

Scrutiny Committee - 18 September 2018

Present: Councillor S Coles (Chairman)

Councillors F Smith-Roberts, N Cavill, A Gunner, T Hall, S Martin-Scott, N Townsend, J Hunt (In place of J Blatchford), R Bowrah (In place of T Davies) and C Herbert (In place of D Webber)

Officers: Tim Burton, Paul Fitzgerald, Natalie Green, Chris Hall, Steve Hughes and Kate Murdoch

Also Present: Councillors P Berry, A Sully, J Warmington, Mrs Anne Elder, Mr James Curry, Mr Mark Washington and Mr Andy Ridgewell

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm)

10. **Apologies.**

Apologies were received from Councillors J Blatchford, B Coombes, T Davies, E Gaines, R Henley, R Lees, L Lisgo and D Webber.

11. **Minutes of the Community Scrutiny Committee held on 1 May and Corporate Scrutiny Committee held on 21 June and Scrutiny Committee held on 24 July (attached).**

The minutes of the meetings of the Community Scrutiny Committee held on 1 May 2018 and the Corporate Scrutiny Committee held 21 June 2018 were taken as read and were signed.

12. **Public Question Time.**

Agenda Item 5 GLL Performance Update

Mr P Boyle spoke about the contract for the proposed leisure provisions within Taunton Deane from August 2019 onwards. He thanked the Committee for the opportunity to speak on the item and advised that there were other members of the public that wanted to speak but who were unable to attend and had sent in letters which had been distributed to the Committee. The users of the leisure centres aimed to work closely with the Council to achieve the best leisure service. He asked the following questions for clarification:-

1. Was there a Service Specification for the forthcoming (2019) Contract and if so please could it be made available?
2. If there was a (2019) Specification how had Council Tax Payers, who were also users of the service, been involved in putting it together?
3. Please could there be User groups in the Centres with local Councillors having the right of attendance if so desired?
4. Were the finances of the provision independently audited?
5. How did Taunton Deane independently monitor and evaluate the provision?

6. How would the user voice be built into the monitoring of the future contract. (a service specification that would enable both the provider and TDBC be clear what must be delivered for the money)

A written response would also be issued out to the public.

Agenda Item 7 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Allocations for 2019/20 – 2022/23

Mr A Debenham spoke about the CIL allocations and asked how the allocations related to particular projects.

Mr T Burton responded and advised that the funding streams originated from the original CIL arrangement and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which identified all the infrastructure projects that were required along with their costings. Further details were given within the report and the IDP could be found on the website under: <https://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/planning-policy/community-infrastructure-levy>

Mrs J Calcroft spoke about the CIL payments and queried the statement on the website that 'the money generated from CIL was used to fund improvements and new infrastructure which development put pressure on'. She asked the following questions:-

- 1) When would the CIL financial report covering the period April 1 2017 – 31 March 2018 be published?
- 2) Why had no improvements or infrastructure measures been put into place over this period of time?
- 3) As known, the permitted 3 years' administrative costs had already been taken out by The Council. Apart from administering the Parish and District Council's allocations surely the majority of administration costs would come when allocating and overseeing actual relevant projects. Could The Council please produce a breakdown of actual administrative costs over this period and what had been done with any surplus?
- 4) Table 1 in the report showed 3 areas for CIL allocation for the period **2019/20** – cycle and pedestrian improvements were allocated £1million, education provision were allocated £4million and public transport improvements a further £1million. A total of **£6million** in a period where the Council's forecast was to realise just been arrived at given a possible £2million shortfall?
- 5) Table 1 allocations only showed an overall budget allowance. There was no indication as to how and where this money was to be spent. Where could one access the actual breakdown costs of the details of these improvements?

A letter from Mike O'Dowd-Jones, Strategic Commissioning Manager, Somerset County Council was read out to the Committee and asked the following questions:-

- 1) Were the CIL charges set at an appropriate level to provide sufficient infrastructure to support the proposed development in the area?
- 2) Was the geographic coverage sufficient to enable infrastructure provision across the whole District, particularly considering the current exclusion of Wellington from the charging regime?

