

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date and Time: Tuesday 19 September 2023 at 7.00 pm

Place: Council Chamber

Present:

Dorn (Chairman), Butcher, Coburn, Davies, Engström, Farmer, Vernon and Delaney

In attendance:

Officers: Graeme Clark, Executive Director, Corporate Services & S151 Officer
Mark Jaggard, Executive Director Place
Nicola Jenkins, Community Partnerships & Projects Officer
Christine Tetlow, Programme Manager
Claire Lord, Committee and Members Services Officer

39 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of 15th August 2023 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Proposed Cllr Dorn
Seconded Cllr Coburn

Unanimous (with the exception of Cllr Delaney who was not at the meeting so abstained)

40 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from:-

Cllr Butler - Cllr Delaney attended as substitute
Cllr Harward
Cllr Smith

41 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations made.

42 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman announced that the Multi Agency Flood Forum meeting was being held on September 26th and so would be reporting into the October Cabinet.

The meeting was also informed that the MTFs report was going to be moved to the November meeting to allow for any announcements from the Chancellor on local government finance in the Autumn Statement. It was confirmed that this delay by one O&S meeting would have no impact on the Budget report being brought to O&S in January.

The members were reminded about the Treasury Management training October 12th, starting at 6.30pm. It was confirmed that it would be a Hybrid meeting and, subject to agreement by the external presenter, it would be recorded so those who could not attend could watch the recording.

43 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (ITEMS PERTAINING TO THE AGENDA)

None.

44 PRESENTATION BY CORE GRANT RECIPIENTS - FLEET PHOENIX

Charlotte Tickner gave a presentation to the meeting highlighting the work of Fleet Phoenix as well as the challenges they face.

The meeting was told of all the projects that Fleet Phoenix undertake including face to face youth work, providing school uniforms and distributing Christmas toys. The members were also informed that Fleet Phoenix was now paying for the services of a trained counsellor to work with the young people.

Ms Tickner highlighted the current “Open Door” programme, which gives help and support to young people and families for as long as they need it. It was explained that this included open sessions and support as required, at various meetings including

- Together round the family meetings
- Child protection meetings
- Local area emergency planning meetings
- Court appearances
- Rape interviews

The question was asked, how the grant Hart District Council gave to Fleet Phoenix was being spent. It was explained that the grant covered 14.5% of the overall costs of the service.

Ms Tickner was asked what were the blocks preventing the expansion of the service. The reply was Money and Staff.

Discussion took place around premises. Whilst the current premises is sufficient, it was confirmed that Fleet Town Council had asked Fleet Phoenix to let them

have their premises requirements in the event that the Civic Quarter regeneration plan was implemented and the current premises was no longer available, this has been submitted. It was agreed that these plans should also be shared with members of the committee for information.

Ms Tickner was thanked for attending the meeting and for all her work with Fleet Phoenix.

Cllr Butcher arrived within this item at 7.09

45 CORPORATE RISK REGISTER (HALF-YEARLY REVIEW)

The Risk Register was introduced to the meeting. It was explained that the report contained only the higher rated risk items for review, ahead of the report being taken to Cabinet.

The committee thanked the officer for the report and noted that it now has consistent content to the service panel reports. However members asked for more clarity within it, as items that carry a high risk, but were unlikely, would score the same as a moderate risk that was more likely to happen. It was agreed that this would be reflected in the report next time with both impact and likelihood scores being shown for each risk rather than just the combined rating. A request was made for some of the major high rated risk items, such as the waste contract, to be reviewed more than twice a year. Members also asked for future reports to show the previous residual risk rating alongside the current one.

Discussion took place around the new planning law that the government is bringing in. The meeting was told that it would affect the amount of money the council could receive for planning, and once the government announces what the changes are, the council would adjust the budgets accordingly.

The spending of the £0.96 million forecast budget surplus in 2023/24 was discussed, it was queried as to whether it should be saved as there was a budget shortfall forecast for 2024/25. It was agreed that although there was currently a surplus, it was confirmed that it would not be allocated until the in-year position and budget for next year was more certain.

46 UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND (UKSPF) RESOURCES AND PROGRAMME UPDATE

The item was introduced and it was explained that the project had had its spend for this year and next approved by Cabinet, but that Cabinet had raised some questions relating to resources, and had queried which were internal and which were external.

It was explained that there was an allowance to use £40k, of the £1million total, on administration. It was also explained that the government had agreed that any monies required to hire project managers need not come out of the £40k admin fund. However, it is not currently known how much the council will need to spend on staff overall. It was felt that this was an important figure to confirm.

