

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD
Wednesday, 13th February, 2019

Present:- Councillor Steele (in the Chair); Councillors Cowles, Brookes, Cusworth, Keenan, Mallinder, Napper, Short, Walsh and Wyatt.

Apologies were received from Councillors Evans and Sansome.

The webcast of the Council Meeting can be viewed at:-

<https://rotherham.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

166. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Resolved:-

1. That the minutes of the meetings held on 24 and 26 October 2018 be approved as true and correct records of the proceedings.
2. That, subject to the amendment of the recommendation to the Cabinet in respect of the Amendments to the Housing Allocations Policy and the inclusion of comments made by Councillor Brookes in respect of discretionary payments on the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan, the minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2019 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

167. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

168. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

A member of the public introduced himself as Mr Steve Hambleton, Chief Executive of Sheffield Royal Society for the Blind, which was responsible for Rotherham Sight and Sound. He referred to the budget proposals which had been subject to consultation from October until the end of November that had sought to reduce funding from the Council for the services provided by Rotherham Sight and Sound. He was pleased to reflect on the way in which the Council had listened to the representations made during the consultation on the budget proposals and was happy with the outcome of the deliberations with senior officers since the close of consultation. He concluded by urging Members to support the budget proposals that had been presented for scrutiny at the meeting.

The Chair thanked Mr Hambleton for his remarks and was pleased to see that the consultation process had proved to be a listening exercise which demonstrated that the Council was open to feedback and amending proposals.

A question was put by another member of the public in respect of why he had not received a response from the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on his request for written clarification on the use of the webcasting technology during meetings of the Board where petitions were being considered or requests from the public to review responses from the Council to petitions were being considered.

In response, the Chair confirmed that he had written to the member of the public earlier that day and apologised for the delay in writing back to him. He further indicated that petitions would continue to be considered in public, but when all representations had been made the Board would ask all present to leave the room during their deliberations, before inviting all to return to hear the outcome and reasons for the recommendations from Members.

In a supplementary question, the member of the public sought clarification from the Chair in respect of why he had not been provided with an explanation of the Council's Complaints Procedure following a question that he had raised at the meeting on 16 January 2019. In response, the Chair indicated that he understood that the individual had met with the Chief Executive and Assistant Chief Executive and had expected that the issue would have been addressed there. As that had not been the case, he would follow up and respond to the individual directly.

169. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Chair reported that there were no items of business that formally required the exclusion of the press or public from the meeting under any paragraph under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. However, he was minded to ask the press, public and other attendees to leave the room whilst the Board debated the petitions (minutes 171 and 172 refer) and gave an undertaking that all attendees would be readmitted for the confirmation of the Board's recommendations.

170. PETITION - RE-NAME PUBLIC SPACE IN ROTHERHAM TOWN CENTRE "CHUCKLE SQUARE"

Consideration was given to a petition, which had received 681 eligible signatures under the Council's petition scheme, submitted by *The Rotherham Advertiser* calling for public space in Rotherham Town Centre to be re-named as 'Chuckle Square' in tribute to the brothers, Barry and Paul Elliott, known as "The Chuckle Brothers".

In presenting the petition, Mr. Gareth Dennison from *The Rotherham Advertiser* reflected on the honours conferred by the Council in recent years on The Yorkshire Regiment and Howard Webb through Freedom of the Borough, which had been great town centre celebrations. The area referred to in the petition was where Effingham Street crossed Howard Street in the town centre, outside Boots. Mr Dennison submitted that the petition showed widespread, popular support for the Chuckle Brothers to be deserving of such a tribute. The idea for the petition had come about following the death of Barry Elliott in August 2018. The Chuckle Brothers had put Rotherham on the map and such a move would literally put the Chuckle Brothers on the map. *The Rotherham Advertiser* had launched the campaign after learning that the Council was looking for ideas to name the square, so it was hoped that there would be no budgetary reason to not proceed with the proposal within the petition. Mr Dennison reflected on the positive, free, media coverage that the town had enjoyed since the petition was launched and specifically in the days leading up to the Board's consideration of the petition. In summary, it was noted that the petition was a light hearted, yet sincere, request to honour the legacy of The Chuckle Brothers and after a rough few years, Mr Dennison, surmised that Rotherham could "do with a chuckle."

