

**IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION**  
**20th December, 2018**

Present:- Councillor Mallinder (in the Chair); Councillors Atkin, B. Cutts, Elliot, Fenwick-Green, Jepson, McNeely, Reeder, Sansome, Vjestica, Walsh, Whysall and Wyatt.

Also in attendance Mrs. W. Birch and Mrs. L. Shears, Co-opted Members.

Apologies for absence were received from The Mayor (Councillor Buckley) and Councillors Jones, Khan and Sheppard.

The webcast of the Council Meeting can be viewed at:-  
<https://rotherham.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

**31. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest to report.

**32. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS**

There were no questions from members of the public or the press.

**33. COMMUNICATIONS**

The Chair provided confirmation of a scrutiny review meeting by the Improving Places Select Commission on the Housing Strategy on the 9<sup>th</sup> January, 2019 at 9.00 a.m. to 11.00 a.m.

**34. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 1ST NOVEMBER, 2018**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> November, 2018.

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission held on Thursday, 1<sup>st</sup> November, 2018, be approved as a correct record.

**35. ASSET MANAGEMENT**

Consideration was given the report which provided an update on the progress and activities of Asset Management.

The Council's Corporate Asset Management Plan 2017 - 2023, which incorporated the Council's Asset Management Policy and Strategy, was now the guiding document for Asset Management activities and priorities with the decisions on property delegated to the Assistant Director Planning Regeneration and Transport and only those of a value greater

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than £100,000 or at the request of the Cabinet Member reserved for Cabinet.

Progress against the Corporate Asset Management Plan was monitored by the Asset Management Board, which was not a decision-making vehicle, but made recommendations. The latest monitoring position confirmed that all actions were “Green” or completed.

The process for dealing with surplus property and decisions and the procedure for the review of surplus operational assets had been revisited and the process both simplified and made more open and included the consultation with Ward Members after an asset had been deemed to be surplus to the Council’s requirements.

Additionally earlier consultation with Ward Members was now also included, before recommendations to the Asset Management Board, where there was a proposal to retain, demolish or declare an asset surplus to the Council’s requirements.

At the request of the Service, the Internal Audit Service had carried out an Audit on the Statutory Compliance in the operational estate. This found that the Asset Management Service was ensuring compliance, but that the methods of compliance record storage and reporting upwards of that compliance required improvement. A set of actions have been agreed to improve compliance record storage and to instigate regular reports on compliance to the Regeneration and Environment - Directorate Management Team and the Asset Management Board.

Paul Smith, Head of Asset Management, provided further insight into Asset Management by way of a powerpoint presentation, which highlighted:-

- Asset Management Governance Structure.
- Post Review – The Asset Management Leadership Team.
- Asset Management Budget.
- Key Assessment Management Deliverables.
- Partnership Working.
- Corporate Asset Management Plan – Five Main Objectives.
- Property Reviews.
- Non-Operational Commercial Property Review
- Commercial Investment, Acquisition and Development Strategy.
- Condition Surveys.

Further information was also provided on the Property Review Flowchart Process and the contents outlined in detail to Members.

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A discussion and answer session ensued and the following issues were raised and clarified:-

- Consistency in the management of former school caretaker's bungalows as isolated properties.

Properties of this type would go through various stages and internal consultation whether to retain or dispose. Any representation would be received by the Asset Management Board. Officers would investigate outstanding concerns and return back.

- Engagement with local residents on the Swinton precinct redevelopment.
- Internal Audit Service audit on compliance and the details on the outcome.

External Audit reviewed all compliance documents and advised the compliant statutory record keeping needed improving and should be reported back more often to Asset Management Board.

- Asset Management dashboard and those performance measures on hold identified as "green", should these not be "amber".

The performance measures deemed vital in terms of resource management and placed on hold would in future be changed to amber or even red.

- Clarification and differentiation of delivery together, public estate and Section 106 properties and the suite of measures attributable to asset management.
- Clarification of the date of the Council's Corporate Asset Management Plan which was 2017/2025.
- Redevelopment of other town centres. This would need to be done in accordance with need and opportunity with emerging requirements whilst taking account of the implications on land and assets for those areas who had produced a neighbourhood plan.
- Clarification of Section 106 Agreements which were a legal agreement attached to a planning application and not specifically for residential properties.
- Benchmarking and the highlighting of measures for performance.

