

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD
Wednesday 15 March 2023

Present:- Councillor Clark (in the Chair); Councillors Bacon, Baker-Rogers, Baum-Dixon, A Carter, Cooksey, Elliott, Pitchley, Wyatt and Tinsley.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councillors Browne and Yasseen.

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

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

158. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 14 DECEMBER 2022 AND 19 JANUARY 2023

Resolved: - That the Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on 14 December 2022 and 19 January 2023 be approved as a true record.

159. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

160. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

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

161. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no exempt items.

162. CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN AND ANNUAL REPORT

The Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy introduced the report and explained it was the annual updated on climate change. The report covered three main areas, it was a progress report indicating what had been delivered so far, it was an annual action plan for climate change along with including a specific plan covering single use plastic.

The Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment introduced the other officers present and provided an overview of the report. This noted that the Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 which had led to a number of reports and action plans. The action plan had been split into three documents focusing on what had been done in terms of the progress on last year's action plan. There was also a year ahead plan for climate change and a specific action plan for single use plastics. A substantial amount of progress had been made in areas such as active travel, electric vehicle charging points and the delivery of a successful tree planting programme.

Actions undertaken regarding building decarbonisation had been successful with the retrofitting of 217 properties by housing and which was being carried out in other areas of the borough. Progress had been made regarding single use plastics nothing that the Town Hall and the theatre was no longer using single use cups.

Lots of engagement was being undertaken, particularly with the Youth Cabinet who had maintained climate changes as one of their manifesto commitments for the year.

There were also a number of schemes being undertaken around climate adaptation, sighting the canal barrier at Forge Island, which would not only protect against climate change and flooding but included climate friendly concrete as part of the construction materials.

Actions for next year included further decarbonisation of council buildings, more retrofitting of the council's housing stock and further action around single use plastics and electric vehicle charging points. It also included the roll-out of the carbon literacy training for officers and Members.

The following points were raised in response to queries:

- The carbon literacy training would provide information around about what the carbon sources were.
- Whilst the report discussed up to six electric vehicle (EV) charging points, it was noted that there were three available at the moment, with additional funding being secured. The existing three EV charging points had come in under budget. All options were being explored to increase the number of charging points.
- The Improving Places Section Commission was undertaking a spotlight review into the Nature Crisis motion which overlapped with climate change.
- The Council needed to consider its schemes as a whole, ensuring that measures were put in place that could be directly attributed to offset any carbon impact of construction projects.
- It was felt that the Carbon Impact Assessments needed to contain more detail.
- The carbon literacy training would be delivered through an e-learning platform.
- Members were encouraged to feedback information on any local tree planting schemes so that it can be captured.
- Information on the number of people who had downloaded the Council's Bin App would be provided outside of the meeting.
- Work was being undertaken with colleagues from Housing to develop the most appropriate methods for recycling and disposal of waste for housing such as blocks of flats etc.
- There were lots of initiatives around how the carbon footprint associated with the Council housing stock and fleet could be reduced.

- It was clarified that fugitive emissions were classed as emissions that were a result of things such as leaks from air conditioning units.

Resolved:

1. That Cabinet be advised that the following recommendations be supported:
 1. Approve the Climate Change Action Plan in Appendix 2 including nature crisis and adaptation actions, noting the key achievements and opportunities summarised in Appendix 1 and sections 2 and 5 of this report.
 2. Approve the Single Use Plastic Action Plan in Appendix 4.
2. That details of the uptake of the “Bin App” be circulated to Members of Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

163. MODERN SLAVERY ANNUAL TRANSPARENCY STATEMENT

The Chair welcomed the Assistant Director for Community Safety and Streetscene to the meeting. He outlined that the Council were one of the early adopters of the anti-Modern Slavery Charter. One of the requirements of the Charter is to publish an annual report. This complements the obligation for large organisations to publish an annual transparency statement. This report fulfilled both functions.

The report provided updates on progress, detailing training undertaken by the Procurement Team and specialist training for frontline officers who may come across issues or concerns. Details were given in respect of how procurement processes were compliant with the Charter, particularly with regards to assessing low bids or tenders. Ethical procurement commitments and trade union rights were outlined alongside safeguarding requirements. All suppliers were informed that they were required to comply with modern slavery standards prior to contract being awarded.

It was noted that that the Council was an active member of the South Yorkshire Modern Slavery Partnership and tackling modern slavery was a key priority for the Safer Rotherham Partnership.

A network of ‘champions’ had been developed. Whilst there was a relatively small number of staff trained in terms of modern slavery, this was to be expanded. It was noted that there had been an increase in the numbers of people referred through the National Referral Mechanism. It was felt that this indicated that more officers are adept at identifying concerns and using those process is to safeguard individuals.

