

## **BUSINESS AND TRANSFORMATION SCRUTINY PANEL**

**THURSDAY 28 MAY 2020 AT 4.00PM**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Bainbridge (Chair), Councillors Allison, Mrs Birks, Bomford (as substitute for Councillor Paton), Mrs Bowman, Ms Ellis-Williams (as substitute for Councillor McNulty) and Mitchelson.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Councillor J Mallinson, Leader  
Councillor Ellis, Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder

**OFFICERS:** Town Clerk and Chief Executive  
Overview and Scrutiny Officer

### **BTSP.20/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor McNulty and Councillor Paton.

### **BTSP.21/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest submitted.

### **BTSP.22/20 PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**RESOLVED** – It was agreed that the items of business in Part A be dealt with in public and Part B be dealt with in private.

### **BTSP.23/20 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

The Panel noted a typing error in the resolution of minute BTSP.14/20, the figure quote (£10,000) should read £101,000.

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2020 be agreed as a correct record with the an amendment to the resolution of BTSP.14/20 so it reads:

- the Council's return on the £101,000 investment with Chancerygate.

### **BTSP.24/20 CALL – IN OF DECISIONS**

There were no items which had been the subject of call-in.

### **BTSP.25/20 OVERVIEW REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME**

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer presented report OS.07/20 providing an overview of matters relating to the work of the Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel.

The report included a table of progress on resolutions from previous meetings, the Overview and Scrutiny Officer drew the Panel's attention to the first resolution which was outstanding. The six-monthly Corporate Project Board had been due to address the resolution in March. The cancellation of the March meeting due to the Covid 19 pandemic meant that the next scheduled report was due to be scrutinised by the Panel in September.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer reminded the Panel that the Carlisle Corporate Peer Challenge, which had taken place at the start of 2020, was positive and highlighted a number of strengths for the Council. The report also made some comments about the role of scrutiny. The full report had been attached to the report and suggested that decision making processes

could be more streamlined with a clearer purpose for Overview and Scrutiny. The Overview and Scrutiny Officer commented that the Panel may wish to consider this matter more closely in the coming year.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer reported that the Scrutiny Chairs Group had met on 13 March 2020. The notes from the meeting had been attached to the report and included the following recommendations for consideration for 2020/21:

- Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel and Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel meet at 10am
- Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel trial a 6.00pm start time.

The proposals would be included in an amended Civic Calendar which would be considered by Council on 14 July.

The Scrutiny Chairs Group also recommended that the number of Members on each Panel be reduced from eight to six. The change would require an amendment to the City Council Constitution. There were no proposals to make changes at this time while the Council focussed on adapting its working practices to a remote working model in response to Covid-19.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer drew the Panel's attention to their proposed Work Programme for 2020/21. She explained that the draft Programme had been based on previous Programmes and asked the Panel to consider how the work Programme could be amended to reflect the response to the current situation and virtual meetings.

In considering the report Members raised the following comments and questions:

- The Panel asked for updates on the following outstanding resolutions as set out in section 3 of the report:
  - 2) BTSP.72/19 – development of a Key Performance Indicator for Climate Emergency measures
  - 3) BTSP.14/20 – the Council's return on the £101,000 investment with Chancerygate
  - 4) BTSP.15/20 – attendance at the meeting of the Development Manager to discuss Section 106

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer agreed to follow up on the resolutions.

- The Panel asked for an update on the Attendance Management Policy Review Task and Finish Group.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer responded that the work of the Task and Finish Group had been expected to be finished before the July meeting of the Panel. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic it had not been possible to begin the work as planned. Discussions had taken place with HR and the Task and Finish Group would be meeting in the near future to set their Terms of Reference and begin the work. The Members of the Task and Finish Group were Councillors Allison, Bainbridge, Mrs Birks, Mrs Bowman and Dr Tickner.

