

## **ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**20 June 2019 at 6.00pm at the Council House, Walsall**

**Committee Members Present:** Councillor L. Harrison (Chair)  
Councillor A. Hicken (Vice–Chair)  
Councillor P. Bott  
Councillor S. Craddock  
Councillor C. Creaney  
Councillor M. Follows  
Councillor P. Kaur  
Councillor A. Nazir  
Councillor G. Singh Sohal  
Councillor M. Ward

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor O. Butler      Clean and Green

**Officers Present:** Simon Neilson      Executive Director –  
Fraz Hussain      Economy and Environment  
Matt Powis      Senior Accountancy Officer  
Democratic Services Officer

### **1/19 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Andrew.

### **2/19 Substitution**

There were no substitutions.

### **3/19 Declarations of Interest and Party Whip**

There were no declarations of interest or party whips

### **4/19 Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)**

There were no items to consider in private session.

### **5/19 Minutes of the previous meetings**

In reference to Minute No. 84/18, A Member requested that Local Councillors of Willenhall be fully consulted with any proposals at the former Legge's site and any

other sites surrounding Willenhall Town Centre to help regenerate the district centre.

In reference to Minute No. 90.18, A Member requested an update on Recreational Centre on Hall Street, Darlaston from the Portfolio Holder for Community, Leisure and Culture. The Committee were informed that an update would be provided to Members in writing.

**Resolved:**

- 1. That the minutes of the meetings held on 11 March, 4 April and 11 April 2019 copies having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record;**
- 2. That, an update on Recreational Centre on Hall Street, Darlaston be provided to Members of the Committee in writing.**

**6/19 Economy and Environment Financial Performance – Pre-Audit Outturn for 2018/19**

Members considered the pre-audit revenue and capital outturn position for 2018/19 for services within the remit of the Committee.

The Senior Accountancy Officer informed the Committee that the year-end position for 2018/19 reported a revenue overspend of £0.067m (net use of earmarked reserves). In addition, the capital budget of £50.018m reported an under spend of £18.241m of which £16.219m had been requested to be carried forward.

It was noted that there was a net capital underspend of £2.022m which related to the Town Centre Masterplan.

Following the report, a question and answer session took place and summarised as follows:

- It was noted that there was an overspend of £345k on Tarmac contractor costs relating to gully works. A Member sought clarification on whether Tarmac were carrying out works on privately owned roads in the Borough at the Council's expense and whether the Council had received any reimbursement for works carried out. The Committee were informed that a response would be provided in writing;
- A Member sought clarification on the re-profiling of monies relating to Direct Town Centre's Public Realms Improvement. In response, the Executive Director confirmed that the re-profiling related to carried funds which had not been spent before the application deadline set by accountable body;
- A Member requested an update on 'Open Plus in Libraries'. In response, the Executive Director informed the Committee that the supplier had not met the expectations of the contract and the Council had challenged the supplier to improve the standards of the work to required expectations. It was requested that an update be considered at a future meeting of the Committee;

- In reference to £2.405m allocation to the District Town Centre's Public Realms Improvement. A Member requested a breakdown of funds for each District Town Centre spent to date. In response, the Executive Director confirmed that information would be provided to Members in writing;
- A Member requested that the Council's four Strategic Locality Partnership Boards consider a report on District Town Centres at a future meeting of the Boards;
- A discussion was held around the utilisation of Section 106 monies and consultation with local Councillors. The Chair informed the Committee that the Council's Planning Committee had requested a report on Section 106 at the next meeting of the Planning Committee in July 2019 and it was noted that the Committee would await the outcome of the Planning Committee's decision before any discussion at a future Scrutiny Committee;
- A Member requested an update on the Park and Ride facility in Moxley. The Executive Director informed the Committee that a response would be provided in writing.

**Resolved:**

- 1. That, the Pre – Audit Outturn Financial Performance for 2018/19 be noted;**
- 2. That, further information be provided to the Committee on Council contractor, Tarmac working on privately owned roads in the Borough;**
- 3. That, an update on 'Open Plus in Libraries' be provided to Members of the Committee in writing;**
- 4. That, information on spent funds per District Town Centre be provided to Members of the Committee in writing;**
- 5. That, an update on the Park and Ride facility in Moxley be provided to Members of the Committee in writing;**
- 6. That, the Council's four Strategic Locality Partnership Boards consider district town centres at a future meeting of the Boards.**

**7/19 Areas of focus – 2019/20**

The Democratic Services Officer gave an overview of the Committee's remit and proposed work programme for 2019/20. He stated that it was proposed to establish an Unauthorised Encampments Working Group following a recommendation from the Committee during 2018/19 municipal year. The Chair highlighted the importance of establishing the Group and welcome nominations from Members of the Committee.

The Executive Director (Economy and Environment) tabled an organisational chart [annexed] highlighting personnel and responsibilities for the Economy and Environment Directorate.

The Democratic Services Officer gave an overview of the Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government from May 2019. It was noted that

Overview and Scrutiny Members would receive training on the guidance in July 2019.

Members debated the issues and selected items for their work programme.

**Resolved:**

- 1. The following items be included on the Committees work programme for 2019/20:**
  - a. Rail Improvement in Walsall;**
  - b. Town Centre Masterplan**
  - c. The Council's Waste Strategy;**
  - d. Employment, Growth and Skills;**
  - e. District Town Centres Update;**
  - f. Air Quality Update;**
  - g. Open Plus in Libraries Update.**
- 2. That, an Unauthorised Encampments Working Group be established with the following membership:-**
  - a. Councillor L. Harrison (Chair);**
  - b. Councillor P. Bott;**
  - c. Councillor I. Shires;**
  - d. Councillor G. Singh Sohal;**
  - e. Councillor M. Ward.**

**8/19 Date of next meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on 26 September 2019.

Termination of Meeting

There being no further business, the meeting terminated 6.53p.m.

Signed: .....

Date: .....