

# Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel

7 March 2023

**Commenced:** 6.00pm

**Terminated:** 7.10pm

**Present:** Councillors Cartey (Chair), Alam, Glover, Gwynne, A Holland, Robinson, Roderick

**Apologies:** Councillor Chadwick

## 29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest submitted by members of the Scrutiny Panel.

## 30. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel held on 10 January 2023 were approved as a correct record.

## 31. INCLUSIVE GROWTH

The Panel welcomed Councillor David Sweeton, Executive Member (Inclusive Growth, Business and Employment); Julian Jackson, Director of Place; Sarah Jamieson, Head of Economy, Employment and Skills; Mike Reed, Head of Major Programmes; and Ben Gudger, Head of Investment and Development, to receive a progress update on delivery of the Inclusive Growth Strategy.

Members received a progress report on the delivery and monitoring of priorities set within the Council's Inclusive Growth Strategy 2021-26. The strategy includes 13 key aims, supported by 25 cross cutting priorities. It was reported that from the 25 priorities, 12 are on track, with 13 in development.

Councillor Sweeton informed members that he is working to ensure the prompt and sustainable delivery and completion of current and outstanding projects. It is also important to get the narrative right regarding the vision for inclusive growth in Tameside, when working with partners from both public and private sectors. In order to attract investment and to achieve real business and employment growth the borough's vision, branding and infrastructure has to be right. Tameside is very much open for business and the strategy can start to work in a way that presents opportunities to a wider audience at regional, national and international levels.

A renewed focus on outcomes associated with business growth, job creation, inward investment, commercial and residential diversity is key. The Council will look to plan and develop growth projects in a more overarching and holistic way that fits within a broader masterplan. Example provided on town centre and public realm projects working collectively for residents and businesses alike, not in isolation.

Networking sessions can help to boost business and industrial links and allow for a better use of resources and facilities, in order to maximise local opportunities through education and employment. Discussion touched upon the role of the Council and a more interventionist approach in creating and supporting viable growth opportunities and interaction with education providers helping to create a local offer and pathway for employment and skills progression.

The panel heard that a proactive approach is needed to attract investment, innovation and high value jobs to Tameside, helping to establish a mix of industries beyond retail and manufacturing by capitalising on growth across creative and digital sectors.

Members received a summary and breakdown of work streams including:

- Business and employer networks
- Major projects
- Levelling Up Fund programmes, including town centres
- Future delivery strategies and identified opportunities

Councillor Sweeton and officers responded to a number of questions from the Panel on:

- Aspirational targets and progress against a number of aims set within the Inclusive Growth Strategy, including:
  - Attracting inward investment to the borough
  - Directing local spend to support SMEs and social enterprise
  - Town centre projects and the local housing offer
- Review and monitoring tools to measure impact and progress in delivering a more diverse mix of businesses, employment and housing opportunities.
- Capitalising on the boroughs' strengths - location, connectivity and strategic transport infrastructure.
- Strategic directions and pre-application discussions associated with planning and development.

Councillor Sweeton and Officers thanked for attending the meeting.

## **32. SCRUTINY BUDGET LETTER**

The Panel received for information, a letter of the Scrutiny Chairs to Councillor Jacqueline North, First Deputy (Finance, Resources & Transformation), in response to annual budget update sessions held on 16 January 2023. The Chair advised members that the joint meeting of Executive Cabinet and Overview Panel received the letter on 8 February 2023.

## **33. SCRUTINY ACTIVITY 2022/23**

The Chair updated members on a report presented to the joint meeting of Executive Cabinet and Overview Panel on 8 February 2023, a summary of the Scrutiny Panel's activity during the 2022/23 municipal year.

## **34. CHAIR'S UPDATE**

The Chair advised members of Scrutiny reports tabled at the joint meeting of Executive Cabinet and Overview Panel on 8 February 2023. Items specific to the panel include:

- Scrutiny update
- Summary of activity for 2022/23

The Chair thanked members for their participation and contribution throughout the year.

## **35. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To note that this is the last formal meeting of the Scrutiny Panel for the 2022/23 municipal year.

**36. URGENT ITEMS**

The Chair reported that there were no urgent items for consideration at this meeting.

**CHAIR**