- 3) Did the inclusion of education infrastructure within the regulation 123 list actually make it more difficult for development to fund the associated schools that were required in new development areas; and was there a case to exclude education from the CIL process to enable site specific agreements?
- 4) Did your proposed principles place unnecessary restrictions on the ability of CIL to fund essential infrastructure, particularly in relation to the principle of a maximum allocation of £3.5m to any one project and no more than 50% of the total cost. As an example, a school required to support a large development might cost in the region of £17m and your proposed restrictions precluded any opportunity for CIL to make a reasonable contribution to such a project.
- 5) Was the inclusion of major development areas or urban extensions in the CIL charging regime still the right thing to do when it was increasingly apparent across the Country that this type of development was better suited to specific funding agreements such as section 106 agreements to ensure essential infrastructure needed for such developments could be secured.

A written response would also be issued out to the public.

13. **Declaration of Interests.**

Members present at the meeting declared the following personal interests in their capacity as a Member of a County, Parish or Town Council:

Name	Item	Member of	Action Taken
Councillor S Coles	All	SCC	Spoke and voted
Councillor N Cavill	All	Parish	Spoke and voted
Councillor N Townsend	All	Parish	Spoke and voted
Councillor J Hunt	All	SCC and Town	Spoke and voted
Councillor B Bowrah	All	Town	Spoke and voted
Councillor J Warmington	All	Parish	Spoke

14. **GLL Performance Update.**

Considered report previously circulated, that set out the operational and financial performance that GLL provided for Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC). GLL raised concerns in terms of usage numbers and income noting that they were adrift of their income budgeted position, however, they had mitigated this through reduced expenditure. The current agreement did not pass any of the risk onto TDBC.

During the discussion of this item, Members made comments and statements and asked questions which included:-

- Members queried whether the bad weather from earlier in 2018 had impacted on the GLL service.

There had been an impact, especially at Vivary Golf Course which had been highlighted within the report. The flooding at the start of the year and the snow in March had meant that they had lost 34 days of use at the golf course. The rest of the leisure facilities had lost a couple of day's trade due to the snow.

- Members highlighted a concern raised by a member of the public that when he had visited Taunton Pool he struggled to access the pool due to clubs and other organised activities taking place.
When St James pool closed in 2016, the pool programme was spread between the remaining two pools in Taunton and therefore the public swimming time was reduced in Taunton Pool. However, since then, the public swimming time has been made available but it has been spread over all the pools within Taunton Deane and not just in one location.
- Members praised the work carried out on two of the four pillars, Better People and Better Community. However, concern was raised over Better Business. Members had been made aware of several issues at Blackbrook Leisure Centre, one of which were the gates and that they were not in use again, they queried how could GLL monitor visitors and payments for use of the facilities. This was not useful for financial monitoring. Concern was also raised over the low standard of customer service being provided, cancellation of classes at short notice and the standard of cleanliness at the pool.
The Senior Manager accepted that the gates had been out of order for too long and explained that they had been having issues with the supplier, but this would be chased. He reassured Members that the protection of income was being monitored. Cleanliness was being worked on and the 'no shoe' policy seemed to have helped. He was aware that customer service needed to improve but there had been challenges with vacancies and sickness levels. These issues would be reported back to the general manager at Blackbrook to ensure improvements were made.
- Members queried the first two paragraphs within the report that detailed the results for Better Service. The net promoter score showed customer satisfaction was under 50% in July 2018 then in the next paragraph it stated the results of a survey showed the satisfaction level was up to 85%. How was that achieved?
The survey was based on a snapshot of visitors to the pool and asked a multitude of questions about the facility, where the net promoter score was based on one question in a survey that was sent to all members that had a valid email address.
- Concern was raised on the decrease in service levels at Wellington Sports Centre. Members queried what had caused the decline. They also queried whether any information had been sent out to the new housing developments in Wellington to advertise the facilities.
The Senior Manager was aware that a couple of other sports centres had opened within the town which could have led to the decline due to the competitive market. The numbers for the swim school had increased but general sports membership had declined. There was more that could be done with the marketing in the new developments, but they had attended a couple of community events and school fetes to promote the facilities. The

officers identified that the positive draw to the Wellington Sports Centre compared to the other centres in the town was the pool.

