

Finance, Resources and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee Report to Full Council

Date: Thursday, 28th January 2016

Chairman: Cllr Mike Stubbs

The Committee welcomed Mr Elliot Ashton, the Chairman of Go Kidsgrove, to provide a verbal update on the project and to take questions from the Committee with regard to current and future possibilities the CiC is exploring. As Chair, I'm acutely aware that the Economic and Development Scrutiny Committee take the lead with Go Kidsgrove, so I asked that questions be limited to those under our purview, namely those of Financial, Resource or indeed the Partnership with the Borough and other Stakeholders.

After his verbal update, Mr Ashton received several questions surrounding the Go Kidsgrove Project, centred mostly around the perception of the lack of Partnership working with other Key Stakeholders in the area, including the local Town Council. Mr Ashton assured everyone that this was not the case and highlighted the newly established 'Chairs' Meeting, which includes the Borough Council, Town Council and CiC itself, as an initiative to strengthen Partnership working in the area. I did feel the need though to question Mr Elliot's use of social media at the end of the questioning as it has often brought him in to conflict with the Partners Go Kidsgrove needs to be successful.

The Committee also received the latest Financial and Performance Management Report from the Director of Resources, taking the Financial Position Quarter Three and the Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council Performance Report Quarter Three in turn.

The third item on the agenda for the evening was the second opportunity for the Finance, Resources and Partnerships Committee to scrutinise the Revenue and Capital Budgets 2016/17. Members were asked to add any comments in respect of the draft budget and council tax proposals, and assurances were made that these comments would be fed back to the Cabinet on the 10th February 2016.

The Committee was also happy to receive the Treasury Management Strategy 2016/17. It was pleasing to me as Chairman, that several questions were raised by members, most noteworthy those of Cllr Loades who challenged the fabric of the report itself. I hope that the response from the Director of Resources and myself allayed some, if not all, of the concerns expressed by some of the Councillor's present.

Finally, the Committee reviewed the Work Plan for forthcoming year and confirmed the inclusion of a 'Co-Operative Council' update much to the pleasure of the Committee at large. I feel I must add that the debate on the evening was excellent, especially with the interaction of the Assets Policy Committee and Full Council in the days before. Cabinet, having now given a clear steer on the Asset Management Strategy on the 10th of February, I hope that the Budget, Capital and Asset Strategies can move forward, of course allowing for the correct scrutiny along the way. Can I also suggest that any Members requiring more detail of the meeting review the minutes, when available.

Cllr M Stubbs – Chair of Finance, Resource & Partnerships Scrutiny Committee