
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE SCRUTINY PANEL

A meeting of the Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel was held on 19 June 2019.

PRESENT: Councillors Saunders (Chair), Hubbard (Vice Chair), Arundale, Branson, Coupe, M Storey, S Walker, Higgins (as substitute for Furness) and Rathmell (as substitute for McTigue)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor Smiles

OFFICERS: G Field, R Horniman, D Johnson, S Lightwing, K Parkes

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were submitted on behalf of Councillors Furness, McTigue.

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no Declarations of Interest at this point in the meeting.

19/1 **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR PRO TEM**

Nominations were sought for the appointment of a Chair *Pro Tem* of the Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel.

Councillor Rathmell was nominated and seconded and, following a vote, appointed as Chair *Pro Tem* of the Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel.

AGREED that Councillor Rathmell was appointed Chair *Pro Tem* of the Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel, until amended by the Panel.

19/2 **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE SCRUTINY PANEL**

Nominations were sought for the appointment of Chair of the Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel. Councillor Saunders was nominated, seconded and, following a vote, appointed as Chair of the Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel.

ORDERED that Councillor Saunders was appointed Chair of the Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel.

19/3 **APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE SCRUTINY PANEL**

Nominations were sought for the appointment of Vice Chair of the Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel. Councillor Hubbard was nominated, seconded and, following a vote, appointed as Vice Chair of the Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel.

ORDERED that Councillor Hubbard was appointed Vice Chair of the Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel.

19/4 **MINUTES - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE SCRUTINY PANEL - 6 MARCH 2019**

The minutes of the meeting of the Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel held on 6 March 2019 were taken as read and approved as a correct record.

19/5 **OVERVIEW OF SERVICE AREAS**

The Executive Director of Growth and Place gave a presentation in relation Growth and Place, which was made up of three service areas: Environment and Commercial Services, Regeneration and Culture, Communities and Communications.

Growth and Place focussed on the integration of Place, Regeneration and Environment based activities. Place was described as "everything around you in the world outside". The Department impacted on the quality of life, day-to-day experiences and the maintenance of the environment as well as supporting economic growth and promoting Middlesbrough to the outside world. The Council had extensive external relationships in the work it undertook in these areas and worked in close collaboration with the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA).

During several years of austerity, the Council's Change Programme had been in place and cuts and efficiencies had been implemented successfully whilst budgets had been met each year. There had been a £750K underspend in the previous year due to prudent budgeting and ensuring only necessary expenditure.

Despite the circumstances, there had been excellent performance in terms of what was delivered and results from the annual staff survey over the past three years had improved. This evidenced there was a collaborative approach and good engagement with staff.

Environment and Regeneration also delivered a significant part of the Corporate Capital Programme - about 80% of the Council's projects. It was always a challenge to ensure projects were delivered on time, on budget, and achieved what they set out to achieve. There was high assurance on the delivery of major capital projects.

The overall objective for Regeneration was to facilitate the development of Middlesbrough as a vibrant, modern, growing city. Major achievements to date included: development of the Investment Prospectus, Centre Square development, TeesAMP delivery, digital sector growth, Local Plan adoption and housing growth.

In relation to housing growth, the issue of infrastructure was raised as well as the provision of schools. It was highlighted that there was a direct relationship between housing growth and the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) in terms of Council tax and income generated. Most of the new housing development was enabled by the private sector and it was vital to gain investor confidence. Middlesbrough Council's Investment Prospectus published on 2017 included seven projects focussed on the development of: Middlehaven, Centre Square, Business and Enterprise, Railway Station and Historic Quarter, University Quarter, Teesside Media and Innovation Village and Housing Growth.

Middlesbrough had received national recognition for the growth of digital businesses as well as developments in advanced manufacturing. One of the largest employment growth sectors currently was health. The Council supplied staffing support to small digital companies to help them grow, prosper, and invest in opportunities. Another project was investment in the Holiday Inn, the business case for which had been designed to give a financial return to the Council.

One of the risks for regeneration was that it was operating in a market-led economy and subject to downturns. However, the Government had a drive for self-sufficiency which was linked to economic growth.

The Capital Projects team oversaw and delivered the Council's major projects including housing, MHomeS, Centre Square, Snow Centre, Boho, Civic Campus and the recent Town Hall refurbishment.

