



SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

BURNLEY TOWN HALL

Monday, 25th July, 2022 at 6.30 pm

PRESENT

MEMBERS

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

OFFICERS

Kate Ingram	– Strategic Head of Economy and Growth
Wilma Waddingham	– Housing Needs Officer
Carol Eddleston	– Democracy Officer

IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor Mark Townsend – Executive Member for Economy and Growth

29. Apologies

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Councillor McGowan and Chief Operating Officer Lukman Patel.

30. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 7th July 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

31. Declarations of Interest

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

32. Shared Prosperity Fund

Kate Ingram, the Strategic Head of Economy and Growth presented the proposed UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Investment Plan which was due to be submitted to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities by 1st August 2022.

The funds replaced EU funding streams including ESIF and ERDF which had, hitherto, been delivered on a county wide basis. Across the county the amount of SPF funding available was approximately 40% less than the current European Funding Programmes. Burnley Borough Council had been allocated £3,488,102.00 over the next three years, heavily backloaded into year three.

In developing the Investment Plan officers had assessed 41 prescribed interventions against the Council's priorities in the Economic Recovery and Growth Strategy and the Community Recovery Plan to assess best fit with local priorities. These were identified in Appendix 4. There were also some interventions which overlapped and the best fit had been chosen for ease of administration. Since the agenda papers had been published it had been proposed that intervention E5 (page 21) be struck out as there was nothing in it that could not be delivered under intervention E3, and E34 (page 23) had been struck out similarly due to its overlap with E33.

Members asked a number of questions and made a number of observations as follows:

- What was the reduction in funding in relation to the former European programmes? – Across the county it was approximately 40% but Burnley had probably had a greater share due to the number of employment and skills initiatives underway..
- It was a good report but there was nothing in there aimed at improving the desperate housing situation in certain parts of the borough, including in Queensgate, Bank Hall, Daneshouse and Gannow – There were no prescribed interventions around housing stock for the Council to select.
- There was nothing in there relating to capital funding to assist manufacturing industries to expand and upskill their workforce. – The Council had considered a capital grant scheme, but there was insufficient funding in the programme for a meaningful scheme. The Council had its own fund to assist businesses. With regard to skills there were lots of other funding streams available, including to colleges, to deliver skills programmes for manufacturing businesses.
- There was a desperate shortage of staff in health and social care but rates of pay were so low – combined with support there were opportunities for people to move into jobs.
- This was a good report but the amount available from the government was derisory.
- What would the Colne Road Enhancements (E1) look like? – these would be environmental enhancements that would be co-designed with local residents and shopkeepers.
- It was uncomfortable to read that 92% of Burnley's economically inactive population (neither in employment nor unemployed) did not actually want a job.
- Those running skills and work programmes regularly said that they needed to get more people onto the programmes. Did something need to be done differently? – SPF offered an opportunity to do things differently rather than responding to targets set at a national and regional level that were not always relevant. The Council was working with a number of local organisations to develop a programme that better met the needs of local people who needed this kind of provision.

- Whether these programmes would create a group of people who were more inclined to work was not known but this could only be addressed by a long term coherent programme with funding to support it.
- The overall levelling up programme was all about 'little bits of goodies' and the overall position in terms of investment in levelling up was going down and the people who suffered most were the people who lived in places like Burnley. Every other substantial, developed nation was putting more money into its economy. There was a systemic problem in the UK that needed to be addressed.
- It was important to remember that the country was just emerging from COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine was pushing up fuel prices.
- Why did 21% of the workforce have no qualifications? – This was in part down to aspirations and motivation. However, not all of these individuals would be unemployed.
- Addressing low aspirations, motivation and self reliance was part of what the Council was trying to address in its Economic Strategy. It was important to raise these among parents so that they in turn could raise these in their children. In addition to parenting the level of teaching in schools was also a factor.

In concluding the discussion, the Chair informed the meeting that he was minded to approve a waiver of call-in on the decision to be taken at the Executive on 27th July, due to the urgency of the implementation of the decision. The Investment Plan had to be submitted by 1st August or it would not be considered by central government. Members were supportive of a waiver of call-in.

IT WAS AGREED THAT

- 1) The report and appendices be noted, and
- 2) The committee support the Chair's intention to approve a waiver of call-in on the decision to be taken by the Executive at its meeting on 28th July 2022.

33. Exclusion of the Public

Members determined to exclude the public from the meeting before discussion took place on the following item of business on the grounds that 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 part 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

34. Rough Sleeping Programme

Wilma Waddingham, Housing Needs Manager, presented a report which sought approval to accept a capital and revenue grant funding award from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in order to establish a rough sleeping accommodation programme in Burnley.

Members were mindful of the increase in recent years of housing advice enquiries, households at risk of homelessness and the demand for temporary accommodation. They were supportive of initiatives to improve the provision of temporary home in the borough and reduce the risk of rough sleeping.

IT WAS AGREED

That the report be noted.