



SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

BURNLEY TOWN HALL

Wednesday, 1st June, 2022 at 6.30 pm

PRESENT

MEMBERS

Councillors H Baker (Chair), A Royle (Vice-Chair), Barton, G Birtwistle, S Hall, A Hosker, M Hurt, M Ishtiaq, Launer, S Lone, J McGowan, Sollis and D Whitaker

OFFICERS

Howard Hamilton-Smith – Head of Finance and Property
Paul Gatrell – Head of Housing & Development Control
Eric Dickinson – Democracy Officer
Carol Eddleston – Democracy Officer

IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor S Graham - Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Resources & Performance
Councillor S Hussain - Executive Member for Community & Environmental Services

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Lewis, G Lishman, L Khan and E Payne.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 9th March 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest in any of the items on the agenda.

4. Notice of Key Decisions and Private Meetings

Eric Dickinson, Democracy Officer, reported that the latest iteration of the Notice of Key Decisions and Private Meetings (NKDPM) had been published on 6th May. Going forwards,

Members were invited to look at future iterations of the notice and notify the Chair which items they wanted to be included on Scrutiny Committee meeting agendas as soon as possible thereafter. The next iteration was due to be published on 14th June.

Since 6th May Notice three items had been moved to the July meeting of the Executive: Play Strategy Review, Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme and Youth Investment Fund Application. Members agreed that these three items should be included on the agenda for the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 7th July.

He also reported on an additional Urgent Notice relating which was published due to an Urgent Executive public item on Household Support Fund needing to be dealt with within the 28 day Notice period.

IT WAS AGREED THAT:

1. The following items be included on the agenda for the 7th July meeting: Play Strategy Review, Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme and Youth Investment Fund Application;
2. Members notify the Chair of any additional items listed on subsequent iterations of the NKDPM that they wished to be included on future Scrutiny Committee agendas, and
3. The 6th May NKDPM be noted.

5. Scrutiny Procedure Rules for Noting

Members noted the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (Part 4.5 of the Council's Constitution) which outlined how the Scrutiny Committee operated and fitted into the Council's decision making process.

Eric Dickinson drew members' attention in particular to the sections on the Work Programme, Agenda items, Policy Review and Development, Call-in, and Procedure at Scrutiny Committee Meetings. He also said that members would be welcome to submit any questions on agenda items to Democracy in advance of the Scrutiny Committee meeting, where possible, as this would enable officers to provide a better informed response at the meeting.

IT WAS AGREED THAT:

The Scrutiny Procedure Rules be noted.

6. Tennis Court Improvements and Management

Howard Hamilton Smith, Head of Finance and Property, presented the report which was due to be presented at the meeting of the Executive on 14th June and which informed members of the current position in terms of tennis provision across the Council's green spaces, provided details of the Lawn Tennis Association's (LTA) Capital Parks Funding proposal for Burnley, including operating models for future management/maintenance of

courts, and proposed a way forward for sustainable tennis provision across Burnley in the future.

Members made a number of observations and asked a number of questions to which the Head of Finance and Property responded as follows:

- Although Burnley Tennis Club did a fantastic job, tennis tended to be overlooked and overshadowed by other sports. Were there any plans to promote the availability of tennis provision?
- There would be a good deal of promotional activity when the improvement plan was launched.

- The scheme was commendable but tennis might be perceived as a middle class sport and much more could be done to encourage take-up and to remove barriers, particularly for people who did not have access to equipment, kit and partners.

- The report identified four sites that currently provided tarmac tennis courts for the public to play on all year round but were there any more in the borough?
- A site at Towneley Park with three courts was now more or less derelict and, due to the prohibitive cost of redeveloping the courts, alternative uses of the site were currently under consideration.

- Were usage figures available for the sites in Queen's Park, Park Road, Padiham, Scott Park and Ightenhill Park?
- Where available, figures would be provided after the meeting.

- Why were the tennis courts in Hapton not mentioned in the report?
- This would be followed up after the meeting.

- Was there an audit of all the sports facilities across the borough that Members could view?
- This was available in the Council's [Playing Pitch Strategy 2016-2026 - burnley.gov.uk](https://www.burnley.gov.uk/playing-pitch-strategy-2016-2026)

IT WAS AGREED THAT:

The report be noted with the observations and questions as outlined above.

7. Planning Authority Monitoring Report 2020-21

Elizabeth Murphy, Planning Policy Manager, presented the report which set out the Council's progress in plan making and monitored the performance of policies in the Local Plan to see whether they were helping to deliver the vision and objectives of the Plan as set out and whether there was any need to formally update the Plan.

Members made a number of observations and raised a number of questions to which the Elizabeth Murphy, responded as follows:

- What was the link between the Council's Climate Change Strategy and Planning?
- The Local Plan was aligned to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The 2012 NPPF in relation to climate change was reproduced in the Local Plan and the

2021 version of the NPPF had not changed very much. The Local Plan supported a transition to a low carbon future. One of the key purposes of the AMR was to monitor changes to planning policy. Relevant Council policies were reviewed annually to ensure they were up to date and, as yet, the NPPF on climate change had not moved on much since the Local Plan was adopted and the Council's Climate Change Strategy was still compatible with the NPPF.

- The biodiversity of the town had changed dramatically over the last 10 years, including the disappearance of many birds due to the destruction of habitats and grasses, and there needed to be a review of what had happened around the town and the impact on wildlife.
- The nature of national planning policy had not changed fundamentally. If it did, the Council would react accordingly. Building regulations had been tightened and the Council was continually looking at whether the Local Plan could still deliver.

