

Minutes of the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee Meeting held on 6 March 2015

Present: Brian Edwards (Chairman)

Attendance

George Adamson	Rev. Preb. M. Metcalf
Ann Beech	Sheree People
Len Bloomer	Martyn Tittley (Vice-Chairman)
Maureen Compton	Paul Woodhead
Tim Corbett	Candice Yeomans
Geoff Martin	

Also in attendance: Mark Deaville and Mark Winnington

Apologies: Ben Adams, James Bailey and Geoff Morrison

PART ONE

34. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

35. Minutes of the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee held on 23 January 2015

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee held on 23 January 2015 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

36. Infrastructure+

The Cabinet Support Member introduced the report and the Head of Place Delivery went through the report in detail, updating Members on the progress that had been made on contract mobilisation and management arrangements. Details of the business cases referred to in paragraph 10 of the report could be made available to Members on request. Members' attention was drawn to highways development and improvements. This is a growth area with more government funding being invested for infrastructure investment.

In regard to ICT systems good progress has been made in the implementation of the new ICT system which facilitates automatic responses back to the members of the public who report issues. The intention is to link with the Council's CRM system, once issues regarding ICT security have been addressed.

The Head of Place Delivery explained that the Strategic Partnership Board meets on a quarterly basis to address issues regarding budget and performance management and risk assurance. The Operational Commissioning Board is made up of County Council

Heads of Service and senior managers from Amey. This Board addresses operational issues and develops the business plan. Project Management Teams sit below the Operational Commissioning Board, and are made up of operational managers. A number of Outcome Groups are being established to give an external view on what the partnership is achieving in the four priority areas: social value; volunteering; environmental and customer information/involvement.

Members were asked how they would like to be involved in the governance of the contract and were offered the opportunity to examine detailed documents including performance reports. Members were reassured that the governance structure for the partnership did not replace the County Council's democratic decision making processes. Members welcomed the improvements that had been made in customer information/involvement and with reference to parish councils reminded officers that those parts of Staffordshire without parish councils would want to have information and be involved. Members requested an organisational chart that would illustrate the partnership structure.

Members stated that with regard to "Partnership working with the District Councils and City Councils" there might be opportunities to work with parish councils, specifically in regard to maintenance of grass verges and asked that this be explored. The Cabinet Support Member responded that he was keen to encourage locality working and requested that Members ask parish councils that were interested in partnership working to contact the County Council.

Members asked if the Strategic Partnership Board met in public and if opposition Members could attend. The Cabinet Member responded that the meeting was a closed meeting as commercially sensitive issues were discussed.

Members asked that the language used in reporting back to customers be reviewed as it was technical and not customer friendly.

Members asked for clarification as to how volunteers might get involved. The Cabinet Member stated that volunteers are critical to help with Rights of Way and Shugborough for example and volunteering had a beneficial impact on their health and wellbeing. He requested that potential volunteers be directed to the County Council's website. He added that members of the public volunteering information was critical to dealing with issues promptly and had a major impact on resources. Any concerns should be reported through the staffordshire.gov.uk website. The Council uses social media and an app. is being developed. With regard to future member involvement the Chairman proposed that a small Working Group be set up in June to consider how the Committee might be involved in the governance of the contract.

RESOLVED – a) The Head of Place Delivery provide Members with an organisational chart that would illustrate the partnership structure b) The Head of Place Delivery feedback concerns regarding the technical language used in reporting back to the public, with a view to making it more customer-friendly c) A Working Group be set up in June 2015 to advise the Committee on how they might be involved in the governance of the Infrastructure+ contract.

37. Staffordshire's Learning Infrastructure Forecast

The Commissioner for Education and Wellbeing introduced the Staffordshire Learning Infrastructure Forecast and drew Members' attention to the organisation design diagram circulated with the papers, specifically to the Access to Learning part of the flowchart, to which the SLIF addresses. The challenges the Council faces were summarised with escalating demand and new pressures emerging. In response to this a 'Forecast' had been developed reflecting the dynamic environment that the Council is aiming to respond to e.g. new housing developments. The importance of working closely with borough and district council planning departments was stressed to ensure that we get the necessary funding from financial sources. Population growth in Staffordshire mirrored growth in the country as a whole and had a major impact on the demand for school places. Over the last five years 2,200 new primary school places and over 200 secondary school places had been created through schools maximising use of their accommodation, and a capital investment of £33m had been made. The School Organisation team was being expanded. However, as illustrated in Appendix B to the report, Total Basic Need allocations from central government have reduced over time and government funding is short term, whereas building school projects are long-term. Section 106 monies received through leverage agreements with planning authorities and developers have increased, reflecting population increases, but changes in the Community Infrastructure Levy legislation will result in a reduction in the amount of monies received through "planning obligations". The Capital Investment Scenario in Figure 6 of Appendix B provided a model reflecting the assumption of finance from government and housing developers. The Council was reasonably confident on the S106 from Strategic Development Allocation (SDA) figures quoted but drew Members' attention to the funding gap of £32m - £72.5m. This report reflected the opportunities and challenges that the Council faced and Officers welcomed an opportunity for an early conversation with Members and indicated that more detail about the county's Strategic Infrastructure Plan would be made available later in the summer 2015.

