

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5 FEBRUARY 2014

PRESENT

Councillors M. Cordingley (Vice-Chairman, in the chair), S. Adshead, R. Bowker, R Chilton, Mrs. P. Dixon, A. Duffield, J.R. Reilly, D. Western and J. Lloyd (ex-Officio)

In attendance

Deborah Brownlee	Corporate Director Children, Families and Wellbeing
Carol Baker	Joint Director, Services for Children, Young People and Families (Strategic and Professional Lead for Healthcare)
Longshaw	Strategic Manager - Neighbourhoods and Communities
Sonia Cubrilo	Strategic Manager - Neighbourhoods and Communities
Richard Roe	Head of Growth
Martin Ledson	Growth & Business Development Manager
Stephen James	Economic Growth Manager
Joseph Maloney	Senior Democratic Services Officer
Sharman Frost	Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B. Shaw and C. Candish

67. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 December 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

68. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made.

69. BUDGET SCRUTINY REPORT

The Committee received and noted the Budget Scrutiny Report for 2014-15, and were advised that the report had been presented to the Executive Committee on Monday 27th January 2014, and that the Executive's formal response will be incorporated into the Budget Executive Meeting in February 2014.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the content of the report be noted.
- (2) That the Committee, as part of its ongoing work programme, revisit progress on the Executive's formal responses to its Budget Scrutiny report.

70. TOWN CENTRE UPDATE ON PROGRESS

The Committee received a report from the Executive Member for Economic Growth and Prosperity on the Council's progress in supporting Town Centres within the Borough. The report gave the Committee an update on activity,

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achievements to date, and the future work programme in Altrincham, Sale, Stretford and Urmston Town Centres.

Members were given the opportunity to comment and raise queries on the content of the report, these included discussions on public transport into the town centres; improved signposting to car parking facilities, and steps that need to be investigated to enforce tidying up derelict areas of land.

The number of vacant premises in the town centres was raised, and Members were advised that this was being addressed in the format of the individual town centre plans, outlining successful initiatives, including the Landlords Forum model in Altrincham being applied to other town centres. Discussions with managing agents in encouraging a joined up approach of working together was proving to have some successful outcomes for the future.

The Chairman then thanked the Executive Member for Economic Growth and Prosperity, and supporting officers for their attendance and the information which they had supplied in addition to the report.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the content of the report, and the responses by the Executive Member to questions, be noted and welcomed.
- (2) That the Committee, as part of its ongoing work programme, receive further progress updates on town centre activities in due course.

71. CHILDRENS SERVICES PERFORMANCE UPDATE 2012-13

The Committee received a progress report from the Executive Member for Supporting Children and Families, and Corporate Director for Children, Families and Wellbeing. Members were advised that the report highlights significant challenges to the ongoing increase in demand to services, and that changes to implement the refreshed working practices were now embedded.

An opportunity was given for Members to raise questions, and the discussions concentrated on the main areas highlighted in the report; including, the Children's Centres where it was reported that registration of younger pre-school children had increased and that the implementation of the Early Years Pathway has had a positive effect on this increase. Volunteers in the Children's Centres had shown an improvement, giving local families the opportunity and skills to support future employment.

It was noted that the ongoing advice and guidance given by Connexions Service working with Secondary Schools and Trafford College, was proving successful in working with young people who are either not in education, training or employment (NEET), or identified as being at risk.

Members were advised that successful working relationships with multi agency partnerships, including the voluntary sector, had shown an improvement in many

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areas; including the reduction of First Time Entrants to the Children and Young Peoples Service Early Help Strategy. Members were pleased to note that this reduction led onto fewer young people receiving custodial sentences, and a significant reduction of re-offending.

The Chairman then thanked the Executive Member, Director, and supporting officers for their attendance and the information which they had supplied in addition to the report.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the content of the report, and the responses by the Executive Member to questions, be noted and welcomed.

72. UPDATE ON TOPIC GROUPS

Councillor Chilton advised the Committee that the Cycling Topic Group meetings would resume on 17 February 2014, following the postponement of the Topic Group whilst the Budget Scrutiny Meetings were taking place. The Topic Group were waiting for information from Transport for Greater Manchester, and it was anticipated that this information would be received in advance of its meeting. He also advised that a Topic Group Meeting would be taking place in early March, to receive a report on the outcomes of the public consultation into the Secondary School Sufficiency Review.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and finished at 7.55 pm