

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD
Wednesday 2 August 2023

Present:- Councillor Clark (in the Chair); Councillors Bacon, Browne, Cooksey, Elliott, Pitchley, Tinsley, Wyatt and Yasseen.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councillors Baker-Rogers and Ball.

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

27. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Pitchley referred to her Register of Interest, declaring her employment as a Consultant for Rotherham Pioneers, in relation to Minute 18 – UK Shared Prosperity Fund – years two and three. She remained present and participated in the proceedings and vote.

28. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

There were no questions from the public and press.

29. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Agenda Item No. 6 (Rotherham Markets & Library Redevelopment - Appendix 2) was exempt from the press and public:-

That under Section 100(A) 4 of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of such Act indicated, as now amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 (information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual/financial information).

Resolved:-That members of the press and public be excluded for this item.

30. UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND - YEARS TWO AND THREE

The Chair invited the Chief Executive to introduce the report. She outlined that the UKSPF was a three-year government funded programme channelled through the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA), introduced as a successor fund to the European Structural Funds (ESF).

It was noted that the UKSPF replaced the funding available through ESF, albeit at a lower level. The regional allocation for South Yorkshire equated

to £38.9 million over three years, compared with €410 million from 2007-2013 and €180 million between 2014 – 2020.

Rotherham's allocation of the UKSPF was £7.2 million from April 2022 to March 2025. Of this £5.6 million was allocated to revenue funding with the remaining £1.6 million allocated to capital projects. £6.4 million was available in years two and three.

All funding allocated under the fund had to meet and eligibility criteria which was signed off by Government in late 2022. The criteria were aligned to the following themes:

- Supporting local business
- People and skills
- Community and place

The report and appendices listed the activity and programmes supported by the fund.

It was noted that the timescales attached to the funding was extremely tight, therefore South Yorkshire partners had looked pragmatically at developing proposals to avoid disruption to services and businesses and loss of key staff. It was outlined that some of the projects would have come to an end had this funding not been available. The use of the funding would ensure that priority schemes could be delivered, especially in the context of cost-of-living inflationary increases. Examples were given of integrated working such as Employment Solutions which were having a positive impact on those people needing additional support to access employment.

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

Further details were sought on how year one funding was reported. It was outlined that details were reported in the financial update, however because of the amount of detail and the significance of years two and three funding this was reported to Cabinet in a stand-alone paper.

Clarification was requested on how partnerships and agencies were selected and if there was sufficient capacity for programmes to be rolled out wider (e.g. Open Arms). It was outlined that a mapping exercise had been undertaken with voluntary-community sector partners to identify what activity was already underway in the borough. This had identified communities where the greatest need of support was required, including local infrastructure. The aim was to target funding where the greatest impact could be made in line with the criteria. It was noted that projects in some wards may not access funding although the Council continued to explore new funding streams to support future targeted work.

Further details were requested about business incubation centres and

how success was measured. The Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment outlined that there were four business incubation centres in Rotherham. Referrals were received from business networks such as the Chamber of Commerce, colleges or self-referrals. What differentiated incubation centres from managed-only workspace was the wraparound support and advice to start-ups and links into research, development and wider networks. Success was measured on the rate of business survival. It was outlined that capital investment would be used to enhance available technology and workspaces.

Further details were sought about the rationale for allocation of funding and if there was any discretion for greater investment, particularly in respect of the theme relating to people and skills. It was felt that this was a critical area in Rotherham as there were gaps in the workforce in respect of skills and education. It was clarified that the South Yorkshire Investment Plan agreed with Government at the end of 2022 had stipulated the allocation according to theme.

Further details were required about the number targeted under the programme and if the investment would make the impact needed, particularly for young people. It was outlined that Employment Solutions worked with people who were furthest away from employment, providing significant wraparound support for those who could not access mainstream models. It was noted that the employment solutions team were outperforming other comparative services. Examples were given of how the team approached its work, providing holistic support to address often complex needs. It was felt that the target of supporting 300 people who were furthest away from employment would make a significant impact. The service complemented the mainstream offer provided by DWP and Job Centre Plus. It was suggested that OSMB visited the Employment Solution team at a future point.