Members sought reassurance that 1300 houses in the Pye Green Valley housing development had been taken into account in the diagram on the location and number of homes on SDAs. Officers stated that this had already been taken into account in earlier calculations.

Members asked for clarification on the New Mainstream Places diagram, specifically why the potential growth of secondary places in the next 15 years in Cannock Chase District was '0'. It was explained that the Potential Growth figure was over and above what could currently be met.

Members referred to Neighbourhood Plans being developed by their local Town Councils and asked if the different plans correlated. Officers responded that the SLIF was being brought to Members at an early stage to ensure that they were aware of the challenges and potential financial shortfall and they asked that Members' assist them in making local councils aware of the SLIF.

Members were concerned that a significant financial shortfall had been identified with no proposals as to how it might be filled. There was no easy answer to filling the gap, but in identifying the gap attempts would now be made to draw funding in. Members suggested a communications strategy be developed to ensure that local councils are

aware of the challenges. Local conversations had begun with local Members, local planning authorities and schools. Members referred to the challenges in their own areas and asked that conversations take place with diocesan representatives.

Members thanked officers for the organogram and suggested that a cash flow diagram would be helpful. The Commissioner stated that further information was available but some was commercially sensitive. The SLIF represented an attempt to bring individual school development projects together into one document. Locality plans would be available in summer 2015. Members requested that plans were shared with all schools (head teachers and Chairs of governing bodies) including those in areas where no housing developments are planned, separate to the District briefings that already take place.

RESOLVED - a) That the Committee endorses the proposal that a priority is placed on the strategic development of Staffordshire's Learning Infrastructure Forecast in the 2015/16 business planning year b) That the Committee consider within their work programme the necessary alignment of wider planning, prioritisation and capital programme decisions where significant interdependencies exist in order to support delivery of the SLIF c) That the SLIF is shared with all schools, including those in areas where no housing developments are planned, separate to the District briefings d) A further update, with locality plans, be brought to the Committee in late summer 2015.

38. Case Study of Ironman 70.3 Staffordshire

The Cabinet Member introduced this item drawing Members' attention to the economic and health impact of the Council's success in successfully bidding for the three year Ironman 70.3 (and UK Corporate Games) contracts. The events will take place in Staffordshire on 14 and 26 June respectively. Members received a presentation given by the Sportshire Co-ordinator and watched a promotional video. 2,600 competitors from 36 countries have signed up for the event. A run only Iron Kids event will be held on 13 June at Shugborough with 500 athletes already signed up. The projected annual economic benefit of £2.7m is expected. Paul Woodhead offered to promote the event on Cannock Radio. Members asked for reassurance that we had adequate accommodation to meet visitors' expectations. The Sportshire Co-ordinator assured Members that accommodation needs would be met and explained that the Shugborough campsite at the Education Centre would accommodate 1,000 visitors and that Yurts and outside accommodation would be available. The Chairman asked if enough volunteers had been attracted to support the event. The Director of the Sports across Staffordshire Partnership explained that the Partnership was working with local charities and he was confident that there would be enough volunteers to support the events. Members congratulated the Director of Sports across Staffordshire Partnership and the Sportshire Co-ordinator for their achievements.

RESOLVED – a) That the Committee endorses the principles underpinning the County Council's Sportshire vision (particularly in relation to major events) in the context of the Council's business priorities.

39. The SACRE Annual Report 2013-14

The Chair of SACRE introduced the report. He had asked that the Committee receive the report and thanked the County Council for their support. He was pleased to report that in spite of academies developing independently of local authority structures there was ongoing coherence in regard to the delivery of religious education and collective worship in schools. All schools are using the networks and agreed syllabus and taking advantage of the professional support commissioned through Entrust. The SACRE Code of Conduct had been developed and has enabled the discussion of sensitive areas to forestall misuse of SACRE. Examination results have shown a good number of pupils take religious studies to Full Course GCSE level and a letter of congratulations has gone out to those who have achieved grades A* to C. SACRE is a harmonious body that has never been inquorate, however if a vote was required, each member would have a single vote. A new syllabus for religious education is now being drawn up with discussions with various agencies taking place. The Chair of SACRE drew Members' attention to the fact that SACRE does not have any additional funding to support the creation of a new Agreed Syllabus and so and is looking at ways of drawing down funding for school improvement. Members thanked the Chair of SACRE for his update.

RESOLVED – That the report be received.

40. Work Programme

The Scrutiny and Support Manager summarised the Work Programme and asked Members if they would agree to a workshop being held to discuss the Countryside Estate Management Review prior to a Cabinet decision planned for 21 October 2015.

RESOLVED – a) That the amendments noted above be made to the work programme
b) It was agreed that a workshop on Countryside Estate Management Review be held in late August/early September 2015.

Chairman