



SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

BURNLEY TOWN HALL

Tuesday 18th March 2015

PRESENT MEMBERS

Councillor Carmichael in the Chair.

Councillors Cunningham, Ellis, Fifield, Frayling, Frost, Graham, Heginbotham, Johnstone, Kelly, Lishman, Monk, Reynolds and Stringer

OFFICERS

Pam Smith	-	Chief Executive
Helen Seechurn	-	Director of Resources
Joanne Swift	-	Head of Streetscene
Francine Keenan	-	Acting Head of Revenues and Benefits
Eric Dickinson	-	Democracy Officer

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Councillors Mark Townsend, John Harbour , Howard Baker, Shah Hussain and Tony Harrison

67. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Briggs and Sumner.

68. Minutes

**IT WAS
AGREED**

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 10th February 2015 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

69. Notice of Key Decisions and Private Meetings

The Notice of Key Decisions and Private Meetings for the period from March 2015 was noted.

70. Town Centre Pedestrianisation Upgrade

Joanne Swift presented an update to Members of the progress of the town centre pedestrianisation upgrade including key timescales over the next 2 years.

She indicated that the Council was working in partnership with Lancashire County Council (LCC) and that the total cost of the scheme was £3M to be funded jointly £1.5M each.

She also highlighted that the Construction activity would end in August 2017, that early design and concept activity was ongoing and that agency consultation would start in March 2015 for approximately 6 weeks.

Members made the following points;

- Would disability and blind groups be consulted as part of the public or stakeholder events.
Joanne Swift indicated that such groups would be invited to a stakeholder event, as would Members of this Committee.
- Has the upgrade been encouraged by the success of recent Markets and music events in the Town Centre and what would be the impact of the upgrade on this?
Joanne Swift stated that within the design phase the ad hoc provision of markets to open up in this space would be considered, with a view to enhancing the space for such events.
- A request was made for some improvements, although not pedestrianisation, to Padiham Town Centre to complement the hard work done to date in reducing the percentage of empty shops.
Joanne Swift indicated that such activity was not within the scope of this project, but it was stated that that funding had been set aside in the future for a Padiham Town Centre Manager whose role included bringing investment into Padiham.
- Could raising of revenue by lighting up adverts on the pavement be taken into account as part of the design phase.
Joanne Swift indicated that at the latter end of the phased approach and subject to the cost envelope if the scheme could be enhanced with lighting then this would be picked up in conjunction with the Communications Team
- The need to link in with the area around Standish Street was highlighted.
Joanne Swift stated that although adjacent areas were not affordable within this phase of the scheme, the Council continued to

support those retailers and that they may receive longer term benefits from the town centre enhancements

- The area at the bottom of St James Street down to Cross Keys needed attention both to sewer infrastructure and shops.

**IT WAS
AGREED**

That the report be noted.

71. Welfare Reform Sub Group

Helen Seechurn presented an amended report which provided an update on the Committee's welfare reform sub group focusing on the take up of Exceptional Hardship Payments (EHP).

She set out how take up had been encouraged since November 2014 by promotion, raising its prominence and by a campaign aimed at under 25s which resulted in 9 returns from 186 applications sent out with 6 successful awards.

She indicated that the £20k budget set aside for EHP has been largely underspent during 2014/15, and it was intended that promotion would be extended to other claimant groups.

She indicated that a further report detailing collection rates and claimant numbers would be ready for circulation to Members in early May 2015.

Members made the following points;

- How were the 186 claimants identified and evaluated? Was there a criteria to select the 86 claimants.
Francine Keenan indicated that the claimants were selected based on a criteria and that they were u25
- Potential claimants awareness and engagement might be enhanced by regular contact using text, that a target sample of those who did not reply could be asked why not, and it was proposed that the 26-35 age group could be contacted as well in the future.
Francine Keenan stated that the use of text was subject to receiving the consent of claimants but that this would be looked at in the future to see if it was feasible, and that the target sample of those who did not apply could be contacted by telephone.

**IT WAS
AGREED**

That the report be noted.

72. Work Programme

**IT WAS
AGREED**

That the Work Programme for the remainder of the 2014/15 Municipal Year be agreed as submitted, with the next meeting being on Tuesday 20th April 2015 at 6.30pm.