- Members praised the instructors and their high level of customer service, however, the same could not be said of the service provided at reception which needed to be improved.
- Members requested more information on the service levels compared to the financial details in future.
- Members of the public raised further concerns about problems with the hot water supply, disabled users of the facilities and the challenges they faced, problems with phone calls not being answered and changes in classes.
The Senior Manager addressed their concerns.

Resolved that the Committee noted the content of the report.

15. **Somerset West Lottery, Year 1 Update.**

Considered report previously circulated, which provided an update on the Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) and West Somerset Council (WSC) joint online community lottery, Somerset West Lottery, that was formed in July 2017. In less than a year, the lottery managed to raise nearly £50,000 for local good causes across the two areas.

During the discussion of this item, Members made comments and statements and asked questions which included:-

- Members praised the implementation of the lottery fund and the money and support it had raised for local causes.
- Members queried the figures and percentages used within the report.
Clarification was given.

Resolved that the Committee:-

- 1) Noted the first year's performance of the Somerset West Lottery; and
- 2) Supported the continuation of the present management arrangements of the Somerset West Lottery Local Community Fund.

16. **Community Infrastructure Levy allocations for 2019/20 - 2022/23.**

Considered report previously circulated, that detailed the proposed Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) allocations of £15,500,000 for the period 2019/20 to 2022/23 for member consideration. The proposed CIL allocations were for infrastructure categories associated with the delivery of infrastructure projects for the Taunton Garden Town and were in addition to the £16,600,000 New Homes Bonus already committed to delivering the Council's growth agenda.

During the discussion of this item, Members made comments and statements and asked questions which included:-

- Members queried the Regulation 123 list and that it stated from 12 April 2016 it would be reviewed annually, however, the list had remained the same.

Officers confirmed that there had been no changes.

- Members queried whether officers had used the standard Central Government prescribed list for regulation 123 and had adopted it for Taunton Deane.

The list was determined by TDBC and not Central Government. The Regulation 123 was a list of projects that the Council would not collect Section 106 funds for, there was no guarantee that the money would be spent on the projects listed. Viability would most likely be different in the future.

- Members suggested that when a new development or scheme had been built with funds from the CIL, a plaque or sign could be placed in the area so that residents were aware of where the money had come from and what the CIL funds were being spent on.
- Members recommended that the list was kept in the current format and the broad descriptions meant that many projects could benefit from the funds.
- Members queried whether the figures used within the CIL were similar to what other Councils used and had been set as a benchmark.

The officers had investigated what other Authorities had used before they set the TDBC CIL figures.

Resolved that the Committee supported recommendations to:-

- a) The Shadow Executive of Somerset West and Taunton Council and to TDBC to support a commitment of Community Infrastructure Levy funding of £15,500,000 for the period 2019/20 to 2022/23, by infrastructure type as set out in Table 1 and recommend the same to TDBC Full Council;
- b) The Shadow Executive of Somerset West and Taunton Council and to TDBC to support the CIL Allocation Principles as set out in Paragraph 4.9;
- c) The Shadow Executive and Shadow Council of Somerset West and Taunton Council to include the proposed investment of CIL Allocations within its recommended Capital Programme for 2019/20; and
- d) The Shadow Executive and Shadow Council of Somerset West and Taunton Council to incorporate delegation powers within the new constitution. The delegation powers would require the approval of the Head of Strategy and relevant Portfolio Holder (in consultation with the S151 Officer) to enable the profile of CIL spending to fall outside the indicative years shown in Table 1 but within the overall sum allocated by infrastructure type and subject to sufficient CIL funding being available.

17. **Confidential Verbal Update relating to the Leisure Procurement Project.**

This item had been deferred.

(The Meeting ended at 8.15 pm)