

Scrutiny Committee update

At our last meeting, as part of Scrutiny's statutory duty we noted, scrutinised and asked questions of clarification from officers on the following financial based reports:

Revenue Monitoring report 2019/20 – Quarter 3

Capital Monitoring Report 2019/20 Quarter 3

Revenue Budget 2020/21

Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021/22 to 2024/25 incorporating the Reserves Strategy

Capital Budget for 2020/21 and Capital Investment Program 2020/25

2020/21 Treasury Management Strategy and 2020/21 – 2022/23 Prudential and Treasury Indicators

The Scrutiny Committee received and considered an item taken in private (Chair declared an interest and stood down) regarding Towneley Hall Capital Works and Burnley Town Hall updates.

Also, as part of our statutory duty we considered the Community Safety Annual Report and were able to satisfy ourselves that the Borough remains pro-active with strong partnership arrangements in place despite the continued atmosphere of austerity facing these agencies.

Since my last report in December 2019 the Scrutiny Railway Working Group has met with the Stakeholder Manager for Northern Rail and the Head of Economy and Growth to discuss progress on Burnley Manchester Road Station. Issues such as the car park on the former ambulance station site, access to platform 2, disabled facilities and tourist information displays were discussed at length. The group has now concluded its review and will be reporting its findings to the full Scrutiny Committee on 11th March 2020 with a view to making recommendations in a report to the Executive.

Our second Review Group this Council year was set up to look at housing issues for tenants and in particular how Calico manages and prioritises its repairs program. The Working Group has now met with Calico and has established the need for a better line of communication than presently exists for elected members. Following these constructive discussions a report will go before the next full Scrutiny Committee in March 2020 outlining the suggested solutions and a strategic way forward to improve links with members and establish monitoring and reporting checks going forward.

Members have also considered the Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and have decided to set up a Working Group to look at issues in parallel with the public consultation currently taking place. Our object in doing this would be to access all the information, including the consultation results when available, in good time before Executive consideration takes place.

Finally, within the Budget monitoring reports was a request for Scrutiny to look at the re-introduction of Community Skips. The Scrutiny Committee resolved to consider a comprehensive report from officers in the usual way to enable us to scrutinise all the relevant issues in good time, prior, of course, to any decision being made by the Executive.

Councillor Andy Tatchell Chair of Scrutiny February 2020

Audit and Standards Committee update

External Auditor Progress Report – January 2020

The External Audit team gave an update on their activities and plans and provided a summary of number of emerging local authority issues. They outlined their team changes and provided a summary of recent grant certification work. At a national level there is an exercise in progress into the future shape of local authority auditing.

Final Accounts 2019/20 Arrangements

This briefed the committee on the preparations for the Statement of Accounts for the Financial year ending in March 2020. The Accounting policies to be used were presented, which are part of the statement. The risks for the delivery of the accounts were discussed, in particular the arrangements for key council staff involved in preparing the accounts, and the steps that had been taken to control this risk.

Annual Governance Statement 2019/20 Arrangements

The AGS is presented alongside the accounts to document the internal control and wider governance system that the Council has had in place for the year. The report covered the preparations for this, and this was consistent with previous years.

Internal Audit Progress Report Quarter 2

The oversight of Audit activity is part of the role of the committee and the most recently available quarters report was provided. This outlines summaries of issued reports and issues as well as updates on the planned activity.

Fraud Risk Assessment

This is an annual report of both the major fraud issues faced by the Council and its arrangements to address these issues. There was discussion on Cyber fraud and the challenges that this presents to the Council. The outcomes from the two-yearly National Fraud Initiative data matching exercise were also provided.

Strategic Risk Register

The Committee considered the updates to the Strategic Risk Register since the last meeting. Two risk scored had changed and some risk triggers and outcomes were revised.

Standards Complaint Under the Council's Code of Conduct Update

This was the noting at the committee of the report which had been provided to Full Council. The Committee's hearing panel had heard the complaint in December.

Development Control Committee update

In recent months Development Control Committee have dealt with a wide variety of planning applications that will contribute to the growth and prosperity of Burnley. Members recently considered the application to develop Land at Curzon Street and the Pioneer Car park for a brand-new development that will see a mix of retail and leisure uses including a new Multi-Screen Cinema Complex. This will have a huge impact on Burnley Town Centre compliment and expanding the current offer that our Town Centre provides for our residents and visitors.

As well as large scale developments planning Committee also regularly consider applications for conversions and change of use to ensure that our existing buildings throughout the Town accommodate the current and future needs of our borough. At recent committees we have seen a large unused residential premises granted permission for a house in multiple occupation and commercial space at St. Mathew's St., a former Warehouse on Claremont St. granted permission for conversion to apartments and the old nightclub on Tunnel St. granted permission to operate as a nursery. All these permissions help ensure that we make best use of our assets and meet the needs of our current and future residents and businesses.

Equally important is the work that Committee do in determining applications for single house extensions. Whilst these proposals are significantly smaller in scale, they are the ones that have a significant impact on our residents and allow people to improve their homes and meet the aspirations of their families.

Licensing Committee update

Licensing Committee is established as the Council's regulatory committee principally concerned with carrying out the authority's licensing functions.

The business of the main committee is generally around local policy matters, local licence conditions and taxi fee setting. The business of the Sub-committees usually takes the form of a 'Hearing' to make decisions in relation to various applications and reviews of new and existing licences.

Since May 2019 Licensing Committee has set up training for its membership, appointed Members to the sub-committees and set new taxi fees effective from January 2020.

The taxi Sub-Committees have held 4 taxi hearings and 3 premises hearings. Two taxi driver licences were refused, one revoked and another subject to no further action. Two premises had additional conditions imposed on their licences, one was subject to no further action.

The decisions can be appealed to the courts. Only one of these decisions has been appealed with a court date set for March 2020.

The current priorities for 2020 include; the statutory review of the Licensing Act policy ready for a decision at Full Council in December 2020 and air quality work including the Council's successful bid to provide four electric vehicle charge-points. The charging infrastructure will be supported by a programme of trade engagement to accelerate the introduction of electric hackney & private hire vehicles onto the fleet, which will be complemented by an appropriate policy framework.