Clarification was sought on how the 'hardest to reach' were identified and engaged with and what mitigation was in place to reduce the risk of people 'falling through the gap'. It was outlined that there were good levels of coordination between statutory agencies and the voluntary and community sectors. For example, outreach workers embedded in communities to liaise with groups to identify people with whom agencies already had a trusted relationship. There were links with other projects such as debt advice, early help, or programmes providing support for people with more complex needs for example drug and alcohol issues.

Further details were sought about multisport physical activity hubs and where these would be located. It was outlined that the capital funding would lever in additional grants from the football Association to create two new facilities in the borough. The locations of these had not yet been determined. Assurance was given that further discussions will take place to identify the areas that meet the criteria and match existing priorities.

In respect of the funding relating to the Children's Capital of Culture,

clarification was sought whether the creation of 40 paid traineeships for young people aged 16 to 25 was sufficiently ambitious. It was clarified that the purpose of this element was to build capacity within host organisations to build a legacy of skills and knowledge within the cultural partnerships. It was observed that there were opportunities to target skills training across the labour market and particularly focusing on young people.

In respect of the capital spend linked to the visitor and leisure economy, clarification was sought to establish how the projects had been selected. It was outlined that the projects had received funding from the 'Levelling-Up' programme. Since that point there had been inflationary pressures which had had an impact on their delivery. In order to deliver the agreed scope, the proposal was to pick up the shortfall through this capital funding so that existing projects could deliver their output and outcomes. It was reiterated that the selected programmes aligned with the set criteria for use of funding and had been prioritised on that basis. Significant investment in Rotherham's towns and villages had been levered in over recent years, amounting to some £1 million.

Further details were sought about the equality impact assessment and gathering data related to take-up of employment and skill support for people with protected characteristics. It was outlined that there was a difficulty in gathering information, particularly with wider networks, however work was underway to identify who access services and the barriers they may face.

Resolved:

- 1) That a further progress report be submitted to the Board prior to the end of the current municipal year.
- 2) That a visit to the Employment Solutions team be organised for OSMB members.
- 3) That Cabinet be advised that the following recommendations be supported:

That Cabinet:

1. Endorse the projects for submission to South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority for award of UKSPF for 2023/24 and 2024/25 as follows:
 - a) Local Business Support
 - i) £1,693,727 for sub-regional business support supporting three strands of "Launchpad" (start-up support); productivity and low carbon.
 - ii) £234,870 capital for Rotherham's business incubation centres.
 - iii) £234,482 for social value to coordinate and enhance

social value activity, focused on increasing local spend through anchor organisations' procurement activity.

- b) People and Skills
 - i) £1,291,013 for Rotherham integrated skills programme (RISP) providing four projects covering the journey from initial engagement with those hardest to reach, through to sustainable employment and career progression.
 - ii) £421,502 for Children's Capital of Culture to extend and expand the traineeship programme with further capacity building support for partners.

- c) Communities and Place
 - i) £471,664 for Children's Capital of Culture, including investment in existing and new events and festivals across the Borough, building capacity in community organisations and groups and creating more resilient models for grass roots programmes.
 - ii) £370,094 for Open Arms Rotherham phase 2 for ongoing delivery of fortnightly one-stop shop sessions, in targeted neighbourhoods and further development of community infrastructure, including community leaders.
 - iii) £100,000 for Reaching Out Across Communities, establishing local equality networks to ensure that current and future interventions are informed by and effectively reach all of Rotherham's diverse communities.
 - iv) £280,000 for town centre events to deliver a regular programme and increase footfall.
 - v) £1,068,709 for the visitor and leisure economy, supporting the delivery of capital schemes across Rotherham, focused on major attractions, increasing visitor numbers, and improving skills
 - vi) £80,000 capital for Active Lives, creating additional multi-sport play zones in local communities.

- d) Rural
 - i) £200,000 for a small grants programme for rural businesses supporting rural micro and small enterprises and tourism and the visitor economy.

2. Agrees to delegate authority to the Assistant Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council to determine revised and final allocations for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, including allocation of funding to the three capital schemes within the 'visitor and leisure economy' proposal. This is to include provision for other eligible actions within the use of the fund should it not be

possible to achieve full spend of the grant through the allocations above.

31. ROTHERHAM MARKETS & LIBRARY REDEVELOPMENT

The Chair invited the Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment to introduce the report. Referring to the scrutiny review undertaken by Improving Places Select Commission, he outlined the importance of the market to Rotherham as a historic market town. The markets supported 300 local businesses, as well as a programme of events, street markets and themed markets.

