



SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

BURNLEY TOWN HALL

Thursday, 1st June, 2023 at 6.30 pm

PRESENT

MEMBERS

Councillors G Barton (Chair), B Horrocks (Vice-Chair), H Baker, H Bridges, M Brindle, J Broughton, M Hurt, S Kazmi, J Launer, J McGowan, P Reynolds and F Wild

OFFICERS

Rob Dobson	– Head of Policy and Engagement
Paul Gatrell	– Head of Housing & Development Control
CJ Walmsley	– Democracy Officer

118. Apologies

The Chair welcomed all Members and gave thanks to Councillor Baker for Chairing the Committee through the last municipal year.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Birtwistle and Whitaker.

119. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 8th March 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Arising from the minutes, clarification was sought with regards the signage in the Standish Street area. Paul Gatrell would follow up, along with the query on how many veterans had been assisted by the Ex-Offenders Government Support Grant.

Councillor Barton reported back to the Committee that in respect of how many referrals came from doctors/GPs in relation to Cosy Homes in Lancashire (CHiL), that information could not be provided, as they were not tracked to that level of detail.

120. Additional Items of Business

There were no additional items of business to be considered.

121. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

122. Exclusion of the Public

Exclusion of press and public was as set out in the agenda. There were no private items to be considered.

123. Public Question Time

One member of the public had submitted a request to speak but was not in attendance. No other questions, statements or petitions had been received from members of the public.

124. Scrutiny Procedure Rules for Noting

The Committee was asked to note the Scrutiny Procedure Rules, as per the Council's Constitution, which outlined how the Committee operates and fits into the Council's decision-making process.

The Chair drew particular attention to rules pertaining to Members subject to a party whip and Members' involvement with the work programme and agenda items.

RESOLVED – That the Scrutiny Procedure Rules be noted.

125. Notice of Key Decisions and Private Meetings

Members were asked to note the Notice of Key Decisions and Private Meetings (NKDPM) published on 12th May 2023, subject to the date change of the Allotment Review 2023 and the Acquisition of temporary accommodation to July 2023.

A concern was raised in relation to homeless people outside shops. Reassurance was given that the Homeless Service does engage with people in the Town Centre and offers services.

Members were reminded that should they wish the Committee to consider any items on the NKDPM, they should inform the Chair.

RESOLVED – That the NKDPM of 12th May 2023 be noted.

126. Scrutiny Review Groups

Councillor Hurt and Wild declared a personal interest in the Calico Review Group update, as Calico tenants.

Paul Gatrell gave a verbal update on the Review Groups for 2022/23. The Calico review had been concluded. It was reported that previously there had been a 6 monthly invite to Calico. A meeting had taken place with the new Managing Director, and it was reported

that they were happy to continue to attend and update the Committee. It was felt that it was important to maintain a Member/Calico relationship and continue the dialogue with Calico. It was felt that once the MD had settled into post an invite should be issued.

It was queried whether the Council could be included on the membership of the Board, as it had been previously. It was advised that the transfer agreement would outline if there was any entitlement to Board membership, and if so, that would need to be determined by Council.

Paul Gatrell would circulate the Calico Annual Report to the Committee for information.

A further update was given on the Queensgate Review Group. Meetings had taken place between Councillors Birtwistle and Royle, and community representatives. Actions had been followed up and the Review concluded.

It was suggested that the Review continue, but with the possibility of Ward Councillors taking up instead. Councillor Birtwistle could provide a further update at the next meeting.

Members were referred to the Scrutiny Work Programme Proposal form which was intended to assist Members in developing their scrutiny review ideas for the coming year. Each 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 with ideas to enable an informed discussion at the next meeting. Members would also be asked to commit to participating in reviews in which they were interested, relevant officers would be identified, and realistic objectives and timeframes considered.

The Head of Policy and Engagement outlined a proposal for a Review Group that would look at the use of Chatbots in the Liberata Contact Centre. One of the contract objectives was increased performance in answering calls, and therefore Liberata wanted to change how calls are handled. Chatbots would signpost callers to how they can complete certain business online, which would free up customer advisors to answer/deal with more technical calls. The Committee could look at how the Chatbot may work, the impact, and make recommendations for implementation/improvement. Whilst it would increase performance against the key performance indicator, the usefulness needed to be determined,

It was felt that wider customer service also needed to be looked at in terms of being equipped to deal with volume and complexity of calls.

It was also reported that it was year 7 of a 10-year contract with Liberata, with the possibility of a 2-year extension. Therefore, whilst the contract wasn't up for negotiation, a value for money exercise was to be conducted. It was stressed that the Council's Executive wanted the Scrutiny Committee to be involved, so a focussed Review Group could ensure a robust analysis.

The Committee agreed that a Review Group for this area should be formed and Councillors Baker, Barton, Horrocks, S Kazmi, Launer and Wild volunteered to sit on the Group.

A further suggestion was made in relation to a Review Group to look at climate change and the Council's strategy. The Council was tasked with developing a strategy and assessing carbon use. It was felt that Scrutiny input could be beneficial to the strategy, before delivering the report to Full Council.

Members also felt that there could be benefit in community partners attending, and having input in Scrutiny meetings. Co-optees were within the remit of the Council's Scrutiny Procedure rules and therefore the option needed to be explored.

- RESOLVED
- (1) That the update on the previous year's review groups be noted;
 - (2) That the new Managing Director of Calico Homes be invited to provide the Scrutiny Committee with an update in the coming months;
 - (3) That Members submit completed Scrutiny Work Programme Proposal forms in time for discussion at the next meeting;
 - (4) That a Liberata Customer Service/Chatbot Review Group be established and Councillors Baker, Barton, Horrocks, S Kazmi, Launer and Wild sit on that group;
 - (5) That a climate change Review Group be considered; and
 - (6) That co-opting community group representatives onto the Committee be explored.

127. Work Programme 2023/24

The Committee considered the draft work programme for 2023/24. The Chair highlighted the importance of the finance reports and also the inclusion of the Planning Authority Monitoring Report 2021/22 for the next meeting.

The Licensing Policy item scheduled for September was to be removed as it was a stand-alone item in the previous municipal year.

RESOLVED – That the work programme for 2023/24 be noted.