The Chair thanked Mr. Dennison for his contribution and invited officers to provide comment. The Acting Assistant Director of Planning, Regeneration and Transportation indicated that there was no formal position from officers in respect of the request made in the petition. A technical explanation was provided to Members in respect of the process followed in naming streets or locations.

It was reported that a representation had been received by the Chair which opposed the request made within the petition. The Chair read the representation to the meeting. Mr. Dennison noted that he could have supplied many comments from those in support of the proposal in the petition, which he would have been happy to have shared with the Board.

After a period of deliberation, the Board had regard to the submissions made during the meeting on behalf of *The Rotherham Advertiser* and recognised the strength of feeling that had been expressed through the petition and other media in respect of the contribution of Barry and Paul Elliott, as the Chuckle Brothers, to the reputation of the borough. Members indicated that they were keen to see the positive contribution made by The Chuckle Brothers acknowledged. As Members were aware of a family connection to Maltby, it was been proposed that the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment consider naming a street, children's play park or other public space as a tribute to the Chuckle Brothers. Members noted that new housing developments in Maltby would provide an opportunity to realise such a tribute in the near future and that when named, the "To Me, To you" signpost designed by *The Rotherham Advertiser* should be incorporated within the location.

Resolved:-

1. That the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment be recommended to consider naming a street, play park or public space in Maltby in tribute to The Chuckle Brothers.
2. That the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment be recommended to include a signpost designed in the same fashion as submitted by *The Rotherham Advertiser* with the iconic catchphrase "To Me To You" marking the location.
3. That no further action be taken in respect of the petition.

171. PETITION - ZEBRA CROSSING ON VICTORIA STREET, KILNHURST

Consideration was given to a petition, signed by 1,379 people, which called on the Council to change a zebra crossing on Victoria Street, Kilnhurst, to a pelican crossing.

Representations supporting the petition were made by Mr. Steve Straw who provided a brief history of the issues faced by pedestrians at the location over a number of years since the zebra crossing was installed over thirty five years ago. He explained that Victoria Street was a principal route connecting to Doncaster, the A1 and M18 motorways and, as such, there was a heavy level of traffic using the road which had led to a number of accidents over the years. Reference was made to the presence of a primary school, nursery and other amenities near to the location of the zebra crossing and that there was a lack of confidence amongst the local community that drivers would stop at the zebra crossing if a child attempted to cross the road.

In summary, the petition had been gathered by approaching the local community for their signature and support, rather than making use of social media or e-petitioning. Mr. Straw felt that Members should have regard to this strength of feeling in considering the petition and actively support the installation of a pelican crossing to replace the extant zebra crossing.

In a question to the lead petitioner, Members sought to establish if a crossing patrol warden was in place at the zebra crossing at the beginning and end of the school day and the number of accidents at the location. In response, Mr. Straw confirmed that there was no longer a patrol warden and he understood there to have been three accidents at the location in the past couple of years. Following on from Mr. Straw's remarks, Councillors Cusworth and Wyatt provided some further clarification in respect of the crossing patrol warden position and the efforts of ward councillors to contribute devolved budgets to the funding of an ongoing patrol presence.

The Chair read a letter of support for the petition from Councillor Sansome, a ward councillor in the neighbouring Swinton ward, who was unable to attend the meeting.

Matthew Reynolds, Transportation Manager, responded to the points raised by the lead petitioner and explained that road safety was an important issue and that officers wished to work with the petitioners and the local community to examine what could be done to address the issues raised. He indicated that tube surveys were already in place at the location to establish data in respect of the volume of traffic, as any decisions to spend money to make changes had to be supported by a strong evidence base. Furthermore, reference was made to regulations from the Department for Transport, supported by Council policy, which were rigorous in assessing the appropriateness of siting zebra or pelican crossings. Other considerations were environmental factors, proximity to junctions, movements associated with nearby bus laybys and widths of footpaths, but the most relevant determinant would be the speed of vehicles approaching the location and the speed survey would be most critical piece of evidence in deciding what action to take. It was confirmed there were no recorded accidents at the location in the past five years, however there had been accidents on Victoria Street that were not related to the zebra crossing and there was no statistical significance arising from national statistics to suggest that a pelican crossing would be safer for pedestrians than a zebra crossing.