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- Management and acquisition of commercial real estate.
- Decision making of the Asset Management Board and how this worked in practice.
- Asset categorisation and if this had been completed on a Ward by Ward basis and reviewed in February on an annual basis.
- Asset management of Council-owned properties and if consideration was given to strategic acquisitions of spare unused land, such as Laudsdale Road at East Herringthorpe.

Some of the land may be HRA allocated sites. Further information would be provided in due course.

- Forthcoming Health Check and if anything further had been done on the storage facilities for information and data.

A Storage Officer had now been appointed from OPE to move this issue forward.

- Review of efficiency on worksmart and completion of the review.

The office moves and relaunch of worksmart had been put on hold due to the Big Hearts Big Changes Team projects that had been brought forward.

- Development of cost effective energy services.

Assessment of buildings and energy ASRs had been undertaken as part of the review with further assessments of how the utilities were managed. The Energy Officer was looking at sites for battery storage, wind power and at opportunities within the Council estate to further this agenda.

**Resolved:-** (1) That the progress against the Asset Management Plan be noted.

(2) That the new property review process be supported and noted.

(3) That the ongoing work on the records storage and reporting of statutory compliance be noted.

(4) That an update on worksmart be provided in six months.

**36. DRAFT SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT PLAN**

Consideration was given to the report which set out the main points of the draft Rotherham Employment and Skills Plan.

The Plan was a joint Council/RTP document, with monitoring of its implementation the responsibility of the Employability and Skills Sub-Group of the Business Growth Board.

The Plan had two main objectives:-

- A workforce with the skills and experience to support Rotherham's economic growth and secure investment.
- Supporting people back into sustainable employment.

Consultation was carried out with local businesses, providers and support organisations, by Sheffield Hallam University (SHU), to identify the main issues facing Rotherham in regard to employability and skills. The headline findings included:-

- Skills shortages and recruitment difficulties for certain sectors.
- Employers (un)willing to accommodate employees with multiple needs.
- Most job information now via the internet and across a wide range of sources, which some people find difficult to access.
- Returners to job markets have outdated skills (esp. IT) and lack confidence.
- Assistance for job seekers has reduced considerably.
- Welfare reform is excluding some people – “survival rather than job hunting”.
- Need more employer involvement in developing the Rotherham skills and employment offer.
- In work poverty.

Improved skill levels could underpin strong and sustainable economic and employment growth, while supporting an increase in the levels and quality of employment for local residents. To achieve this, Rotherham partners would seek to deliver the following priorities:-

- Provide the support that Rotherham residents require to access the local job market and to maximise progression within their careers.
- Assist businesses to source the training they require to unlock new jobs, new markets and raise productivity.
- Develop enterprising young people and jobseekers, aware of the career options available to them and the breadth of local employment opportunities, including apprenticeships.
- Use the University Centre Rotherham (UCR) and other local providers to drive an increase in the number of residents with Level

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- 4 and higher qualifications.
- Ensure that (young) people can find a job that meets their aspirations within Rotherham or the wider Sheffield City Region.
- Broker close linkages between Rotherham based enterprises, many of whom are successful and growing, and Rotherham schools and colleges, to provide the workforce of the future – including teacher/industry placements and business involvement in curriculum delivery.

The Plan included a “delivery plan” setting out the actions needed to deliver these priorities, with each action having an outcome and timescale, which it would be monitored against.

It was, therefore, important for the Council to produce and implement a Rotherham Employment and Skills Plan - to deliver a fit for purpose strategy developed and endorsed by all the relevant stakeholders, which would meet the needs of both businesses and residents to ensure they could access sustainable jobs with the prospect of career progression.

The Plan would also ensure that Rotherham’s employment and skills activities dovetail with those of the wider City Region.

A discussion and question and answer session ensued and the following issues were raised and clarified:-

- Future and current implications of the Plan, the success of its delivery and if successful what percentage would Rotherham receive from that funding.

Funding allocations were dependent upon the current projects across South Yorkshire. The process was competitive, but the funding was shared out evenly.

- Preparing young people for the world of work and the outcome on Rotherham Schools against Gatsby Benchmark 5.

Benchmark 5 depicted that all young people should have a meaningful encounter with an employer. Employer delivery events had been held and provided a young people with a flavour of industry.

- Gullivers’ Valley was opening in 2020, but the caravan park was due to open a year earlier in 2019. Publicity needed to clearly identify the two separate entities, which would be run and open separately to each other.

This would be clearly identified in the final version of the Plan.