The Assistant Director thanked Members for the recent spotlight review into modern slavery and looked forward to receiving the recommendations in due course. Those that are approved, will be incorporated into the Council’s Modern Slavery Transparency Statement Action Plan 2023/24.

The Chair invited questions from the Board and the following points were

clarified:

- Details were sought to establish what checks can be put in place to ensure that subcontractors were also compliant with the objectives of the charter. It was outlined that the Procurement Team were examining how this can be done within supply chains.
- Clarification was sought if the council were informed of the outcomes of referrals to the National Referral Mechanism and how this in turn, informed procurement procedures and processes. It was noted that the process was complex and often took some time to complete. Work was undertaken with other local authorities as authorities may be required to move potential victims to places of safety. Feedback was shared as appropriate and should criminal charges be applied this would be taken into account as appropriate.
- Details were asked about raising awareness locally and what role the Council had in this. The Police and Crime Commissioner had allocated funding to the Safer Rotherham Partnership to deliver training on this issue; a big focus was working in schools to raise awareness of these challenging issues. The Council also publicises events and information on social media such as the national awareness day.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Director for his report.

Resolved: That Cabinet be advised that the following recommendations be supported:

- 1) Cabinet notes the progress made to date.
- 2) Cabinet agrees for the current Transparency Statement 2022/23 to remain in place in 2023/24.

164. SOCIAL VALUE ANNUAL REPORT

The Chair welcomed the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive to the meeting. The Leader introduced the report outlining that the social value policy was introduced approximately three years ago. It set out a number of objectives to get best use of external spend with suppliers, value for money and maximise the benefits for Rotherham community and businesses. The purpose of this was to keep Council spend in the local economy, generating jobs, increasing wages through the commitment to the 'real living wage' and trying to raise incomes of low-income households.

It was outlined that there were £13.5m of social value commitments being secured from eligible new Council contracts in the last three years. and more money was being spent within the local and sub-regional economies than before. It was also noted that the Council pressed its suppliers to pay the 'real living wage' as a condition of contract. It was noted that new wage rates would be introduced for directly employed staff of £10.19 per

hour and this would come into effect from April 1, 2023.

RMBC had developed its own bespoke measurement framework comprising a range of measures, across five themes, and designed to have a positive impact on the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the Rotherham community:

- Jobs: Promote Local Skills and Employment.
- Growth: Supporting Growth of Local and Small Business.
- Social: Healthier, Safer and more Resilient Communities.
- Environment: Protecting and Improving Our Environment.
- Innovation: Promoting Social Innovation

The Chief Executive reflected on the commitments made last year and progress to date. The social value commissioning toolkit has been launched providing guidance and tools for those involved in preparing specifications for contracts to include social value from the beginning of planning through to letting the contract. Training has been undertaken with staff to ensure that social value is considered at an early stage in the process. Work is also underway with the wider Rotherham Together Partnership and the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority to disseminate the Social Value Charter. The importance of working with anchor networks was cited to make sure that partners are working together to make sure as much of the spend could go locally. Progress was being made with examples given of the benefits this initiative had brought including employment opportunities, training and qualifications. These were illustrated through case studies.

The Chair invited questions from Board and a discussion on the following points ensued:

- Clarification was sought on how engagement with local businesses was undertaken. Details were provided of 'meet the buyer' events, how contracts were advertised, and how details of procurement processes were disseminated. Engagement had also taken place with the Chamber of Commerce and Rotherham Pioneers. Information was shared with partners to coordinate activity.
- For larger contractors, it was felt that there was a good level of awareness about procurement web-based systems. To ensure that local contractors had opportunities to tender, there was a requirement for smaller contracts that one quote has to be provided locally. The Council used the Chamber of Commerce to advise on local supply chains and work is underway to build a library of local business. The Business Advisor Network was also utilised to draw on local intelligence about potential suppliers or contractors. The Council was committed to increasing local spend.
- Details with sought how social value was measured in awarding contracts. Contract managers would assess bids to establish how it met the criteria of delivering skills and apprenticeships and demonstrate local benefits. The contract would be scored

accordingly. The report detailed how this was undertaken.

- Further information was requested how local start-ups were encouraged to apply for contracts. Details were given of local networks and the assistance RiDO gives. It was noted that RiDO have links with new businesses and gave advice about supply chains and opportunities.

Resolved:- That Cabinet be advised that the following recommendations be supported:

- 1) That the annual report is received noting the increased social value commitments along with outcomes achieved.
- 2) That Cabinet agree the following key priorities for 2023 include:
 - a. Continue to embed the foundations of strong social value delivery through contract manager and supplier learning and development, tools and evaluation.
 - b. Support new and existing businesses to enter into new markets, from which the Council buys goods and services through the work of Rotherham Investment and Development Office and meet the buyer events.
 - c. Hold a Social Value celebration event for suppliers to showcase impact and inspire others.
 - d. Formally launch Rotherham Social Value Anchor Networks to raise awareness and engagement of more partners.

