

SPECIAL SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

13 JANUARY 2020 AT 6.00 P.M. AT THE COUNCIL HOUSE

Committee Members Present Councillor Murray (Chair)
Councillor Nawaz
Councillor Creaney
Councillor Ferguson
Councillor Harrison
Councillor Mazhar
Councillor Rasab
Councillor Samra
Councillor Shires
Councillor M. Statham

Officers Present Paula Furnival – Executive Director (Adult Social Care)
Paul Gordon – Head of Business Change
Stephen Gunther – Director of Public Health
Scott Porter – Programme Manager
Craig Goodall – Senior Democratic Services Officer

Portfolio Holders Councillor Bird - Leader
Councillor Craddock – Health and Wellbeing
Councillor Martin – Adult Social Care
Councillor Perry – Community, Leisure and Culture
Councillor Towe – Education and Skills

197/20 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors S. Ditta and L. Jeavons.

198/20 SUBSTITUTIONS

Councillor Mazhar substituted for Councillor Ditta and Councillor Creaney substituted for Councillor Jeavons.

199/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest of party whip.

200/20 LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 (AS AMENDED)

There were no items to consider in private session.

201/20 **CALL-IN OF CABINET DECISION – RESILIENT COMMUNITIES**

In line with the provisions in the Constitution the decision taken by Cabinet on 18 December 2019 relating to 'Walsall Proud Programme: Resilient Communities' (RC) was called in by five Members of the Committee on 30 December 2019.

The Chair outlined the order of business and invited the call-in Members to explain their reasons for the call-in.

The call-in Members outlined their reasons for the call-in. These included a request for further detail on budgets for the service and implications for staff, the proposed role for the voluntary and community sector (VCS), the role of elected Members at Community Forums and a request for Cabinet to 'pause' their decision of 18 December 2019 to enable the Committee to establish a working group to make recommendations to Cabinet before the end of the municipal year.

The Portfolio Holder (Community, Leisure and Culture) responded to the call-in. He outlined his vision for the RC model emphasising the need to do something differently, to innovate, and avoid the constant refreshing of locality working. He noted that the Council cannot solve all problems and the model was designed to help communities become self-sustaining. He accepted that each locality had its own strengths and development needs which would be supported.

The Chair opened the meeting to questions to the Portfolio Holder. The following are the principal points from the ensuing question session:

- There was no proposal to change the footprint of the existing four localities.
- Regarding community forums the Portfolio Holder reported that politics turned people off engaging. He stated a need to develop the role of elected Members on community forums.
- There was no figure set for the Innovation Fund. It was noted it would need to be significant enough to make a difference in areas of need.
- Up to 40% efficiencies were anticipated in the RC budget but the Portfolio Holder noted that this top level may not be achieved. The existing budget was £3.6m.
- It was important that partners contributed their own resources to assist in delivering the RC model.
- Following a request for support to the local community in Clayhanger the Portfolio Holder requested officers to complete an options appraisal for an unused building in the area.

The Chair opened the meeting to a debate on issues discussed thus far. During this debate Members expressed concerns about:

- The proposed budget and staff reduction and the potential for this to reduce the impact of the RC model as outlined.
- Whether partners would contribute as envisaged or whether they would see the Council reducing its own resources and seek to protect their own.
- The lack of feedback from communities about the proposed model.

- The potential creation of a gap on how local communities would be consulted and engaged on local and regional strategic issues that affected their futures.

It was moved and seconded that:

Cabinet pause delivery of their decision taken on 18 December 2019 'Walsall Proud Programme: Resilient Communities' to enable a cross party working to be established to undertake a detailed assessment of the proposed Resilient Communities model and report back to the Committee on 28 April 2020.

On being put to the vote the motion was lost.

It was moved and seconded and:

Resolved:

That, a cross party working group be established by the Scrutiny Overview Committee at its meeting on 4 February 2020 to enable a detailed assessment of the proposed Resilient Communities model to be undertaken and for the working group to report back to the Committee on 28 April 2020.

202/20 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the date of the next meeting was 4 February 2020.

The meeting terminated at 7.23 p.m.

Chair:

Date:.....