

Place Select Committee

A meeting of Place Select Committee was held on Monday, 21st February, 2022.

Present: Cllr Chris Barlow (Chair), Cllr Mohammed Javed (Vice-Chair), Cllr Pauline Beall, Cllr Stefan Houghton, Cllr Maurice Perry (sub for Cllr Bill Woodhead MBE), Cllr Norma Stephenson OBE (sub for Cllr Louise Baldock), Cllr Hugo Stratton, Cllr Hilary Vickers.

Officers: Jamie McCann, Andy Corcoran, Simon Milner, Ian Raine, Dale Rowbotham (CS&T); Garry Cummings (FD&BS); Rachel Harrison, Gary Woods (MD).

Also in attendance: Cllr Nigel Cooke (Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing).

Apologies: Cllr Louise Baldock, Cllr Bill Woodhead MBE.

PLA 38/21 Evacuation Procedure

The Evacuation Procedure was noted.

PLA 39/21 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

PLA 40/21 Minutes - 17 January 2022

Consideration was given to the minutes of the Place Select Committee meeting which was held on the 17th January 2022 for approval and signature.

AGREED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 17th January 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

PLA 41/21 Action Plan for Agreed Recommendations - Scrutiny Review of Highways Asset Management (including Potholes & Flooding)

Members were presented with the Action Plan setting out how the agreed recommendations from the Scrutiny Review of Highways Asset Management (including Potholes & Flooding) will be implemented and target days for completion.

The Committee queried the past review of new pothole equipment and if the Council had purchased any. Officers stated that the Council trialled the pothole equipment but it was not what was envisaged nor worth the investment. The Council were looking into the purchase of new pothole equipment in the future.

The Committee questioned where the new 'rubber' road surfaces would be located and trialled, and whether this approach would be rolled-out to more mainstream roads following the initial trial cul-de-sac. Officers stated suitable roads to begin the trial had been identified and, once materials had been tested appropriately, the programme would then be expanded.

Regarding the building of new housing developments, the Committee commented that good gullies should be in place from the beginning to save the Council money from future repairs (though it was noted that this is a planning issue too). Officers stated that there was a review of the Tees Valley Design

Guide to tackle the issue.

AGREED that:

- 1) the Action Plan be approved;
- 2) a progress update on these approved actions will be provided to the Committee in approximately 12 months.

**PLA
42/21** **Overview Reports 2022**

Members were presented with overview reports from both the Community Services and Transport and Town Centres Development directorates.

Community Services and Transport

The Community Services and Transport report reflected on the challenges and opportunities, and the priorities for the year ahead, in relation to the following themes:

- Waste Strategy Consultations
- Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) post September 2023 onwards
- Energy From Waste Plant (EFW)
- Continue programme of road and pavement maintenance and repairs
- Deliver the major transport-related projects for Stockton
- Cemeteries
- Catering Services
- Support the delivery of the sustainable transport schemes contained within the TVCA's City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement programme for Stockton
- Climate Change
- Fleet Management

The main issues raised by the Committee were as follows:

- Members queried if more buses and extra routes were being rolled out to encourage the public back on to this mode of transport. Members were informed that depending on the funding received by the Government there would likely be a rebalancing of existing provision.
- Members queried about boiler grants and highlighted uncertainty around processes for boiler replacements and associated costs. Members were informed that if they had any questions / specific cases regarding the scheme, they could speak to officers after the meeting.
- Members questioned how the Council were planning to recruit and retain staff, particularly HGV / technical operatives. Members were informed staff shortages were a national issue, the Council were trying to combat this by having competitive rates of pay, training staff in technical areas and offering an extensive range of apprenticeships. The Council trains its own staff and have 10-15 individuals going through HGV training using the apprenticeship levy.
- Members queried as to what classified a tree as dead due to there being some enquiries from the public following the recent storms. Officers stated there

was a tree management plan in place and the Council could look at providing further guidance on when a tree required intervention.

- Members commented that parents were praising the fruit in schools' initiative and asked for thanks to be passed onto the directorates catering staff.
- Members queried the locations of the new electric car charging points and felt these should be widely promoted (e.g., Stockton News). Members were informed the locations would be sent to them after the meeting and that, once rolled-out, communications would indeed follow.
- Good feedback regarding the Tees Flex bus was noted – this also needed to be promoted more.
- Members questioned how the rollout of the new charging points was being financed, with the response from officers being it was partly funded from existing TVCA funds and partly through the new City Regions Sustainable Transport Settlement.
- It was confirmed that there were no plans to charge for green waste – indeed, the Government appeared to be making plans to prohibit charges for such collections.
- Members welcomed developments around tackling draining issues in cemeteries.
- Staff from the directorate were commended for their efforts during the year, including support given to the Committee with its scrutiny reviews.

Town Centres Development

The Town Centres Development report reflected on emerging issues in relation to a number of themes including:

- Pressure on the retail sector
- Town Centre development
- The impact of Covid-19

Following an outline of the priorities for the year ahead, as well as the challenges and opportunities, for the Borough's six main town centre areas, subsequent discussions were noted as follows:

- Discussion around the Town Hall and its purpose for the future – the Council was looking at new flexible civic space and an options appraisal would be undertaken. Assurance was given that there was no intention for the Town Hall to be demolished.
- In relation to Dunedin House, looking at how much work needed to be completed before the Council could start moving in. Regarding the size of the building, it was still felt that this was an appropriate facility (the Council had already planned on reducing its footprint through flexible working, something the pandemic had accelerated) – talks with existing tenants at Dunedin House continue.
- The Hilton Hotel was performing well – a more detailed update on this would be provided to Members in March 2022.
- A query was raised as to when the new car parking facilities in Yarm would be operable – this would be confirmed after this meeting.
- Discussion around the Railway Heritage bi-centenary celebrations. Members were informed a report went to Cabinet in January with Cabinet approving the outline of proposed celebrations.
- Questions were raised around Levelling-Up Funding for Billingham and when the next round of bidding would be, with Officers responding bidding

would start around springtime with decisions being made later in the year.

- Stockton High Street developments continues apace, with discussions ongoing with North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust, and strong demand for the southern end – detailed design plan to be confirmed in the next few months.

AGREED that

- 1) the information be noted.
- 2) additional information in relation to the Town Centres Development report be provided as identified.

**PLA
43/21** **Work Programme 2021-2022**

Consideration was given to the Work Programme. Members were reminded that the next formal Committee meeting on the 21st March 2022 had been cancelled and replaced with an informal evidence-gathering session (via Teams) for the ongoing Residents Parking Zones review, where representatives from local Business Forums would be providing their views on this scrutiny topic. The informal 'summary of evidence / draft recommendations' session for this review would therefore now take place immediately after the next formal Committee meeting on the 25th April 2022.

AGREED that the Work Programme be noted.

**PLA
44/21** **Chair's Update**

The Chair had no further updates.