution and hard work. Members urged the Executive to accept the recommendations made in the report, which would be submitted to them at the next available opportunity. The Committee looked forward to receiving the Executive's the formal response.

RESOLVED: That the report and its recommendations be endorsed by the Committee for referral to the Executive.

44. TASK & FINISH GROUP REVIEW: JOINT VENTURE CONTRACT BETWEEN TRAFFORD COUNCIL AND AMEY

The Committee received a report of the Task and Finish Group setup to review the Joint Venture Contract between the Council and Amey. The Chairman thanked all Group Members who were involved with the review for their valued contribution and hard work. Members urged the Executive to accept the recommendations made in the report, which would be submitted to them at the next available opportunity. The Committee looked forward to receiving the Executive's the formal response.

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RESOLVED: That the report and its recommendations be endorsed by the Committee for referral to the Executive.

45. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered a report of the Chairman recapping the work covered by Scrutiny during the 2016/17 Municipal Year. Members discussed possible items to be added to the 2017/18 Scrutiny work programme, including: an item on Police and Crime; the implementation of the green waste fee and the accompanying management system; and a further update on the Physical Activity Vision. It was also suggested that the Committee review the out of borough child placement process and the costs associated with this.

Some Members suggested that the Committee should meet more frequently, stating that the current arrangements made it more difficult to take a strategic approach to Scrutiny.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and the items mentioned be considered for the 2017/18 work programme.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and finished at 8.25 pm