The Planning Department co-ordinated and delivered land use planning including the statutory Local Plan and master planning, enforcement and compliance, planning applications, building regulations, conservation and listed buildings. It was highlighted that building regulations were now often signed off by private contractors and a suggestion was made that the Council should employ a Clerk of Works to ensure good quality developments.

Once planning permission was granted, the Council did not always have much direct engagement. However, it was envisaged that MHome, the Council's new building company, would have control over the quality and style of building, which would in turn encourage other developers to meet the same standard.

Management of the transport infrastructure included overseeing developments, transport policy and strategies, highway modelling, master planning, highway condition, traffic light systems and parking enforcement. One significant area was improving public transport and ensuring more rail and bus services to increase patronage.

In terms of size and staffing, Environment and Commercial Services was huge, and operationally complex in terms of co-ordination and day-to-day activity. The stated overall objectives for the Environment and Commercial Services were:

- A safe and clean town through provision of excellent operational based services that met citizens' needs.
- Supporting a healthy town: provision of great parks and open spaces by increasing the level of physical and mental health.
- Promoting environmental sustainability.
- Delivery of the Council's property management activities.
- Providing a return on investment through commercial operations.

The service also worked closely with Environment City to promote environmental sustainability. The Council also had a large property portfolio and was responsible for the cleaning, maintenance, opening and closing of buildings.

Future opportunities included increasing the level of resident centred operations in support of the social regeneration agenda and working with community and voluntary groups. The contract for the Haverton Hill incinerator was due to end in 2025 and at the current time there was no alternative. Therefore, the development of a waste disposal facility was an important issue for the Council to resolve. Middlesbrough was working closely with four other authorities to look at cost effective arrangements and also how to increase recycling. Middlesbrough was slightly below average for recycling rates.

The service was also leading on Centre Square Building One: the new civic building for council staff, where a new way of working would be introduced including hot-desking and the paperless office, which was better for the environment.

In 2019/2020 the service area had a significant level of cuts as part of the MTFP and had to find ways of delivering services to residents without affecting the quality. Another risk was maintaining the commercial aspects of the business in a challenging, cost-driven world. It was highlighted that private sector businesses did not always have the same costs to meet as Local Authorities.

Environment Services was the management of the Council's outdoor spaces and provided the following:

- Waste Collection and Recycling: managing the Tees Valley Waste Disposal Contract.
- Area Care: open space management: cleansing, horticultural, arboriculture, playgrounds.
- Parks and Newham Grange Farm.
- Highways Maintenance: reactive maintenance, inspections, winter and gully maintenance.
- Fleet Service and Maintenance.
- Environment enforcement and pest control.
- School Catering.

Property and Commercial Services was about ensuring that property was safe and fit for

purpose, including:

- Asset and Property Management: reactive and cyclical maintenance; energy management.
- Design Services to Council and schools.
- Health and Safety and Emergency response cover.
- Transporter Bridge.
- Bereavement Services.
- Building cleaning and caretaking.
- Integrated Transport Unit.

The spend for both areas was in the region of £56 million per annum and an overview of the strategic budget was included in the presentation for Members' information.

Recent achievements for the service included:

- The Financial Times recognised Middlesbrough as one of the top ten cities for economic growth in 2018.
- 86% of corporate priorities were delivered, on target, in 2018/2019.
- 96% of Directorate priorities were delivered in 2018/2019.
- There was a budget underspend of over £720,000 in 2018/2019.
- All Change Programme and corporate efficiencies had been achieved.
- Six Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) from the Investment Prospectus were on target to be achieved.
- Middlesbrough was the first Local Authority in the north east to adopt a Local Plan and Statement of Community Involvement.

A list of the KPIs for 2019/2020 was provided for Members' information.

Members commented on waste collection, public transport, infrastructure and working with the Tees Valley Combined Authority and the Executive Director responded.

AGREED that the information provided was received and noted.

19/6

ANY OTHER URGENT ITEMS WHICH IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR, MAY BE CONSIDERED

Councillor Branson advised the Panel that he would be attending a conference on City Regional Transport and would provide an overview at the next meeting.

NOTED