

Minutes of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 26 February 2024

Present: Gill Heath (Vice-Chair (Scrutiny)) in the Chair

| Attendance | |
|---------------|----------------|
| Tina Clements | Bernard Peters |
| Mike Davies | Bob Spencer |
| Jeremy Pert | Nigel Yates |

Also in attendance: Alan White

Apologies: John Francis, Kath Perry, MBE and Samantha Thompson. Cabinet members Ian Parry and Philip White.

Part One

32. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

33. Minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2023

Resolved: – That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

34. Local Joint Enterprise Partnership

The Leader of the Council introduced the report which explained that due to the imminent closure of the Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SSLEP) and the integration of its responsibilities into the upper tier authorities, there was a need to consider how the functions would be managed and decisions made across the geographical area. The report proposed a new joint committee with Stoke on Trent City Council. Terms of Reference for the establishment and operation of the new committee were appended to the report.

The proposals would be considered by Cabinet in March 2024.

The Committee was informed that current or scheduled projects would move to the new joint committee. No significant risks had been identified for the County Council. Risks for individual projects would be considered during the schemes project planning in the normal way.

Resolved:

- a) That the approach to form a Joint Enterprise Delivery Committee with Stoke-on-Trent City Council and the draft Terms of Reference for the Joint Enterprise Delivery Committee with Stoke-on-Trent City Council ("Joint Committee") be noted.
- b) The proposal, that ahead of the Joint Committee being established and once the reserves of the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SSLEP) were formally transferred to the County Council as the accountable body, it was being recommended that Cabinet agree to the immediate ring-fencing of funding for the Growth Hub, Careers Hub and Local Visitor Economy Partnership as key economic programmes for the local area was noted.
- c) It was agreed that subject to the Cabinet decisions referred to in recommendation b) above being approved, the Prosperous Overview & Scrutiny Committee monitor delivery through the 6-monthly Economic Strategy Delivery Update, as the committee responsible for such matters.

35. Quarterly Integrated Performance Report (Q3)

The Leader of the Council introduced the Integrated Performance Report for Quarter 3 2023/24 which summarised the Councils performance and financial position against the Strategic and Delivery Plans.

The report detailed the main challenges facing each of the four service areas, notably Children in Care, SEND, and Highways. The report also detailed the forecast overspend of £5.4m (0.9%) compared to the previous forecast.

The main issues discussed at the meeting were:

- The Home upgrade funding for off grid (mains gas supply) properties, appeared to be related to postcodes rather than any property that was 'off-grid'. It was requested that more information on this be passed to the committee members.
- Early Intervention was still being delivered through the Building Resilient Families service and the Children in Care plan.
- New Highway inspectors would be recruited, these would provide capacity to identify category 3 potholes which had turned to category 1 due to bad weather.
- Land that was for sale within a members constituency was available to view via the Property Committee. [Committee details - Property Sub-Committee - Staffordshire County Council](#)
- Steady progress was being made on the Climate change target.
- Business startup rates had stagnated in recent months. The reasons why and the type of business affected had not yet been identified. A link to the monthly survey would be emailed to members.

- The Ofsted Report had highlighted the need to bridge the gap in knowledge and partnership working in order to have co-produced plans for children in care.
- It was felt that the use of national benchmarking for children in care information was more appropriate than regional as it was closer to the local profile.
- Members were informed that the Corporate Plan and Delivery Plan were being refreshed and this would change the reporting information in next years integrated report to this committee.
- Showing data for a longer period of time (e.g. annual or over 2 or 3 years) would be useful to see, particularly in EHCP and Category 3 highway repairs.
- Sight of the plan to improve the quality of care providers locally, as rated by the CQC, was requested.
- The detail on Treasury management would be reported every six months to Cabinet.

Resolved:

- a) That the Quarter 3 2023/24 Integrated Performance Report be noted.
- b) That data for a longer period of time (e.g. annual or over 2 or 3 years) would be useful to see an annual trend, particularly in EHCP and Category 3 highway repairs.
- c) That the following information be provided to the committee:
 - The criteria for Home upgrade funding for off grid (mains gas supply) properties and if this related to postcodes.
 - Business startup rates - A link to the monthly survey.
 - The plan to improve the quality of care providers, as rated by the CQC.

36. Overview and Scrutiny Work Programmes

Members were reminded that the Committee, as part of its role as overarching O&S committee, had responsibility for developing and agreeing the combined work programme for the Council's O&S function.

Appendix 1 of the report outlined the O&S planned items for all four committees for quarter three. Appendix 2 listed the actions and outcomes of recommendations made from May 2023. It was noted that this was a developing piece of work and monitoring of recommendations would continue to be reviewed.

Resolved: The work programmes for the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees were agreed.

37. Work Programme

The Committee was reminded that the 8 March 2024 (reserved for any call-ins) would be followed by an informal meeting to discuss the Corporate Plan/Delivery Plan and the Community Strategy. A copy of the notes taken at an informal meeting between Officers and members to look at Performance indicators for Entrust had been attached to the work programme for information.

Resolved: That the Work Programme be noted.

Chair