

EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD: 30 SEPTEMBER 2010

Start: 7.30pm

Finish: 10.05pm

PRESENT:

Councillor: O'Toole (Chairman)

Councillors: Mrs Atherley Hennessey
Mrs Blake Mawdsley
Coyle Moran
Cropper Nolan
Evans R A Pendleton
Furey Pope
Gartside Pratt
Grice Tattersall
Hanlon

In attendance:

Councillors: Cotterill (Leader of the Labour Group)
Grant (Leader)
Fowler (Portfolio Holder Community Services and Health)
Owens (Portfolio Holder Regeneration and Estates)
Westley (Portfolio Holder Finance and Performance Management)

Officers:

Executive Manager Housing and Property Maintenance Services
(Mr B Livermore)
Executive Manager Regeneration and Estates (Mrs J Traverse)
Head of Leisure and Cultural Services (Mr J Nelson)
Deputy Treasurer (Mr M Kostrzewski)
Legal Services Manager (Mr T P Broderick)
Principal Overview and Scrutiny Officer (Mrs C A Jackson)

In attendance:

Chairman of West Lancashire Community Leisure Ltd. (Mr J Bullock)
Contracts Manager, West Lancashire Community Leisure Ltd. (Mr M Snaylam)

13. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

14. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4, Members noted the termination of membership of Councillor G M Roberts and the appointment of Councillor Mrs Atherley for this meeting only, thereby giving effect to the wishes of the Political Groups.

15. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It is noted that the Code of Conduct in relation to personal and prejudicial interests of Cabinet Members when they have a decision is overridden by Section 21(13) of the Local Government Act 2000.

1. Councillor Grice declared a personal and prejudicial interest in item no. 7 (Leisure Trust Update) in view of him being appointed by Council to serve on the Leisure Trust Board and left the Chamber during the discussion of this item.
2. Councillor Cotterill declared a personal interest in item 7 (Leisure Trust Update) in relation to references to Homestart West Lancs. as he is a member of their management committee.
3. Councillors Mrs Atherley, Mrs Blake, Cotterill, Cropper, Mrs Evans, Fowler, Gartside, Grant, Pope, Pratt and Westley declared personal interests in relation to relevant lines in the budget in respect of item 14 (Capital Programme Outturn 2009/10) in view of their (or their spouse's) membership of Parish Councils.
4. Councillors Cropper and Westley declared a personal interest in item 8(a) (Called-in item - Sponsorship of Roundabouts and Other Parts of the Highway Infrastructure) in view of his membership of Lancashire County Council.

17. DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of a party whip.

18. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 1 July 2010 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

19. LEISURE TRUST UPDATE

Consideration was given to the presentation by John Bullock, Chairman and Mark Snaylam, Contracts Manager of West Lancashire Community Leisure as contained on pages 249 to 262 of the Book of Reports. The presentation included:

- An introduction from the Chairman of the Trust
- The trustees and a profile of their responsibilities
- Activities and initiatives undertaken during 2009/10
- An overview of the contract which runs until March 2020
- Facilities at Nye Bevan, Park Pool, Skelmersdale, Burscough and Banks Leisure Centre and the membership/user numbers
- Income and patronage – a 6% increase in income and 4% patronage increase in patronage for 2009. 21% increase in patronage from 2004 to 2009.

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- Operational Highlights including – increased in patronage year on year from 2004, closer links with the PCT; community based special events; closer links to National Governing Bodies, Partnership working with Young People’s Service (YPS) to help reduce instances of juvenile nuisance around Skelmersdale; External H & S audits improvements in scores; Investment in Burscough & Nye Bevan Gyms of £300k; partnership working with local clubs and organisations; attracting additional funding into West Lancashire; Improved Quest scores; closer links with local schools and generating an operational surplus resulting in a surplus share of 2009
- Challenges including – Managing energy costs; increasing patronage with a down turn in the market; moving the operation from good to great; “skills pledge”; positive difference to communities; engagement with partners and stakeholders; “slow-down” of Skelmersdale town centre development.
- Opportunities including – investment in facilities; web centric marketing; 5 hour offer for sport funding through Sport England and Lottery; Maximising PCT links and the wider health agenda; enhancing “value for money” offering; reduction of environmental impact

In concluding the presentation the Operations Manager indicated that the way forward for the Trust would be to: increase patronage; continually improve the facilities with a capital investment of £¾ million for 2010-2011; continue to develop staff and work closer with partners and community groups, and to offer more participation opportunities through Trust funding.

