

Report of:	Head of Economic Prosperity and Head of Housing & Partnerships
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Key Decision:	No
Report Track:	Promoting Prosperity Scrutiny Committee and Council

PROMOTING PROSPERITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

3rd JULY 2019

ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report summarises the work undertaken by the Promoting Prosperity Scrutiny Committee during the municipal year 2018-19.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Members note the report and approve its submission to Council.

3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 The report summarises the work undertaken by the Promoting Prosperity Scrutiny Committee during the municipal year 2018-19.
- 3.2 The Committee received information on:
- (i) the annual reports for the former Economic Development and Town Centres Scrutiny Committee and Housing, Crime and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee;
 - (ii) quarterly progress reports on the Promoting Prosperity Priority Delivery Plan for 2018-19.
- 3.3 The Committee undertook three Scrutiny Reviews during 2018-19.

- (i) Economic Prosperity – Policy for Commercial Use of the Highway;
- (ii) Housing – Review of Vulnerable Persons Grass Cutting Scheme – Eligibility Criteria;
- (iii) Economic Prosperity – Review of Cannock Street Market.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 The Promoting Prosperity Scrutiny Committee is responsible for scrutinising matters relating to the Council's corporate priority of Promoting Prosperity.

5 Report Detail

- 5.1 It was agreed in July 2016 by full Council that in future the Scrutiny Committees would produce an annual report for Council on the work undertaken by each of the Committees.

- 5.2 The key role of the Scrutiny Committee is to:
- Hold the executive to account;
 - Ensure corporate priorities are met
 - Review and develop policies
 - Scrutinise partners
 - Consider performance management information

- 5.3 The remit of the Promoting Prosperity Scrutiny Committee during 2018-19 included:
- Promoting Prosperity PDP
 - Planning
 - Economic Development
 - Building Control
 - Markets
 - Land and Property Holdings (excluding HRA)
 - Town Centre Regeneration
 - Strategic Housing & Tenancy Services
 - Housing Maintenance
 - Housing Property Services

- 5.4 The Committee considered the following items during 2018-19

4 July 2018

- End of Year Performance Report 2017-18
- Committee's work programme for 2018-19

23 October 2018

- Outcome of Working Group to review the Policy for Commercial Use of the Highway

21 November 2018

- Outcome of Working Group to review the Working Group to Review the Vulnerable Persons Decorating and Grass Cutting Scheme – Eligibility Criteria
- Quarter 2 Promoting Prosperity PDP 2018-19 update

13th March 2019

- Outcome of Working Group to Review the Cannock Street Market
- Quarter 3 Promoting Prosperity PDP 2018-19 update

Working Group to review the Policy for Commercial Use of the Highway

5.5 A Working Group of 4 Members was established to carry out the review and to then bring its findings back to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Committee. The Working Group met on 3 occasions. In addition Members undertook visits to all 3 town centres and the views of various interested parties were obtained and these were presented to the Working Group. These included groups representing persons with disabilities, Planners, Economic Development and Licensing. Furthermore, a survey of how other Local Authorities deal with the Commercial Use of the Highway was carried out and the results of this considered by the Working Group. Members considered various options for the future of the Policy and its potential application in the District. On 23rd October 2018, the Committee resolved 'that Option C (CCDC provides advice and guidance only) be recommended to Cabinet and then Council'.

5.6 On 13th December 2018, Cabinet agreed:

(i) Officers should review the current fee structure and look at expanding the application of the Policy to cover the whole District.

(ii) Officers should investigate whether the enforcement of highways obstructions covered by the policy could be delegated from the County Council to the District Council, in order that matters are simplified.

(iii) Officers to report their findings to Cabinet and the matter will then be considered by Council

Working Group to review of the Vulnerable Persons Decorating and Grass Cutting Scheme – Eligibility Criteria

5.7 A Working Group of 4 Members was established to carry out the review. The Working Group met on 2 formal occasions and 1 informal occasion. Officers delivered a presentation to the Working Group which explained the background to the Scheme. The Working Group also considered approaches taken by other Social Housing Landlords.

- 5.8 The Working Group had unanimously agreed that the Grass Cutting Scheme did not require any amendment as it was operating well and all eligible tenants who had requested the service were having their grass cut.
- 5.9 However, with regards to the Internal Decorating Scheme the Group considered that it was important to retain the scheme but it was in need of review. The Group noted that it was fundamentally unfair to be on the waiting list for a place on the Internal Decorating Scheme for 7 years and then have to wait a further 3 years for a place to become available.

The following amendments to the Internal Decorating Scheme were approved by Cabinet on the 13th December 2018.

(A) To reduce the offer to 1 room being decorated once every 5 years, thereby enabling all eligible tenants to be included on the list. Consideration could be given to reducing the 5-year period once the waiting list had been reduced and the backlog cleared.

(B) That tenants should have a clear rent account for 3 to 6 months to be able to be included on the list. Additionally, no other sundry debtor payments, owing to Housing, should be outstanding.

(C) That where a tenant refuses the date offered to them they should go on a reserve list for cancellation, unless the reasons for refusal were for a medical reason or due to bereavement.

(D) That the scheme be reviewed after 2 years.

The changes would be implemented from the 1st April 2019.

Working Group to Review the Cannock Street Market

- 5.10 At the meeting of the Committee on 21 November 2018 Members agreed to review the street market in Cannock. A Working Group of five Members was established to carry out the review and to then bring its findings back to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Committee. The Working Group met on three formal occasions. Representatives from the current market operator Sketts and the newly formed Cannock Town Centre Partnership were invited to attend the meeting of the Working Group on 30 January 2019. The Working Group agreed that different events running alongside the street market attracted customers into the town centre. It was considered that the support of the CTCP would enable more specialist events to be held in conjunction with the street market. Such events will further improve the vitality and vibrancy of the town centre as well as bring variety to the town centre retail offer. It was also considered that the current arrangement with Sketts worked well and that the current contract should be extended for 12 months and that they should be asked to trial a Tuesday market over the summer.

The following recommendations were agreed by the Promoting Prosperity Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 13 March 2019.

- (A) Extension of the current street market contract with Sketts for a 12 month period from 31 October, 2019;
- (B) That Sketts be asked to undertake a survey to establish whether there was any appetite for operating the street market for an additional day (Tuesday);
- (C) That, should the outcome of the survey be positive, Sketts be asked to trial a Tuesday street market during the summer of 2019 with the possibility of including this additional day within the street market contract when it was renewed in November 2020;
- (D) That the new contract specification should include a requirement for the street market operator to:
 - (i) develop links and work in partnership with the McArthur Glen designer outlet to create initiatives to attract customers to the town centre;
 - (ii) work alongside the Cannock Town Centre Partnership in developing a programme of events to promote the town centre with the aim of increasing visitors.
- (E) That the positive work of the Cannock Town Centre Partnership in organising events to promote the town centre should be acknowledged, encouraged and supported.

5.11 Cabinet at its meeting on 18 April 2019 gave consideration to the above recommendations as made by the Promoting Prosperity Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting held on 13 March 2019.

6	Implications
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6.1 Financial

None

6.2 Legal

None

6.3 Human Resources

None

6.4 Section 17 (Crime Prevention)

None

6.5 Human Rights Act

None

6.6 Data Protection

None

6.7 Risk Management

None

6.8 Equality & Diversity

None

6.9 Best Value

None

7 Appendices to the Report

None

Previous Consideration

None

Background Papers

None