The Lead Petitioner asked how school children would be able to cross the road safely if no pelican crossing could be installed and without a crossing patrol warden. In response, officers confirmed that a number of initiatives had been introduced including a humped crossing, upgraded Belisha beacons and wider environmental initiatives. Reference was also made to driver awareness with better usage of signage and parking restrictions to improve visibility on the approach to the crossing. It was confirmed that all of the aforementioned issues would be considered again in response to the petition.

Members queried whether any analysis had taken place in respect of the feasibility of converting to a pelican crossing at the location in view of the traffic lights on the humpbacked bridge further up Victoria Street. In response, it was explained that there were stringent guidelines in respect of the installation of pelican crossings, although it was anticipated that this proposal would fit within those guidelines, but further investigation would confirm that.

Reference was made to driver behaviour and it was considered that this might be a significant issue with drivers speeding to get through the green light at the traffic lights on the humpbacked bridge on Victoria Street. Furthermore, clarity was provided from Members that data would only be available from recordable accidents, rather than the anecdotal information concerning accidents which local residents would be more familiar with. In response, officers confirmed that decision making would be based on statistics, evidence and data.

Members queried the extent to which the Public Health function worked with the Transportation service to improve road safety. In response it was confirmed that the two services did work together, but it was principally to support walking and cycling initiatives. In view of the suggestion made by Members, officers agreed to investigate further the feasibility of using these funds to improve road safety.

The Chair invited the Lead Petitioner to submit further questions to officers in respect of the period of time that data would be collected. It was anticipated that the data would be collated and available for analysis by April 2019.

After a period of deliberation, having considered the representations made by the lead petitioner and information supplied by officers, Members recognised the concerns of the people of Kilnhurst regarding road safety on the zebra crossing on Victoria Street. To this end, Members recommended that officers fully investigate the request within the petition and report back to the Improving Places Select Commission at the earliest opportunity.

Resolved:-

1. That the petition be supported.
2. That the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment investigate fully the feasibility of installing a pelican crossing at the location on Victoria Street, Kilnhurst, in line with the request made within the petition.
3. That the outcome of the investigation be reported back to the Improving Places Select Commission at the earliest opportunity.

172. BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX 2019/20 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

Consideration was given to a report which was due to be considered by the Cabinet meeting on 18 February 2019 that proposed the Council's Budget and Council Tax for 2019/20. The proposals were based on the outcome of the Council's Final Local Government Finance Settlement, budget consultation and the consideration of Directorate budget proposals through the Council's formal Budget and Scrutiny process alongside a review of the financial planning assumptions within the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

In setting the proposed 2019/20 budget, the report sought Cabinet's endorsement of a recommendation to Council an increase of 2.99% in the Council's basic Council Tax. The report contained proposals to balance the revenue budget for both 2019/20 and 2020/21. The Budget and Council Tax Report 2018/19 highlighted the need to address a £30m financial gap over the period 2019/20 and 2020/21.

The Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Finance attended the meeting to respond to specific queries from Members in respect of the proposals.

Assurances were sought by Members in respect of how realistic the proposals were for reductions in the numbers of looked after children by 2020-21, which predicated significant savings within the budget proposals. In response, it was explained that extensive benchmarking had taken place of practice in other authorities where Children and Young People's Services had been in a process of recovery and the analysis provided confidence that the numbers in the report were achievable whilst maintaining the safety of the child. Assurances had also been provided by professionals based on the best information available and the service was moving in the right direction in reducing costs.

Members sought assurances in respect of monitoring and evaluation in respect of the proposed increase associated with independent adult care sector provision. In response, the Leader expressed the view that there was no reason to believe that the proposal would have an adverse impact. He further reflected on the financial pressures facing the sector, however it was noted that there was presently an over provision within the borough in respect of independent adult care.