The meeting was told, in order to minimise costs and back office work the team were creating standard forms for the projects, for example standard funding agreements, PID and Financial Plans.

The data mining project was discussed. It was queried as to whether the project was going to generate new and exciting opportunities. It was explained that the initial 'Here for Hart' meeting had generated many ideas and themes but didn't provide any numerical data. The data mining would be the vehicle that would be investigating the numerical data. This would be reported back at a councillor event in October. It was agreed any positives generated by the data mining should be reported.

The point made in the report about avoiding legacy costs for the Council was stressed by the Committee. A query was raised as to whether consideration, for the self-sustainability of a project was taken into account when a project for funding was being selected. It was confirmed that the team were looking into creating Hubs and the sustainability and viability of the hub would be taken into consideration when selecting a project.

47 REVIEW PROGRESS ON THE SHAPLEY HEATH ACTIONS

The item was introduced with the background that the Audit committee had, used 3 sources of information, and in March 2023 had made a number of recommendations, which had been subsequently agreed by Cabinet, and O&S were asked to review the progress in September, and to make comments to Cabinet.

Concern was expressed that projects were discussed at Informal Cabinet, the minutes for which are not shared in an open forum. The meeting was informed that the Leader also attended all Project Board meetings and reported back to the Portfolio holders. It was raised that the minutes from Project board meetings were also not made public. It was explained that the agreed actions arising from the review identified that portfolio holders should have greater oversight of projects, and this was the arrangement put in place. This observation will be brought to the attention of the Cabinet. It was suggested that O&S played a more proactive role in over-seeing projects.

It was agreed that a tabular representation of projects and what checks were in place gives good visibility of where the gaps are, and that a table of this nature should be reviewed by either the Audit Committee or O&S.

Discussion took place around financial monitoring. It was confirmed that a 'Spend to date and forecast' was reported to Project Board each month for each project and then reported to O&S within the quarterly monitoring report. It was felt that the meeting would like to see more of the in-depth details ie. monthly figures, in these reports to give a clearer picture on how the projects were progressing.

With regard to action 10 on FOI and data retention, members expressed concerned that reports and information were not going to be kept for a reasonable length of time and so would not be available for reference to reflect on "what went wrong". It was felt that using GDPR to justify the non-retention of data was incorrect and not acceptable. This point will be reviewed and referred back to the Audit Committee. On action 11, it was felt that although training improves compliance it didn't give assurance that it was happening.

Recommendations

To pass to Cabinet the Committee's view that the major projects list should be reviewed by Cabinet and not Informal Cabinet for greater transparency.

With regard to FOIs, there should be a clearer link to show that data is being kept correctly and for a reasonable amount of time.

48 FLY TIPPING TASK AND FINISH GROUP

The meeting was informed that the Terms of Reference had been updated to provide background information and to improve direction. It was commented that 'Bring Sites' had been excluded from the scope. It was requested that they were included, but with reference to large scale dumping of waste not general littering. The meeting agreed upon this.

It was agreed that this Task and Finish group should liaise with the CCTV Task as there was a certain amount of overlap.

It was proposed that the membership (to elect their own chairman at the 1st meeting) was

- Cllr Butler
- Cllr Butcher
- Cllr Engström
- Cllr Smith

And that Bring sites, with reference to large scale dumping, should be included in the scope.

Proposed Cllr Dorn
Seconded Cllr Coburn

Unanimous

49 CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

None

50 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

It was confirmed that the MTFs would be added to the Work Programme and that the Multi Agency Flood forum would be reviewed in November.

The meeting was asked for questions that could be posed to HCC when they attended to answer queries on the new On Street Parking contract.

- 1) Comparisons for the same period as previous years (both pre and post covid) on
 - Number of Patrols
 - Amount of Enforcement
 - Number of Prosecutions

It was agreed that these statistics should be broken down by month and by Ward. They should also highlight hot spots (eg around schools).

- 2) The threshold used identify if there was a need to increase either enforcement or restrictions when safety was an issue.
- 3) If and where parking meters would be introduced in Fleet.

It was requested that an item be added to the work Programme to revisit the planning 'Peer Review' and subsequent action plan and its implementation in the Place Service.

Discussion took place around whether this could be incorporated into the service panel review. It was felt that a more detailed analysis was required.

It was decided to add "A Review of the implementation of the peer review action plan and the impact it had had on the development management performance within the 'Place service' to the work Programme [The Chairman to draft a scope, discuss with the Director of Place, then circulate to members of the committee for agreement].

The meeting closed at 8.57 pm