



SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

BURNLEY TOWN HALL

Thursday, 13th February, 2020 at 6.30 pm

PRESENT

MEMBERS

Councillors A Tatchell (Chair), M Johnstone (Vice-Chair), H Baker, T Commis, A Fewings, S Lone, P McCann, L Mehanna, A Newhouse, L Pate, E Payne and M Townsend

OFFICERS

Lukman Patel	– Chief Operating Officer
Asad Mushtaq	– Head of Finance and Property
Simon Goff	– Head of Green Spaces and Amenities
Amy Johnson	– Principal Accountant
Andrew Leah	– Property Services Manager
Richard Brown	– Community Safety Officer
Eric Dickinson	– Democracy Officer

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor Maggie Lishman – Exec Member for Resources and Performance Management
Councillor Cosima Towneley – Exec Member for Economy and Growth
David Aspin - Liberata
Rob McKay - UK Restorations
Phil Kirby - UK Restorations

53. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Bea Foster and Dale Ferrier.

54. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st January 2020 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

55. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Andy Tatchell declared an Other (Prejudicial) Interest in Item 17 on the agenda relating to the Towneley Hall Capital Works and Town Hall Update.

56. Notice of Key Decisions and Private Meetings

IT WAS AGREED

That the 28 day Notice of Key Decisions and Private Meetings for the 17th February 2020 Executive be noted.

57. Community Safety Annual Report

Richard Brown presented the Community Safety report for 2019/20 and set out the Community Safety Projects and Activity in Burnley for 2019/20, as well as the proposed activity for 2020/21.

Members asked the following questions;

- If alleygates are removed from pre 2008 alleygating schemes, are residents still responsible for the backstreet?
It was stated that residents would still be responsible as the land was made private at the time of gating.

IT WAS AGREED

That the report be noted.

58. Revenue Budget Q3

Amy Johnson reported on Revenue Budget Monitoring Q3 to 31 December 2019. She highlighted the salary and non-salary savings.

Members asked the following questions;

- Had the non -salary savings been taken out of the budget?
It was stated that it had been built into the base of the budget.

IT WAS AGREED

That the report be noted.

59. Capital Budget Q3

Amy Johnston reported on Capital Monitoring Q3 to 31st December 2019.

Members asked the following questions;

- Why was there a transfer of 150k from Vacant Property Initiative to General Capital Receipts?
Finance would provide the answer to Members in due course.

IT WAS AGREED

That the report be noted.

60. Revenue Budget 2020/21

Asad Mushtaq presented a report on the Capital Budget 2020/21.

Members discussed paragraph 20 regarding the proposed involvement of Scrutiny Committee with a Community Skips project, and referred to the results of a report regarding the effectiveness of community skips during 2018/19.

Members also asked the following questions;

- Was New Homes Bonus (NHB) only for one year now?
It was stated that the Government had redesigned NHB and it was confirmed as only being for one year.
- Why could collection rates of Council Tax not be protected by putting a charge against property?
It was stated that enforcement against non- payment of Council Tax was a complicated area of law and in some cases was not effective as some properties were in negative equity.
- What was the 40k growth item for the LDS paying for?
It was stated that it was for a one -off fee for consultants

IT WAS AGREED

(1) That the report be noted; and

(2) That relating to Paragraph 20 and the Community Skips Project, the Scrutiny Committee would consider a comprehensive report from Officers to enable it to consider all the issues in good time, prior to any decision being made on the project at the Executive

61. Medium Term Financial Strategy

Asad Mushtaq presented a report on the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Members asked the following questions;

- Why has there been no allowance made for an increase in business rates revenue?
It was stated that there had been a number of challenges by businesses to their rateable values, and that there was some concern if the Government was to recalibrate the base line for business rates in order to make growth the new normal.

IT WAS AGREED

That the report be noted

62. Capital Budget 2020/21 and Capital Investment Programme

Asad Mushtaq presented the Capital Budget 2020/21 and Capital Investment Programme.

Members asked the following questions;

- What is the value of the Town Hall and was it feasible to replace it?
It was stated that it was Grade 2 listed building and a heritage asset.
- Regarding the Capital Receipts and Contributions analysis for 2019/20 and CIP 2021-25 why is the programme not in balance as generally in previous years and now showing a deficit?
It was stated that the easy big capital receipts were no longer available and now the Council had to prioritise health and safety issues, wind and water protection and maintain its income returns. It was also stated that borrowing was currently at historic low interest rates.

IT WAS AGREED

That the report be noted.

63. Treasury Management and Prudential Borrowing

Amy Johnson presented the Treasury Management and Prudential Borrowing report.

IT WAS AGREED

That the report be noted.

64. Scrutiny Review Groups

The Chair reported on the progress of the Committee's Working Groups.

He indicated that the Railway Working Group had recently met and was aiming to present a report to the next Scrutiny Committee on the 11th March 2020 with a view to making recommendations to the Executive.

He also indicated that a meeting took place with Calico as part of the Private Sector Housing Working Group regarding a communications facility, and that it was also aiming to present a report to the next Scrutiny Committee on the 11th March 2020 with a view to making recommendations.

Members also discussed Minute 51 (21st January 2020 Scrutiny Committee) and what work the Working Group would do regarding the Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

IT WAS AGREED

(1) That the report be noted; and

(2) That Democracy would contact Scrutiny Members for any volunteers to look at the issues with the SPD in parallel with the consultation which was currently taking place, and that any outcomes would be looked at by Scrutiny in good time before it was considered by the Executive.

65. Work Programme 2019/20

IT WAS AGREED

That the Work Programme 2019/20 be noted.

66. Exclusion of the Public

That the public be excluded from the meeting before discussion takes place on the items relating to minute 67 in 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 Paragraph 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

67. Towneley Hall Capital Works and Town Hall Update

Councillor Andy Tatchell left the room for this item and was not involved in the debate or vote.

Councillor Marcus Johnstone (Vice -Chair) took the Chair for this item.

David Aspin, Rob McKay, and Phil Kirby gave a presentation to Members on an update of the Town Hall Capital Works including a number of options for future work on the Town Hall.

Members asked a number of questions about the options for the Town Hall, their costs and sustainability.

Simon Goff also reported on Capital Works for Towneley Hall.

IT WAS AGREED

That all the recommendations in the report be endorsed to the Executive, and that Option 3 on page 23 of the presentation regarding future Town Hall Capital Works be recommended to the Executive.