

COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBOURHOODS SCRUTINY PANEL

15th July 2019

Meeting commenced: 2.00 p.m.
“ ended: 4:15 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Burch - in the Chair

Councillors Barnes, Fletcher, Karen Garrido, Mullen, Ryan, Turner, Walker, Warner, Joan Walsh and Wheeler.

Councillor David Lancaster - Lead Member for Environment and Community Safety

OFFICERS: David Seager - Assistant Director, Operational and Community Services

Sarah Ashurst - Group Leader (Investment)

John Wooderson - Head of Service Urban Renewal

Chris Wilkinson - Regulatory Services

Chris Farey - Head of Library Services

Susan Leonard - SCL, Secretary to the Board

Alex Archer - Financer Manager

Mike Relph - Senior Democratic Services Adviser

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Humphreys.

2. MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

The minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 17th June, 2019, were approved as a correct record.

3. PLACE DIRECTORATE BUDGET 2019/20 MONITORING

The Strategic Director for Place submitted a report providing an update in relation to the budget position of his service groups, with specific reference to the following:-

- Revenue Budget 2019/20
- Capital Programme 2019/20
- Revenue Budget Outturn position for 2018/19
- Progress made towards the agreed savings programme 2019/20.

Members raised issues and commented on, and noted them, as follows:-

(a) The likely impact of imposing a charge on pest control services, particularly for those on low incomes. It was reported these fees had been reluctantly introduced by Salford City Council due to increasing budget restraints and was one many other

local authorities had taken, with very few who did now not make a charge. It was suggested that social housing providers had a duty to provide such services for their tenants.

RESOLVED: THAT the report, specifically the Revenue Budget 2019/20, Capital Programme 2019/20, Revenue Budget Outturn position for 2018/19, progress in achieving agreed savings for 2019/20, and further measures to bring forecast expenditure back in line with the budget, be noted.

4. LIBRARY SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE
(Previous Minute 3 - 18 February 2019)

The Strategic Director for Place and the Chief Executive for Salford Community Leisure (SCL) submitted a joint report which provided an update in relation to the various elements of the ongoing Library Implementation Plan, particularly progress already achieved and future actions. Chris Farey provided further information to support and supplement that contained in the report.

Members raised issues and commented on, and noted them, as follows:-

(a) Was the "Click and Collect" service available at libraries other than Swinton? It was confirmed this service was available at all libraries in the City.

(b) Was there the ability for people to access the print facilities in libraries using their own electronic devices? This was not currently possible, but was something which was being actively pursued.

(c) Was the stock of books rotated regularly throughout all libraries in Salford? This was something which was done and was a vital element in ensuring the service met the needs of customers.

(d) Why were certain library activities, such as mum and toddlers groups, suspended during the summer months? This was an issue of capacity and during this time staff efforts were focussed on other more relevant seasonal activities, but this did not prevent volunteers running them at these times of the year, possibly on a more informal basis, to meet local needs.

(e) What was the methodology in selecting and developing the stock of books held by the library service? This was a challenge, but a core role of the library service. It primarily relied on responding to customer feedback and balancing this against making optimum use of the budget resources available.

RESOLVED: THAT the contents of report, together with the additional information provided, be noted and Chris Farey be thanked for his attendance.

5. PLACE DIRECTORATE - DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN 2019/20

The Strategic Director for Place submitted the draft 2019/20 business plan for his directorate. Sarah Ashurst provided further information to support and supplement that contained in the report.

Members raised issues and commented on, and noted them, as follows:-

(a) In relation to “Affordable Warmth”, reference was made to the use of pre-payment meters in social housing accommodation, particularly the ability to obtain “emergency energy” the cost of which fell on the property, rather than the individual tenant, which in turn could put those moving into accommodation at an immediate financial disadvantage through no fault of their own. While in a few circumstances pre-payment meters were the only option, the City Council was working with housing providers for their removal wherever possible, which was in line with the wider Salford Anti Poverty Strategy.

(b) Salford was becoming a much more diverse community and as a result what engagement was made with the appropriate voluntary and non profit making “Third Sector” organisations? This was an important activity and Salford City Council continued to engage and develop links with such organisations and groups. This also played a vital role in community impact assessment work as part of the budgetary process.

(c) The value of early intervention work in terms of combating anti social behaviour and criminal activity. It was suggested work in this regard, particularly in relation to Probation Service activities in reducing re-offending, was an issue the Panel could possibly look at in more detail.

RESOLVED: THAT Place Directorate Business Plan 2019/20 be noted and Sarah Ashurst be thanked for her attendance.

6. TRADING STANDARDS - COMBATING COUNTERFEITING

John Wooderson and Chris Wilkinson gave a presentation which provided an overview of current activities in relation to tackling counterfeit items, their production and distribution, which focussed on the following key themes:-

- Current trends
 - illicit tobacco
 - illicit alcohol
 - social media
 - product safety
- Recent activities
- Examples of counterfeit items
- Concealments
- Consumer access to counterfeit products
- Potential threats to future enforcement effectiveness
 - organised crime
 - Brexit

Members raised issues and commented on, and noted them, as follows:-

(a) Were the current activities leading to a reduction in the availability of counterfeit goods? It remained an increasing difficult task, but the effectiveness of actions was

primarily limited by the powers to prosecute which were currently available to local authorities and other enforcement agencies. The complexities of the supply chain for such goods, also made it difficult to identify the source, which was often overseas, in turn making effective enforcement action, or enable the prosecution of those responsible.

(b) What was the best method for members of the public to report the sale of counterfeit items and was there a need to raise awareness of the potential dangers of purchasing such items? Reporting was best done either directly with Salford City Council, or via the Citizens Advice service. There was increasingly less resources to undertake locally focussed promotional work, warning of the dangers of purchasing counterfeit products, but the City Council always linked into national campaigns aimed at raising awareness. It was suggested it would be of value for elected members to be kept aware of any such campaigns.

(c) Did those companies whose products were being counterfeited, contribute to supporting enforcement activity? In financial terms this was minimal.

RESOLVED: THAT presentation and the information provided be noted and John Wooderson and Chris Wilkinson be thanked for their attendance.

7. WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20

Members gave consideration to the Panel's suggested Work Programme for 2019/20.

It was indicated that the Chair and Deputy Chair had met with the Strategic Director for Place to discuss the Panel's Work Programme 2019/20 from which a series of potential topics and issues had been identified, which now subject to them proving feasible, had to be scheduled.

RESOLVED: THAT following additional items, be provisionally incorporated into Panel's work Programme for 2019/20:

- Eccles Town Centre - actions to address anti social behaviour by young people
- Probation Service - re-offending reduction initiatives (see Minute 5(c))

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the Panel would be held on Monday, 16th September, 2019, commencing at 2.00 pm.