165. FLEET REPLACEMENT PLAN

The Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment introduced the report explaining the council had around 337 vehicles operating across a countless number of services and performing lots of different tasks. The proposal was to replace around 119 vehicles over the next two years, comprising of vehicles that did not meet the Euro 6 standard of emissions along with replacing those that costed a lot of money, which were principally those that were leased or on hire arrangements. It was an ambitious proposal as 64 of the vehicles would be battery/electric vehicles. This was an ever-evolving picture with the information considering the current market conditions.

In response to queries the following points were made:

- More and more people were moving to electric vehicles, in order to manage that particular type of waste, the team was working closes with colleagues in waste to ensure that disposal of any batteries was responsible and sustainable going forward.
- The Council had been selective, in terms of which vehicles it had identified for prioritisation, considering aspects such as range and reliability. The fleet replacement plan considered the models of vehicles that were emerging with stronger capabilities and mileage

ranges.

- A factor that would be considered as part of a central approach to the fleet management would be to develop a policy around home charging facilities in the same way as other Council's had adopted.
- It was acknowledged that the full life costs of an electric vehicle were likely to be more expensive however there was a need to focus on the climate benefits and take a blended, balanced approach, delivering the best value for money.

Resolved:

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

That Cabinet:

1. Approves the approach to fleet replacement, which refreshes 35% of the current fleet by 2025/26 that works towards the Council's strategic objective of achieving 'Net Zero' status by 2030, and Borough wide by 2040.
2. Notes the intention to strengthen centralised fleet management, including Council-wide requests for additional vehicles, acquisition, disposal, maintenance and redeployment of assets to ensure best utilisation and value.
3. Delegates authority to the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment, in consultation with the S.151 Officer, and Cabinet Member for Transport and the Environment to enter into the necessary procurement agreements to effect the delivery of the report objectives.

166. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION CUSTOMER SERVICES PEER CHALLENGE

The Leader introduced the report explaining that this was started last year when through the LGA, peers from other Council were invited to speak about customer service and customer services. Part of this review was driven by the delays in the call centre and the contact centre, which lead into a much wider conversation about the way that the Council engaged with the public including the treatment they received when they interacted with the Council's services.

Following the review an action plan had been created, with some of those actions already undertaken but some were new.

The Assistant Director, Customer, Information and Digital went on to explain that a lot of work had been carried out within customer services over the last four or five years and the review was a way of checking the Council was heading in the right direction, compared to what other authorities were doing. There were six key points that came out of the review which were listed in the action plan. A number of those actions were already completed, with good progress being made on the others. He was certain that all target deadlines for completion of those actions would be met.

The review helped to understand how customer services could better understand all the activity that impacted customers to ensure the Council had the most joined up approach possible creating consistency. Consideration was given to the following aspects:

- Engagement with key stakeholders, whether they were internal or external.
- Use of technology, understanding that digital was not always the right answer, but used in the right way, at the right time, it could be beneficial.
- Ensuring that no one was excluded, and everyone was taken on the journey whilst having consistent access to services regardless of how they contacted the council.

The following points were raised during the course of discussions:

- Concern was expressed that not all emails got responded to in a timely manner. It was understood that the answer was not always readily available however a holding response should be issued.
- It was felt that the Council did not always apply a joined-up approach when dealing with queries that could sit with multiple departments. Residents were not bothered who resolved the query, just that it was resolved.
- Work was being undertaken with officers to address consistency in approach and putting themselves in the shoes of the resident. Work should be undertaken between departments in the background to resolve the query regardless of who it was submitted to in the first instance.
- The Council had adopted a 'one council' approach, with one person taking ownership of the query, consulting with all relevant departments to get it resolved.

Resolved: That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board noted the report.

167. WORK IN PROGRESS - SELECT COMMISSIONS

The Chair invited the Commission Chairs or Vice-Chair to give an overview of their activity.

The Chair of Improving Lives Select Commission outlined that the Commission had recently had a session on understanding performance information from CYPS. It was a helpful session.

The Chair of Improving Places Select Commission cited the review on 'Nature Crisis'. The review on Selective Licensing was reaching a conclusion and recommendations would be determined shortly.

The Vice-Chair of Health Select Commission reported that the last scheduled meeting due to focus on Maternity Services was cancelled due to bad weather. This would be rearranged shortly. A review on Oral

Health was scheduled later in the month.

168. FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS - 1 MARCH 2023 TO 31 MAY 2023

The Board considered the Forward Plan of Key Decisions 1 March 2023 to 31 May 2023.

Resolved: - That the Forward Plan be noted.

169. CALL-IN ISSUES

There were no call-in issues.

170. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no urgent items.

171. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved: - That the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board will be held at 10.00am on Wednesday 19 April, 2023 at Rotherham Town Hall.