

**IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION
Tuesday 16 March 2021**

Present:- Councillor Mallinder (in the Chair); Councillors Atkin, Brookes, Buckley, Elliot, Jepson, Jones, Khan, McNeely, Reeder, Rushforth, Sansome, Sheppard, Taylor, Tweed and Wyatt.

Apologies were received from Councillor B. Cutts, Ms. Bacon and Ms. Jacques.

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

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

130. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 2 FEBRUARY 2021

Resolved:-

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 02 February 2021 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

131. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

132. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

The Chair confirmed that no questions had been submitted.

133. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Chair advised that there were no items of business on the agenda that would require the exclusion of the press or public from the meeting.

134. TRANSPORTATION - ACTIVE TRAVEL AND TRANSFORMING CITIES UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report providing an overview and update on progress of the Council's Transforming Cities Active Travel Programme 2020-23. The report included an update on the current position with the programme within the 3-year delivery timeframe, issues which could impact on the current profile, and mitigation approaches in use.

In discussion, Members requested additional details around project scheduling in the Parkgate area. Assurances were provided that the intended works were two years hence, which affords time to plan around key risks. It is customary to work to timing windows, and there can be project delivery conversations ahead of time to minimise congestion at peak times.

Further details were requested around resurfacing at a specific site. This was to be delivered by the Highways resurfacing programme, and the teams would be working closely to coordinate the end results.

Assurances were requested that a list of shovel-ready projects could be compiled and prepared in case of additional funding sources coming through in addition to those already discussed. The response noted that funding was sparse for shovel ready projects, the cost of developing a scheme or project often had to be taken in view of a designated funding stream or bid. IF there were encouragement to believe there would be funding from the TCF, the team would begin to undertake scheme design. Engineering level design and development before funding is available would be an achievement that, whilst desirable and advantageous, is not currently in practice.

Members also requested additional information regarding a specific scheme beyond those mentioned in the report. The response noted a scheme in the area in question which is currently under discussion and how this current discussion corresponds with a historic scheme discussion. Following an explanation of the prioritisation process, it was noted that future updates would include a clear account of prioritisation of projects.

Further details were requested regarding schemes under development for the South of the Borough. The response from officers affirmed that the priority follows where the greatest increase in cycling is anticipated or happening. A recent physical observational survey of the cycle network has informed the development of the cycling strategy. The rationale included in this strategy begins to build a case for development of cycleways where there currently may be fewer or none.

Resolved:-

1. That the report be noted and the next update be brought in 12 months' time.
2. That a list of projects be prepared to ensure projects can proceed upon receipt of funding.

135. CULTURE, SPORT AND TOURISM UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report which provided an update on the delivery of the Culture, Sport and Tourism Service throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The report included details on a selection of the projects that the service has delivered over the past year and set out key projects over the coming twelve months.

In discussion, Members requested additional details regarding the logging and tracking of volunteer hours. The response from officers indicated that the variety of volunteer opportunities and the number of volunteers were

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currently tracked. Volunteer hours were tracked through the service, but those hours mediated through community organisations were not currently tracked.

Members also requested more details regarding benchmarking in respect of engagement. The response from officers noted that the statistics were taken from the Cultural Strategy which referenced the Active Lives Survey from 2017. More benchmarking statistics would be included in the next update.

Members expressed interest in hearing more about engagement with schools and libraries, and successful engagement opportunities such as pop-up libraries that could be continued and enhanced further. The response from officers provided assurances that engagement with schools had been undertaken and was planned to grow more in the foreseeable future.

Members asked for more information around the “order and collect” library service, and whether this service would continue to be offered even after library buildings are open again. The response from officers affirmed the value of the service and the intention therefore to continue the service.

Members requested further information around the memorial activities in response to bereaved communities following the pandemic. The response from officers explained in detail how the memorial activities would work and the discussions that were currently in progress regarding the potential arts memorials in communities.

Members expressed appreciation and requested that the success of efforts in respect of the Brinsworth Library move be noted.

Resolved:-

1. That the report be noted and the next update be brought in 12 months' time.
2. That benchmarking be undertaken with libraries in neighbouring authorities and provided as part of the next update.
3. That a procedure be developed whereby volunteer time which is not mediated through the service directly may be logged and tracked, with a view to demonstrating fully volunteer engagement in Rotherham.

136. OUTCOMES FROM WORKING GROUP - WARD HOUSING HUBS

Consideration was given to a report on the findings and recommendations of the 25 February meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission sub-group which examined the redevelopment of Ward Housing Hubs.

Resolved:-

1. That the briefing be noted and the following recommendations be submitted to Cabinet for approval:-
 - a) That training and guidance be provided as part of Member Induction to ensure that new Members have a working knowledge of how Ward Housing Hubs link with Neighbourhoods.
 - b) That provision be made to enable more joint-ward funding and collaboration across ward boundaries where there is mutual agreement and benefit.
 - c) That Members be provided with clear, reader-friendly criteria for HRA funding and guidance around other sources of funding if HRA funds do not apply; and that the guidance include an explanation of the 'roll over' facility for unallocated spend, from one year to the next, within the four year cycle.
 - d) That projects be procured and delivered through an appropriate and timely procurement process with a view to demonstrating value for money.
 - e) That provision be made for approval of projects earlier in the municipal year to maximise the time available to deliver approved projects.
 - f) That processes be developed to enable decision-making where there are only two Ward Members, for example, in the event of a dispute or quorum issue.
 - g) That a range of methods be adopted to promote Ward Housing Hubs and to enable residents to engage actively in a way which suits their needs and preferences.
 - h) That the Council's Employment Solutions Team liaise with RotherFed to promote the Pathways Employment Scheme across all the wards.
2. That the next update be presented to Improving Places Select Commission in 12 months' time.

137. WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

Consideration was given to a briefing presented by the Governance Advisor in respect of the Commission's updated work programme, with especial mention of a change of schedule for the upcoming Aids and Adaptations Tenant Scrutiny Review, which had been deferred for scrutiny at the next meeting, in June, to incorporate a related and larger piece of review work currently in progress by the Council's Business Unit. It was requested that Members begin contributing to the formation of the work programme for 2021-2022.

Resolved:-

1. That the updated work programme be noted.

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138. URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair advised that there were no urgent items of business requiring a decision at this meeting.

139. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

The Chair announced that the next virtual meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission will take place on 29 June 2021, commencing at 1.30 pm.