Comments and questions were raised in respect of the following:

- Current levy of subsidy and how calculated
- Tendering opportunities in relation to the proposed Skelmersdale Sports Centre
- The GP Referral Scheme and links as GP commissioning develops
- Club/Schools Sports Development and opportunities
- Concessions for the over 60’s, for example free swimming sessions
- Cost and usage of large inflatables at Nye Bevan and Ormskirk Pools.
- Improving the entrance to Nye Bevan Pool
- Swimming concessions particularly for youngsters
- Relationship between Council, Trust and Serco
- The future of the Trust
- Membership packages to encourage use of leisure facilities
- Opportunities linked to Olympics 2012
- Income breakdown – percentage from charges and income via retail
- Investment of capital
- Long term plans for Skelmersdale Sports Centre and Digmoor Community Centre
- Asbestos and air monitoring at Skelmersdale Sports Centre
- The quality benchmark QUEST and the assessment processes.

The Contracts Manager and Head of Leisure & Cultural Services provided responses to the comments and questions raised.

In further discussion reference was made to:

- The increase in usage since 2005
- The work of the volunteers
- Impact on the communities accessing leisure facilities
- The link to the 2012 Olympics and getting communities involved.
- Some of the new initiatives introduced during 2009/10, for example the Schools Triathlon
- Impact on usage figures linked to the closure during the period of Wigan Pool and retention rate when that facility reopened.

On behalf of the Committee the Chairman thanked the representatives from the Leisure Trust for their attendance and the informative presentation.

RESOLVED: A. That the representatives from the Leisure Trust be thanked for their presentation and attendance.

B. That the presentation and comments raised be noted.

20. CALLED IN ITEMS

Consideration was given to the following called in items, as circulated and contained on pages 123 to 167 of the Book of Reports.

21. CALLED IN ITEM - SPONSORSHIP OF ROUNDABOUTS AND OTHER PARTS OF THE HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE

Consideration as given to the report of the Council Secretary and Solicitor advising that a decision of Cabinet in relation to the above item (minute 50 refers) had received a call in requisition signed by five Members of the Committee. The report set out the reason given for the call in, together with the alternative decision put forward by the five Members concerned on the requisition notice.

Further clarification was sought as it was felt that the report of the Executive Manager Regeneration and Estates did not cover the possible unintended consequences of the proposed scheme in sufficient detail.

In the ensuing discussion the following comments/questions were noted:

- Clarification of the Borough Council's input into the scheme and impact of delaying a decision
- Advertisement consents applications and confirmation that these applications are matters for consideration by the Planning Committee
- Type of business expected to sponsor roundabouts
- Protection of roundabouts with established landscaping and artwork
- Concerns regarding unauthorised signs, safety and anti-social nuisance issues.

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The Executive Manager Regeneration and Estates responded to questions and following an invitation from the Chairman the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Estates explained that the scheme was something that would be new for the Borough but had worked successfully elsewhere. The Executive Manager Regeneration and Estates agreed to prepare a Members' Update.

During the discussion a Member sought information in relation to the maintenance of artwork on roundabouts in Skelmersdale, particularly the "Light Box" which it was stated had not been working for some time and the Executive Manager Regeneration and Estates undertook to raise the issue with colleagues in the Planning Division.

RESOLVED: That the Committee does not seek a different decision.

22. MID LANCASHIRE MULTI AREA AGREEMENT/LOCAL INVESTMENT PLANS/LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIPS

Consideration as given to the report of the Council Secretary and Solicitor advising that a decision of Cabinet in relation to the above item (minute 64 refers) had received a call in requisition signed by five Members of the Committee. The report set out the reason given for the call in, together with the alternative decision put forward by the five Members concerned on the requisition notice.