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- Disconcerting comments about the barriers that people faced around the work environment, despite many initiatives over the years to improve this situation and Ofsted requiring schools to provide independent careers guidance.
- Adults lacking in literacy and numeracy skills were more likely to suffer from ill health and social exclusion (Appendix 1 of the Plan).
- Benefits to the local economy - roughly £14,643 the same as Leeds City Region.
- High unemployment rate for the Borough now matched the national rate. Was there variability among different areas and was data available down at Ward level.

Unemployment rates were available on a Ward by Ward basis. Details would be distributed to the Select Commission.

- How achievable was the business education links in terms of young people in schools.

Research showed that meeting employers, employment fayres, interactive events and more stimulating speed networking events and employers visiting schools raised awareness of career opportunities.

The local advisory fayre at Magna brought together over 40+ employers who talked to around 550 young people in the morning and jobseekers of any age in an afternoon and advised on current opportunities.

- Opportunities to achieve Level 4 qualifications and the advantages now with a university campus in the Borough.
- Long term illness and the legacies left from the steel and coal industries. Can figures on age ranges be provided?
- Operation of the Wheels to Work Scheme – details to be provided.
- Can details of the Gatsby Score Tables be provided? In terms of Gatsby 5 it was pleasing to hear that employment officers were in some schools, but greater emphasis was needed to make schools aware of the qualifications needed for local employers.

The Gatsby benchmarks would be shared. Each school had its own system for measuring where they were against these. The Enterprise Co-ordinator was showing schools how to record against these accordingly.

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Enterprise Adviser Representatives from industry were linked and provided a steer with lots of input.

- Rotherfed were doing Teaching Assistant training courses and information was requested on whether the WEA worked in partnership with the job centre.

Further information would be sought and shared about the WEA and the job centre and the discussions with young people about new jobs, going back into work and retaining.

- Page 71 referred to medium-low tech manufacturing and public administration shedding over 1,000 jobs and the planning that was needed to help any affected employees.

This was a shrinking sector that would need support to move to one from medium low tech manufacturing. This would be picked up in the Plan.

- Was RiDO assisting to try and keep people in employment? The positive change to look at the skills shortage was welcomed.
- In the Strategy a number of targets were missing. Would there be an annual review of how many young people hoped to get into employment.

The numbers and targets would be complete once the Plan was agreed and would be reviewed and monitored on an annual basis by the Business Growth Board.

- Could the funding from the SCR be broken down and would there be any joint funding by private and public through the LEP. If all this was coming from Rotherham how far could this be shared.

Funding and the Plan would be closely linked to the Sheffield City Region to maximise opportunities. Rotherham had a good track record and hopefully businesses would benefit with a more balanced version and wide range of jobs.

- There was a need to move medium manufacturing to high. The northern regions did appear to have difficulties in attracting new graduates into different areas and by working with the Sheffield City Region this would assist with breaking down prejudice and the area to become successful.

Being realistic Sheffield had the attractions and the jobs economy had to work together.

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- Page 68 of the Action Plan indicated that as an outcome the lack of a private vehicle must not act as a barrier to accessing jobs in Rotherham.

The Wheels to Work Scheme and the liaison with partners would look to improve connectivity further.

- 32% of residents aged 16 to 64 either had no qualifications or only those below NVQ Level 2. Was consideration given to older workers in employment and whether they were functioning in jobs above NVQ Level 2 but with no formal qualification?

No information was available, but the problem was encountered if people then moved jobs.

- How successful were further education colleges in getting young people to pass English and Maths.

Data would be provided if this was available.

- Transport accessibility and connectivity across the region. Could this be raised at the Transport Advisory Board?

Regular dialogue with SYPTE bus operators who ran a commercial service would continue.

- How many apprentices stayed on with the same employer and secured permanent employment.

Little information was available about retention, but would be looked into further.

- Equality Impact Assessment requirement.

**Resolved:-** (1) That the comments on the draft Plan be considered for inclusion in the final version recommended to Cabinet.

(2) That further information be shared with the Improving Places Select Commission on:-

- Unemployment rates by Wards.
- Long term illness figures and age ranges.
- Wheels to Work Scheme.
- Links between WEA and job centre.
- Gatsby Tables Score detail.

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- Data success rates for Maths and English in FE colleges.
- Apprenticeship retention into permanent employment.
- Equality Impact Assessment confirmation if required

(3) That an update on progress of the Draft Skills and Employment Plan be provided in six to nine months' time.

### **37. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING**

Resolved:- That the next meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission take place on Thursday, 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2019 at 1.30 p.m.