

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

6.00 P.M.

9TH DECEMBER 2015

PRESENT:- Councillors Nigel Goodrich (Chairman), June Ashworth (Vice-Chairman), Alan Biddulph, Rob Devey, Caroline Jackson, David Whitaker and Phillippa Williamson.

Apologies for Absence:-

Councillors Lucy Atkinson and Brett Cooper

Also in attendance:-

Councillors Eileen Blamire and Margaret Pattison

Christine Stebbing Chair of the Morecambe Town Team

Officers in attendance:-

Stephen Metcalfe	Principal Democratic Support Officer
Sarah Moorghen	Democratic Support Officer

46 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18th November 2015 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

47 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS AUTHORISED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There were no items of urgent business.

48 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor June Ashworth declared an interest in respect of agenda item 8 – Update on the Portas Project as she was a member of Morecambe Town Council.

Councillor David Whittaker declared an interest in respect of agenda item 8 – Update on the Portas Project as he was a member of Morecambe Town Council.

49 CONSIDERATION OF ANY REQUESTS FOR COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION (IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROCESS)

It was noted that there had not been any requests for items to be considered in accordance with the Councillor of Call for Action process.

50 CONSIDERATION OF ANY PETITIONS (IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROCESS)

It was noted that there had not been any requests for items to be considered in accordance with the Consideration of Petitions process.

51 LOCALITY WORKING

It was noted that there was no update on locality working.

52 UPDATE ON THE PORTAS PROJECT

The Chairman welcomed Christine Stebbing, Chair of Morecambe Town Team, to the meeting.

For the benefit of the newly elected Members of the Committee, Ms Stebbing gave a summary of the work done by the Morecambe Town Team that had been set up in 2012 under the Portas initiative.

Ms Stebbing informed the Committee that the Town Team was set up to deliver increased footfall between the Arndale Centre and the Festival Market area along Victoria Street, Morecambe. She explained that Victoria Street was very different from the majority of Portas Towns where the emphasis was on empty shops as Victoria Street had very few empty properties and shops.

The Committee were informed that the projects aims had taken some time to come to fruition but that of the £100,000 budget £98,000 had now been allocated. £2,000 was retained as a contingency and work on the project was due to be completed by spring 2016.

Ms Stebbing informed the Committee of a number of initiatives carried out by the Town Team including street planting and cleaning, markets, celebrity signing events and Christmas lighting. The Team was also involved in a number of Portas funded projects including a £5K Heartstone Project and the Springboard exercise in 2013 which was a three pronged survey into shopping habits. As a result of the finding of that exercise the Team organised a "Be your Best" Customer Services workshop, Digital High Street training sessions, and produced leaflets on things to do in the area.

Members were advised that earlier in the year a website had been launched for local retailers titled More in Morecambe. This allowed local businesses to feature their business and promote special offers. This would also feature a webcam showing views over the Bay.

The Town Team had also commissioned a Corporate Town Branding exercise and the completed branding package was now downloadable from their website.

Members were advised that the Town Team had been progressing with the Victoria Street Art project titled Victoria Press and had commissioned Deco Publique to bring the scheme to fruition. The art work would incorporate local stories/pictures including entertainment, sport, heritage, views and wildlife. The Arndale Centre would also feature an Art Deco design selected by the new owners New River and Hemmingway Design. The artwork was due to be completed in spring 2016.

The Committee was advised that the Town Team had also part funded the City Council's Wayfinding project which would feature signage on the Victoria Street.

Finally, the Committee was informed that the Town Team had evolved over the last year and now had members from the wider town including the Chamber of Commerce Chief

Executive. They were looking towards a BID for Morecambe and it was hoped that New River would be interested in continuing the Art led theme through the Arndale Centre to New Square, Morecambe and around the entrance facing Morecambe library.

Members asked a number of questions relating to the Portas Project including progress of the Project, what Members could do to assist the project, the artwork and public consultations and if there would be any positive impact on employment in the area.

Resolved:

That Christine Stebbing be thanked for her attendance at the meeting.

53 DISCUSSIONS WITH COUNCILLOR EILEEN BLAMIRE

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Eileen Blamire, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member with responsibility for relationships with other Councils, communications, performance management and democratic services, legal and HR.

Councillor Blamire gave the Committee an overview of her portfolio. In particular she spoke to the Committee about issues regarding Combined Authorities, the Peer Review Challenge, communications, replacement of the Chief Executive and the work done by Council Officers in relation to Storm Desmond.

Members asked a number of questions relating to Councillor Blamire's portfolio including questions relating to shared services, the Peer Review, Combined Authorities, communication, information sharing and use of social media, and review of procedures for dealing with major incidents.

Resolved:

That Councillor Eileen Blamire be thanked for her attendance at the meeting.

54 WORK PROGRAMME REPORT

Members considered the Work Programme. A Task Group scoping document on the Night Time Economy was circulated to the Committee and it was agreed that an informal task group would be set up, with the scoping document amended as follows:-

- Amend the review topic name to 'Late Night Economy in the Lancaster District'.
- Amend rationale to include Lancashire Constabulary.
- Inclusion of transportation and hotels in the witness/expert section.
- Group Administrators to be requested to nominate one further Member from their group, based on interest, to form part of the informal Task Group.

Members requested a briefing note on Health and Housing functions and policies and agreed that Councillor Karen Leytham, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing and Environmental Health, be invited to a future meeting of the Committee.

The Committee discussed cuts to rural bus services and agreed to invite the bus user group to the January 2016 meeting of the Committee.

In view of the recent unprecedented flooding issues and resulting electricity failures in the District Members discussed the flooding and emergency procedures and agreed to hold an additional Meeting of the Committee, if appropriate, in March 2016, to consider a report, and the policies and procedures in place for dealing with this and other major flooding incidents. Members also requested that the relevant officer(s), Cabinet Member(s), and other relevant representatives including the emergency services, Lancashire County Council, NW Electricity and the Environment Agency be invited to the meeting to provide evidence and answer questions to ensure that all organisations learn from this incident. In order to gather evidence it was agreed that all Councillors would be emailed to obtain their feedback from the various Wards within the District.

The Committee agreed that Dementia Friends training would be undertaken by Members and included in the Work Programme, to be undertaken either prior to or at a future meeting and that all Members of the Council be invited to attend.

Members also discussed the Older Peoples meeting and agreed that the Agenda for this meeting should not be restricted to Older Peoples issues and that other business be dealt with at the meeting.

It was noted that the Licensing Scheme for Private Sector Rented Properties was contained on the Committee's Work Programme and it was requested that an update be provided.

Members agreed that the update from the University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay and Royal Lancaster Infirmary would be removed from the Work Programme as the Trust was now out of Special Measures.

It was noted that Cabinet, at its meeting held on 1st December 2015, had considered the Peer Challenge Action Plan. Contained within the Plan was consideration of how to make best use of Overview and Scrutiny. Members agreed to include this issue in the Work Programme for consideration in April 2016.

The Committee agreed that the previously proposed Task Group on Litter had been superseded by the Task Group on the Night Time Economy, but that a briefing note on whether fly tipping had increased since the introduction of charges at the Recycling Centre be requested.

Resolved:

That the actions, as set out above, be agreed.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 8.10 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
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