The Executive Manager Regeneration and Estates provided a further update on the scheme and responded to questions and, at the request of the Chairman, the Leader provided information on how the process was proceeding.

In the ensuing discussion the following comments/questions were noted:

- The options being proposed and the long term implications for West Lancashire.
- The outcome of the Mid Lancashire MAA submission and current position on emerging LEP's and LIP's
- Fragmentation of Lancashire
- Potential impact on the "smaller Boroughs"
- The wider implications for the North West region
- Emerging "localism" and transfer of Regional Development Agency responsibilities.

RESOLVED: That the Committee does not wish to ask for a different decision.

23. KEY DECISION FORWARD PLANS - 1 AUGUST 2010 - 31 JANUARY 2011

There were no items under this heading.

24. RELEVANT MINUTES OF CABINET

Consideration was given to the following minutes of meetings of Cabinet.

25. CABINET MINUTES - 21 JULY 2010

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 21 July 2010.

RESOLVED: A. That the Minutes of Cabinet held on 21 July 2010 be noted.

26. CABINET MINUTES - 14 SEPTEMBER 2010

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 14 September 2010. Members raised questions/comments on:

Minute 49 (Ormskirk Motor Festival) – the support for the venture but the impact on traffic and parking in the market town and clarification on the funds (£10,000) set aside for the event. In response the Chairman undertook to raise the queries with the Portfolio Holders for Community Services and Health and Planning and Transportation.

Minute 60 (The Northern Rail) - the involvement of Merseyrail or Merseytravel or both in relation to the Skelmersdale Rail Feasibility Study. In response the Executive Manager Regeneration and Planning undertook to seek clarification on this point from the Interim Head of Planning Policy & Environment.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 14 September 2010 be noted.

27. ITEM REFERRED FROM CABINET

The following item was referred from Cabinet to seek comments, if any, before consideration by Council on 20 October 2010.

28. AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Consideration was given to the report of the Council Secretary and Solicitor which set out the decision of Cabinet, at its meeting on 14 September 2010, in relation to an item on Affordable Housing and which sought comments, if any, of this Committee prior to consideration by Council on 20 October 2010.

The Executive Manager Housing and Property Maintenance Services in his introduction to the item drew Members attention to Section 9 on Appendix B entitled 'Property Location'.

Members made general comments in respect of the following:

- Purchasing choices including ability to purchase property elsewhere
- Imposition of restrictions
- Mechanism, particularly in relation to down-sizing
- Shortage of two-bedroom accommodation in some areas
- Area boundaries

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

29. REVENUE OUTTURN

Consideration was given to the report of the Council Secretary and Solicitor as circulated and contained on pages 217 to 223 of the Book of Reports which provided details of the key features of the financial outturn position for the previous financial year (2009-10) in relation to the General Review and Housing Revenue Accounts.

RESOLVED: That the outturn position be noted.

30. REVENUE MONITORING

Consideration was given to the report of the Council Secretary and Solicitor as circulated and contained on pages 225 to 228 of the Book of Reports which provided an assessment of the financial position on the revenue accounts in the new financial year.

Members raised questions and comments in respect of the following:

- Employee Costs and impact of JE
- Reserves and off-setting
- Impact of economic downturn

RESOLVED: That the financial position of the Revenue Accounts be noted.

31. CAPITAL PROGRAMME OUTTURN 2009/10

Consideration was given to the report of the Council Secretary and Solicitor as circulated and contained on pages 229 to 242 of the Book of Reports which provided a summary of the capital outturn position for the 2009/2010 financial year.

Members raised questions and comments in respect of the following:

- Variance and slippage reported at paragraph 9.2

It was felt that more specific details should be reported in relation to year on year slippage in the future.

RESOLVED:A. That the final position on the Capital Programme for 2009/2010 financial year be noted.

- B. That it be recommended that in relation to approvals of capital schemes that have slipped year on year, that the details be reported to Cabinet for information.

32. CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING 2010/2011

Consideration was given to the report of the Council Secretary and Solicitor as circulated and contained on pages 243 to 247 of the Book of Reports which provided an overview of the current progress on the Capital Programme.

RESOLVED: That progress on the Capital Programme be noted.

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Chairman