

SPECIAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 22nd July, 2024

Present: Councillor Bernard Dawson MBE (in the Chair),
Councillors Heather Anderson and Zak Khan

Apologies Councillors Clare McKenna, Clare Pritchard, Clare Yates and
Mohammed Younis

88 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Clare Pritchard, Clare McKenna, Clare Yates and Mohammed Younis.

Councillor Dave Parkins acted as substitute representative for Councillor Clare Pritchard.

There had been one membership change to the Committee which had taken place at Full Council on 11th July 2024: Councillor Zak Khan replaced Councillor Josh Allen.

89 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no interests or dispensations declared at the meeting.

90 Minutes of the last Meeting

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 5th March 2024 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

Resolved - **That the Minutes be received and approved as a correct record.**

91 Overview & Scrutiny Work Programmes

The Scrutiny and Policy Officer submitted a report requesting the Special Overview & Scrutiny Committee gave consideration to and approved the work programme for 2024/25. The Committee was advised of the process for agreeing the work programme as set out in the Overview and Scrutiny procedure rule C6(a). Thirty-five requests had been received for items to be considered for Scrutiny and these had been discussed by the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Scrutiny Committees before draft work programmes being reported to Cabinet for comment. There had been no comments received from Cabinet.

Committee had been informed that the work programme for the Special Overview & Scrutiny Committee had shown 'Town Centre Levelling Up Project Progress' to be included on this meeting's agenda, however, they were advised that this item would now be moved as an update of the item would benefit the Committee better, later in the year.

The Leader of the Council pointed out that the terms of reference for the Committee included 'Devolution' and, as this issue has become more prominent following the General

Election, he proposed that this item was also included in the work programme and added to a meeting scheduled for the end of 2024, beginning of 2025.

Resolved - **That the work programme for the Special Overview & Scrutiny Committee be approved subject to the item 'Town Centre Levelling Up Project Progress' being moved to take place at the October 2024 meeting and 'Devolution' being added to the work programme for meeting towards the end of 2024/beginning of 2025.**

92 Market Chambers Update

The Head of Museums and Heritage Development, Gillian Berry submitted a report to inform the Committee of progress in the National Heritage Lottery Fund (NHLF) development stage project in relation to Accrington Market Chambers. The Leader of the Council, Councillor Munsif Dad, attended the Committee on behalf of the Portfolio holder for Heritage, Culture and Arts to speak on the item. The Heritage and Cultural Engagement Officer, Hannah Saxton, was also in attendance.

The Leader of the Council referred to the Chairmanship of the previous Chair of the Special Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Josh Allen, and his due diligence in serving the Committee and allowing free discussion and proposed that the gratitude of Members be recorded.

The Leader of the Council outlined details of progress on the National Heritage Lottery Fund (NLHF) development stage project in relation to Accrington Market Chambers. He explained that the Market Chambers was part of the Council's overall Town Centre Investment Plan designed to regenerate Accrington Town Centre and bring economic and other benefits to the Borough. He indicated that the first stage of the project was to develop a new cultural heritage space with a significant part of the work around engagement.

The Head of Museums and Heritage Development gave details of funding for the project and that £833,056, in total, NHLF had been received. She explained that the development phase lasted up to 2 years and enabled applicants to work on their project proposals followed by a delivery stage of no more than 5 years. The report referred to the development stage of the project and she informed the Committee that the community was at the heart of this development and referred to the importance of ensuring that these views were incorporated into their plans.

Committee Members submitted questions that related to:

- Their ability to secure funding in the future to ensure the completion of the project and if there was a Plan B should this not happen.
- That all 3 buildings involved in the project were brought back into use ensuring continuity of visual appearance.
- The Town Hall was brought back into community use.
- Could the historical township of Huncoat (included in the Domesday Book) be included in plans.
- What would happen if the CPO of one part of the building was not successful.
- How were stakeholders in Accrington and those on the periphery of the town being engaged.
- Request for variation in type of experiences provided.

The Head Museums and Heritage Development reported that they could not guarantee future funding but were fairly confident that they would acquire it. In respect of bringing all three buildings back into use, it was reported that efforts would be made to ensure all buildings were treated the same for visual effect. She indicated that the development of the project would aim to sign post people to different locations to ensure that footfall and the associated economic benefits would be spread.

The success of the CPO on the Market Chambers was important and would take time to process but was built into the end process.

The engagement of stakeholders to the project was of great importance and efforts were being made to ensure that people's views were being collated and considered. She also indicated that visits had been made to other museums and heritage providers and it was their aim to compliment rather than compete with them.

Resolved - **That the report be noted.**

93 Exclusion of the Public

Resolved - **That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during the following item, when it was likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, or the nature of the proceedings, that there would otherwise be disclosure of exempt information within the Paragraph at Schedule 12A of the Act specified at the item.**

94 Nomination of Co-optee

Exempt information under the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12, Paragraph 1 – Information relating to any individual

The Scrutiny and Policy Officer submitted a report requesting the Committee to consider a nomination for a Co-opted member on the Special Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Committee was informed that they could have a maximum of two Co-optees. One nomination, as outlined in the report, had been received in advance of the meeting and was accepted.

A further nomination for Co-optee was put forward at the meeting and was also accepted. The Committee was advised that these nominations would be submitted as recommendations for approval to the next Full Council as Co-optees on the Special Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Resolved - **That the nominations for Shahed Mahmood and Andy Tatchell as Co-optees on the Special Overview & Scrutiny Committee for a period of 2 municipal years (2024-25 & 2025-26) be accepted and recommended to Full Council for approval.**

Signed:.....

Date:

Chair of the meeting
At which the minutes were confirmed