The market redevelopment was part of the Town Centre Masterplan agreed in 2017. The proposed relocation of the library emerged from the work undertaken for the new Library Strategy (2021-2026) and following consultation and engagement, it was identified that a more central location for the library was the preferred option. The report proposed enabling works in order that preparation could begin on site and mitigate against increasing costs. It was expected that the full scheme would be presented to Cabinet in November 2023.

The Chair invited the Chair of Improving Places Select Commission to speak to the report. It was acknowledged that market redevelopment may be challenging for traders, customers and the local authority. He thanked the Strategic Director for referencing the recommendations from the commission's scrutiny review. He highlighted that it was critical that the food and beverage offer was developed; recognising that redevelopments worked better where the facilities were multiuse, including health and well-being and cultural events. The relocation of the library was felt to be key to this. It was also observed that the nearby student population was an opportunity to increase potential footfall.

The Chair invited questions and comments from Board Members and a discussion on the following issues ensued:

Further details were sought on opportunities to host alternative events such as artisan markets. In response, it was outlined that such examples would be part of the offer alongside supporting the existing business base. The proposals focused on the refurbishment and redevelopment of the current market site.

It was noted that since the introduction of the Thursday market, town centre shops had experienced greater footfall because of the trade that had been brought in. Further details were sought about the engagement with local traders and their views of the redevelopment/refurbishment plans. It was noted that financial support would be offered during the period of refurbishment to compensate for disruption and upheaval. It was outlined that traders had engaged with the design and concept work, with plans amended following feedback, including the introduction of a temporary market solution.

Further details were sought about the potential for social or evening events in the covered market. An example was given of evening events related to celebrations such as Ramadan and Eid which attracted communities that may not usually access the town centre. It was confirmed that the cultural events offer would be linked to the development to ensure that the flexible space could be used for different events and groups.

It was noted that a number of other towns and cities had recently refurbished their market complexes. Clarification was sought that local authorities had been contacted to establish if lessons could be learnt from their experiences. It was confirmed that this had been the case, in addition the Market Manager had contacted their equivalent in other local authorities and used feedback from their traders on the impact of redevelopment.

Further details were requested on how engagement had been conducted and examples were given of engagement with traders and the public. It was noted that the Market Manager would undertake 'soft consultation' through conversations with market traders. In terms of the library proposals, there have been extensive public engagement. An example was given of recent public consultation on the library offer and the outdoor space.

Further details were sought to clarify delegated authority. It was outlined that once approval for the enabling work had been given by Cabinet, the Strategic Director in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and Cabinet Member, could make decisions to ensure that the enabling work progressed.

As Members indicated that they wish to ask questions of Exempt Appendix 2, as resolved in minute 17, the meeting went into closed session.

A discussion on the following issues ensued:

- Commercial sensitivities and confidentiality;
- Inflationary pressures;
- Risks and mitigations.

The Chair re-opened the session.

Resolved:

- 1) That Cabinet be advised that the following recommendations be supported:

That Cabinet:

1. Note the progress to date on Rotherham Markets and Library redevelopment.
2. Approve the enabling works for the Rotherham Markets and Library development, as detailed in Appendix 2 of this report.
3. Delegate authority to the Strategic Director of Regeneration of Environment, in consultation with the S151 Officer and the Cabinet Member for Jobs and Local Economy, to award contract(s) for the works up to the values detailed in Appendix 2.

32. WORK PROGRAMME

The Board considered its Work Programme.

The Senior Governance Adviser outlined future work including the review of life-saving equipment and Children's Commissioner Takeover Challenge.

There was a request for a presentation on the outcomes of the 2021 Census. It was also noted that a separate meeting would be organised to discuss the Director of Public Health's Annual Report: The Impact of the Pandemic in Rotherham.

An update was requested on educational attainment and SEND. It was confirmed that this would come under the remit of Improving Lives Select Commission.

The Chair of the Health Select Committee requested that every effort be made, wherever possible, to secure attendance from relevant Cabinet Members and senior officers at future meetings.

Resolved: - That the Work Programme be approved.

33. WORK IN PROGRESS - SELECT COMMISSIONS

There were no updates given.

34. CALL-IN ISSUES

There were no call-in issues.

35. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no urgent items.

36. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved: - That the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny

Management Board will be held at 10am on Wednesday 13 September 2023 at Rotherham Town Hall.