

At a meeting of the ECONOMIC PROSPERITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE, SUNDERLAND on TUESDAY 5TH DECEMBER, 2017 at 5.30 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor David Snowdon in the Chair

Councillors Blackburn, Curran, Dixon, I Galbraith, E. Gibson, Marshall, Porthouse and Turner.

Also in attendance:-

Ms Michelle Coates, Principal Policy Officer, People and Neighbourhoods

Mr Jim Diamond, Scrutiny Officer, Sunderland City Council

Mr Stuart Douglas, Lead Policy Officer for Community Safety

Mr John Seager, Chief Executive of Siglion

Mrs Christine Tilley, Governance Services Team Leader, Sunderland City Council

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors G. Galbraith, Taylor.

Minutes of the Last Ordinary Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 7th November, 2017

A copy of the minutes of the last ordinary meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 7th November, 2017 was submitted.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last ordinary meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 7th November, 2017 (copy circulated), be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Declarations of Interest (including Whipping Declarations)

There were no declarations of interest made.

Variation in the Order of Business

The Chairman proposed and it was agreed that the order of business be changed so that item 5, 'Sunderland City Centre Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) – Feedback' was considered at this point on the agenda as Mr Stuart Douglas, Lead Policy Officer for Community Safety had another engagement later that evening.

Sunderland City Centre Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) – Feedback

The Director of the Strategy, Partnerships and Transformation submitted a report (copy circulated) to update the Committee on the operational delivery of the Sunderland City Centre Public Space Order (PSPO) which went live on 3rd April 2017.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr Stuart Douglas, Lead Policy Officer for Community Safety briefed the Committee on the prohibitions contained in the Order detailed in paragraph 3.1 of the report. Mr Douglas explained that a Police Officer could ask someone to refrain from an activity and if it was repeated the Police Officer could issue a fixed penalty notice.

Mr Douglas referred the Committee to the analysis of warnings and fixed penalty notices issued from 3rd April to 30th September 2017 which were detailed in the report at paragraph 4. He commented that there had been 2 significant terrorism attacks during the period which might have impacted on the focus given to the PSPO by Northumbria Police. Mr Douglas advised that bin raking was a considerable problem for the Local Authority and the implementation of the Order had impacted positively on the Place Management service.

Councillor Blackburn referred to the antisocial behaviour Houghton Town Centre was currently experiencing and enquired whether the area would be suitable for a PSPO.

Councillor Porthouse commented that he would like to see an order implemented in the area he represented.

Councillor I. Galbraith enquired whether the City Centre Order could be extended up Hylton Road and Chester Road to where there were issues in respect of bin raking.

In response to the above questions, Mr Douglas advised that a decision had been taken to introduce a pilot PSPO in the city centre with a view to either having separate orders for different areas of the city or alternatively, look to encompass all the other areas of the city in one order. The preferred option as far as the Cabinet was concerned was to have one order for the rest of the city.

Ms Michelle Coates added that initial discussions had taken place with Northumbria Police on the proposal for a citywide PSPO; the timeline for a draft order would be the new financial year and consultation with Members would begin early in the new year.

Mr Douglas advised that the timeline for the introduction would need to be consulted upon and approved and there would need to be evidence of a problem before it could be included in the Order. He estimated that the process of bringing in a citywide order would take approximately 6 months from start to finish.

Mr Douglas also advised that if Members were looking to vary the current city centre PSPO by adding a couple of streets this could be possible with the approval of the Police and the Council without the need to go through extensive stages. It could not be extended over three wards and evidence of where a problem was occurring would be needed.

In response to the Chairman, Mr Douglas reported that at a recent meeting with the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for City Services, both Members were keen for Officers to discuss the issues causing concern with the Police and check what evidence was available as a starter list for consultation with Members.

Mr Douglas advised that he would inform the Portfolio Holder that Members were keen to progress the Citywide Order.

The Chairman having thanked Mr Douglas and Ms Coates for their attendance, it was:-

2. RESOLVED that the contents of the report and presentation, be received and noted.

Siglion Progress Report

The Chief Executive of Siglion, Mr John Seager submitted a report (copy circulated) providing an update on progress being made in delivering the regeneration of a number of key sites within the city.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr John Seager, the Chief Executive of Siglion provided the Committee with a comprehensive presentation detailing progress being made with regards to the Vaux Site and the developments at Seaburn and at Chapel Garth.

Mr Seager advised that the first phase of development on the Vaux site included a 60,000 square foot office building and completion of phase 1 was scheduled for June 2018.

In response to Members' questions, Mr Seager advised that there had been lots of interest in the office block and they were in discussion with companies who were very positive however, no one had signed up for it yet. He also confirmed that work on 'The Launch' was within budget. At the ground floor level on the site there would be amenity retail, however there were no plans to transfer shops to the site from the high street, neither were there any plans to change the name of the site and it would remain known as the Vaux site.

With regards to the development at Chapel Garth, Mr Seager advised that the Section 106 agreement for the site made provision for an educational facility and in this case it had been agreed that it would be better to have it outside the development which had been agreed with the Local Authority.

Councillors Marshall and Gibson expressed concerns at the level of increased traffic to the area as a result of the Chapel Garth development and pointed out that there were already issues in this regard because of the success of Doxford International Business Park as well as the associated parking issues.

Councillor Porthouse suggested that another access onto the A19 in the location was needed to cope with the increase in traffic.

In response to questions from Councillor M. Dixon, Mr Seager advised that Siglion had a property portfolio of around £1m square foot and its ethos was of helping to nurture business in the city.

Mr Seager confirmed that rents at the Fish Quay had not increased and the 'noise' around the fish quay referred to was in respect of a number of occupiers who were licensed but were doing things that were hazardous and against what was allowed under the legal agreement.

Mr Seager explained that extra security costs and insurance had been recharged to occupiers which had been communicated to them however a number of them were not happy with this. The company had spent a considerable amount of time in sorting all of the above out.

Mr Seager advised that he was not in a position to answer questions about Carillion. Carillion had made an original investment and Siglion was not reliant on continued investment from Carillion to facilitate its business plan.

The Chairman having thanked Mr Seager for his attendance, it was:-

3. RESOLVED that the information detailed in the report and presentation on the current position in relation to the progress being made by Siglion in delivering the regeneration of a number of key sites within the city, be received and noted.

Annual Work Programme 2017/18

The Head of Member Support and Community Partnerships submitted a report (copy circulated), setting out the current work programme of the Committee for the 2017-18 municipal year.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr Jim Diamond, Scrutiny Officer, Sunderland City Council informed the Committee of the proposal to visit the new Wear crossing, the recently named 'Northern Spire' in advance of its opening in Spring 2018.

The Committee discussed the work plan and it was:-

4. RESOLVED that the an update on the City of Culture Bid be added to the business for the January meeting subject to the Director of the bid being available to attend in January, an alternative date for the meeting from 2nd January be sought due to the number of Members being unable to attend on that date and concern being raised as to whether the meeting would be quorate and that the remainder of the information contained in the work programme be received and noted.

Notice of Key Decisions

A report providing an opportunity to consider the items on the Executive's Notice of Key Decisions for the 28 day period from 14th November 2017 (copy circulated), was submitted.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

5. RESOLVED that the Notice of Key Decisions be received and noted.

The Chairman then closed the meeting having thanked Members and Officers for their attendance and having wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

(Signed) D. SNOWDON,
Chairman.