- What was the difference in terms of social rented tenure between `rented from Council` and `Other social rented`?
- `Rented from Council` was essentially council housing, `Other social rented` was mainly housing rented from Calico. In Burnley Calico managed a lot of what was council housing and the picture from Census data may not be entirely accurate as some residents in Calico properties may describe themselves as renting from the Council.

IT WAS AGREED THAT:

The report be noted.

8. Scrutiny Review Groups

Eric Dickinson referred members to the Scrutiny Work Programme Proposal form which had been designed to assist members in developing their scrutiny review ideas for the work it wanted the committee to carry out over the year.

Each scrutiny review needed to be properly project managed, should have a set of objectives and an initial view on the outcomes that the review would seek to achieve. Wherever possible review groups should be guided by SMART objectives (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound).

Members of the committee were encouraged to complete and return the proposal form after the meeting with ideas to enable an informed discussion at the next meeting on the work the committee wanted to carry out over the year. At that meeting members would be asked to commit to participating in reviews in which they were interested, relevant officers would be identified, and realistic objectives and timeframes considered.

It was suggested that one potential review was of the current decline in the Queensgate/Bank Hall area, where there were sadly a number of people living in cars or in gardens with cardboard boxes for shelter. Identifying the reasons for these issues in this area could then be used to help other parts of the town.

Councillor Royle reported to the committee on a scrutiny review that she had been leading into Calico Homes during 2021/22. She explained that there were a lot of Calico properties in her ward and most of the issues that residents raised with her were about housing. She had tried to go direct to try to resolve issues on behalf of residents but had concluded that conducting a scrutiny review would bring more influence to bear.

A Calico Housing scrutiny review group had been established and Paul Gatrell, the Head of Housing and Development Control, had helped to set up meetings with a Director of Calico. Members had presented evidence to back up residents' concerns, including photographs and written statements. At the last meeting of the Review Group the Director had presented a list of improvements that were to be made to some of the older properties, which included the laying of new roofs and the fitting of new boilers. It had been decided that the review should be kept open and meetings with the Director continue so that progress could be monitored. A written update report would be brought to the next meeting summarising the work of the Review to date..

Councillor Royle said that some members of the review group were no longer members of the committee so she would welcome other members to get involved. It was agreed that Councillors Barton, Sollis and Whitaker would join the group which currently consisted of Councillors Birtwistle, Hosker and Royle.

IT WAS AGREED THAT:

- 1) Councillors Barton, Sollis and Whitaker join the Calico Homes scrutiny review group;
- 2) A written update on the Calico Homes scrutiny review group be presented to the next meeting,
- 3) Members be encouraged to submit completed Scrutiny Work Programme Proposal forms in time for discussion at the next meeting.

9. Work Programme 2022/23

In line with discussions earlier in the meeting, IT WAS AGREED THAT:

The work programme be amended to include the following on the agenda for the next meeting:

- Play Strategy Review
- Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme
- Youth Investment Fund Application
- Annual Report on the State of the Local Economy
- Update on Calico Homes Scrutiny Review
- Scoping of Scrutiny Review of Queensgate/Bank Hall Area
- Consideration of other suggestions for Scrutiny Reviews.

10. Exclusion of the Public

Members determined to exclude the public from the meeting before discussion took place on the items of business relating to minute 11 (Charter Walk Progress 2022-23 and

Proposals), minute 12 (Enforcement and Cash Collection Contract) and minute 13 (Sale of Residential Properties) on the grounds that in the view of the nature of the business to be transacted if the public were present there would be a disclosure to them of exempt information within the meaning of Part VA of the Local Government Act 1972.

11. Charter Walk Progress 2022-23 and Proposals

Howard Hamilton Smith presented an update on the current position with Charter Walk and informed members of proposals for 2022.

Discussion took place around the following:

- The Council already owned the market prior to purchasing Charter Walk but ownership of the wider area would provide the Council with more options going forward;
- Footfall figures pre-, during and post-COVID would be helpful for members
- The Centre for Cities Report 2022 stated that Burnley town centre had been the least affected by the pandemic;
- The artisan market had proven to be very popular;
- Burnley had a bright future ahead;
- Public consultation on proposals for Charter Walk would take place in due course.

IT WAS AGREED THAT:

- 1) The update report on the current position and proposals for 2022 be noted. and
- 2) The information requested by Members be provided outside of the meeting.

12. Enforcement and Cash Collection Contract

Howard Hamilton Smith presented a report relating to the procurement of Parking Enforcement and Cash Collection Services.

Members had a brief discussion on different parking arrangements in smaller towns in East Lancashire and noted that Burnley had tried various ways of reducing car parking charges, such as `Free after 3:00` in Council owned car parks.

IT WAS AGREED THAT:

The recommendations in the report to the Executive be endorsed.

13. Sale of Residential Properties

Paul Gatrell, Head of Housing and Development Control, presented a report on the sale of residential properties.

Discussions included the following:

- Some of the properties identified had been fully renovated to a good standard which was reflected in the valuations referenced in the report. These renovations might include new boiler, new kitchen and new roof.
- Income from the residential sales would be added to the Housing Capital Programme.
- Members would be provided with the original purchase cost to the Council outside of the meeting.
- The Council had a programme to purchase up to 20 empty properties per year with a view to getting them renovated for resale as part of a recycling process.
- The process of the Council purchasing an empty property could vary from 6-12 months up to several years depending on complexity, including identifying the owner and negotiating the purchase.

IT WAS AGREED THAT:

- 1) The recommendations in the report be endorsed, and
- 2) Members be provided with the information requested outside of the meeting.