- Referring to the Corporate Project report, the Panel asked that the report be brought to them in July instead of September.
- A Member reminded the Panel that the Scrutiny Chairs Group were not able to make decisions and any recommendations had to be considered by each of the Panels. He felt that it was not an appropriate climate to discuss changes to the number of Panel Members and commented that work would have to be carried out based on the Peer Review. When that work was completed it may alter the way Scrutiny was carried out by the Council and suggested any discussions regarding altering Panels waited until after the Peer Review work was completed.

The Panel discussed adding the Peer Review to their Work Programme in some detail. They agreed that the Review could give Scrutiny the opportunity to be dynamic and add value to the decisions of the Council to make it as good as it could be. The Panel requested that the matter be added to their Work Programme to be discussed as soon as possible.

- It was noted that the Sickness Absence Report was scheduled to be scrutinised every three months, the Chair asked that one of the reports be submitted at the start of the year to include winter sickness.
- The Overview and Scrutiny Officer reported that the Property Services Manager had suggested that the Asset Management Plan and the Annual Property Survey Report be combined into one report for scrutiny in July. The Panel considered the request and agreed that they could be combined but clarified that the information they required was the impact that the outcome of Annual Property Survey would have on the 2020/21 financial year and any impact on the Council's reserves.
- The Work Programme included a six-monthly overview of the Civic Centre Reinstatement and a Member queried the period of time before any scrutiny was undertaken.

The Chair clarified that it was hoped that the work would have sufficiently progressed that it could be meaningfully scrutinised.

- The Panel discussed the Work Programme and felt it was not an appropriate time to make changes to the work of the Panel. They agreed to leave the Programme and make changes as necessary as the result of the current situation and the scrutiny of the Peer Review.
- The Chair asked each Member of the Panel for their preference regarding their preference for the start time of the Panel and suggested 10.00am or 4.00pm. The majority of the Panel preferred the 4.00pm start time.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Overview Report incorporating the Work Programme and Key Decision items relevant to the Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel be noted (OS.07/20);

2) That the Overview and Scrutiny Officer follow up on the outstanding resolutions set out below:

- (2) BTSP.72/19 – development of a Key Performance Indicator for Climate Emergency measures
- (3) BTSP.14/20 – the Council's return on the £101,000 investment with Chancerygate
- (4) BTSP.15/20 – attendance at the meeting of the Development Manager to discuss Section 106 agreements

3) That the 2020/21 Work Programme be amended as follows:

- Corporate Project Report be moved in the work programme to July
- That the Asset Management Plan and the Annual Property Survey Report be combined into one report for scrutiny in July
- That the Corporate Peer Challenge Feedback Report be added to the Work Programme for scrutiny as soon as possible.

4) That, subject to the agreement of Council in July, meetings of the Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel would begin at 4.00pm.

## **BTSP.26/20      SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT**

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer presented the draft Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel section for the Scrutiny Annual Report 2019/20. (OS.06/20)

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer reported that the Constitution requires that overview and scrutiny committees report annually to full Council on their workings and make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate. The Scrutiny Annual Report was prepared to meet this requirement.

The last meetings of the 2019/20 Scrutiny year were cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the need to reduce face to face contact. Remote working practices were being established to allow Scrutiny Panels to operate in Carlisle City Council. Section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 set out the guidance that allowed Councils to operate public meetings in virtual, rather than physical locations.

The Panel discussed the draft report and agreed that the Peer Challenge Review should be added to the report as it was an important document for Scrutiny.

RESOLVED – That the Scrutiny Annual Report (OS.06/20) be agreed subject to the inclusion of the Corporate Peer Challenge Feedback Report as an important topic of scrutiny moving forward.

### **BTSP.27/20            FOR INFORMATION ONLY REPORT**

A report had been circulated to the Panel for information only. Panel Members had some questions with regard to the content of the report and it was agreed that questions submitted would receive a written response (and for reasons of transparency the report, questions and answers to be included on the next BTSP Agenda as an informative report).

(The meeting ended at 4.59pm)