Reference was made to the report indicating that the Council would pursue a more commercial and outward facing approach to doing business, generating income and leveraging the resources and assets of partners in the borough. Members sought to understand exactly what that meant. In response, the Leader confirmed that the authority would continue to pursue projects from previous years which would take time to be realised. In a supplementary question, reference was made to the work done in Trafford to improve the Sunday market which revolved around an excellent food offer and whether the Council had given consideration to introducing something similar within the borough. In response, the Leader did not believe that anything specific had been considered, but reminded Members of the existing on-street market which traded at a surplus for the Council.

Assurances were sought in respect of the proposed capital expenditure on Microsoft Office 365, which was significant in value and in terms of its impact on every service, officer and Member of the Council. An explanation was provided to the Board regarding the rationale for the project and the purchase of software licences for the product. Further assurances were provided in respect of Cabinet Member and senior officer oversight and reporting on the implementation of the project.

Reflecting on previous recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, the Leader provided a synopsis of the consultation process in respect of the budget proposals, the methodology and how effective social media had been in increasing contact and engagement on the proposals. Whilst there remained lessons for the future, the general feeling was that the process had improved on previous years.

Resolved:-

1. That the Cabinet be advised that the recommendations to Council be supported.

173. COMMISSIONING AND PROCUREMENT OF A NEW DELIVERY MODEL FOR HOME CARE AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Consideration was given to a report which provided an overview of the current home care and support service in Rotherham, particularly the state of the local market in terms of ability to meet current demand for service and the pressures faced by providers. The report highlighted the case for change, before focusing on the key principles and approaches that would underpin a new delivery model for home care and support services. Those principles were proposed to be incorporated into a new service specification produced following a co-production exercise with a range of stakeholders. The intention was therefore to procure a new model of home care and support through a competitive tender process, with alternative service arrangements in place from November 2019.

Members sought clarification in respect of how the service would recruit, train and retain young people to make this an attractive career option. In response, it was explained that conversations were ongoing with local colleges in respect of promoting health and care diplomas and reference was also made to the career routes through the NHS which would enable carers to progress to becoming nurses.

Assurances were also sought in respect of how consistency of standards would be achieved across the borough with different providers. In response, it was explained that dialogue would be ongoing with providers as consistency was really important. The Council's contract compliance function would ensure that there would be consistency in respect of training, recruitment and safety, as it was part of the authority's statutory role to ensure that the local market was well developed and properly managed.

Members commented that the report read more like a specification of requirements rather than a process of system design and sought assurances that the Target Operating Model was sufficiently developed to use as a basis for contracts in the coming years. In response, the Strategic Director confirmed that the new operating model would cover the whole service and providers needed to be thinking differently, which would represent a cultural challenge for them given that the new model required new ways of working. Specifications and contracts would be drawn up with new providers to build in flexibility so that the Council could make changes as required.

Further assurances were sought in respect of the buy-in from frontline staff for the proposals and it was confirmed that they had been involved in the core design of the proposals.

Members sought assurances that risks arising from Brexit which may impact on workforce numbers had been considered. In response, it was confirmed that the challenges posed by the exit from the European Union in respect of workforce in the care sector required national consideration and response. There were concerns regarding the fragility of the home care market, but the model proposed was designed to address systemic issues and develop the attractiveness of the sector with a career path for younger people to follow.

It was confirmed that the contracts were anticipated to be in place by November 2019, however the procurement process for this needed to commence in April 2019. On this basis, Members agreed that the Health Select Commission should receive an update on performance outcomes from the contract after twelve months of operation in November 2020.

Resolved:-

1. That Cabinet be advised that the recommendations be supported.

2. That performance outcomes in respect of the contracts be reported to the Health Select Commission in November 2020.

174. URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair reported that there was no business requiring urgent consideration by the Board.

175. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The Chair reported that he had consented to the cancellation of the planned next meeting on 20 February 2019 and it was therefore

Resolved:-

That the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board be held on Wednesday 13 March 2019 at 11.00 a.m. in Rotherham Town Hall.