

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD
Wednesday, 15th May, 2019

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

Apologies were received from Councillors Evans and Short.

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

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

225. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Keenan declared a personal interest in agenda item 5 (Cultural Strategy 2019 – 2025) on the grounds that she was a board member of a local arts charity.

226. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

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

227. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

228. CULTURAL STRATEGY 2019 - 2025

Consideration was given to a report submitted for pre-decision scrutiny prior to determination at the Cabinet meeting to be held on 20 May 2019 which requested consideration and endorsement of the new Cultural Strategy 2019 – 2026. Rotherham's new Cultural Strategy had been produced in collaboration with members of the public and partners from across the cultural, leisure, green spaces and tourism sectors. This would be the first Strategy produced by the local Cultural Partnership Board since it was established in 2018.

Having commended the extensive consultation on the proposed strategy, Members sought assurances in respect of the accountability arrangements for the Cultural Partnership Board and wished to understand how this body linked to the Rotherham Together Partnership (RTP). In response, the Cabinet Member for Cleaner Greener Communities advised that she was the Chair of the Cultural Partnership Board, which met every couple of months, and had attended meetings of the RTP as requested.

Reference was made to the need to link the strategy to public health priorities to reduce obesity levels in children and young people and Members sought to understand how the strategy would complement this approach and how the Health Select Commission could be involved in this work.

Members expressed pleasure at the positive responses received to the consultation on the strategy and queried whether there was a need to leverage what was at the borough's disposal so that the public would have clarity on what was available and to also provide clarity to arts organisations. Furthermore, Members were pleased to see that the Sheffield City Region were preparing to bid for the UK City of Culture and sought to understand who was organising the bid and what involvement there would be from the borough. In response, it was explained that the Culture, Sport and Tourism service was working closely with the Neighbourhoods Service to develop a much deeper understanding of what was available locally, as it was appreciated that not all cultural activities took place in a theatre, museum or arts centre. The bid for the UK Capital of Culture had been a manifesto commitment for the Mayor of the Sheffield City Region and Rotherham MBC had been the first local authority in the region to indicate its support for the bid.

Members sought to understand how the Cultural Strategy would link to the work that had been undertaken in respect of the Child Friendly Borough. In response, it was explained that the Children's Capital of Culture was a key action and the service had been working closely with colleagues in Children and Young People's Services to apprise them of progress made in obtaining funding.

Clarification was sought as to how the strategy would fit into the broader skills agenda. In response, the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment indicated that this was seen as a key component of the growth agenda for the borough. Businesses and their employees want to live and have exciting things to do in nice places and this was a key driver in the strategy. It was noted that places with a strong cultural offer tended to enjoy stronger economic growth.

Reflecting on the earlier reference to the Children's Capital of Culture, Members noted that this would be a significant decision and noted that there was no previous frameworks or models so that this would present challenges in developing and delivering the idea. Assurances were sought that the authority was linking to previous Capitals of Culture to draw on their experiences to inform the approach to make the Children's Capital of Culture a success for Rotherham.

In response, officers confirmed that the authority had trademarked the concept and held a licence for it. Furthermore, a lot of co-creation was taking place, which had been tested by national grant funding bodies, who had indicated a keen interest in the work being developed. Furthermore, Hull and the forthcoming UK Capital of Culture, Coventry, were both keen to work with the authority so as to continue and build legacy work arising from their experiences as capitals of culture.

The Chair advised that the Board would recommend that the Cabinet should not consider the report at its meeting on 20 May 2019 on the basis that an equality impact assessment had not been included with the agenda papers. Whilst Members were broadly supportive the provisions and vision of the strategy, the Board felt it necessary to make a recommendation to the Cabinet that the absence of an equality impact assessment would present a risk in respect the proposed decision to adopt the strategy.

Resolved:-

1. That Cabinet be recommended to defer consideration of the strategy, pending the completion and submission of an accompanying Equality Analysis.
2. That greater clarity be provided on the governance arrangements and lines of accountability in any future report presenting the strategy for endorsement.
3. That a detailed implementation plan be submitted to the Improving Places Select Commission, following endorsement of the strategy by Cabinet.

229. CONSULTATION ON A NEW LIBRARY STRATEGY 2020-2025

Consideration was given to a report which had been presented for pre-decision scrutiny by the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment prior to its determination by the Cabinet at its meeting on 20 May 2019.

The report set out proposals to undertake consultation on a new library strategy for the period 2020 – 2025 and a future service delivery model for the Libraries and Neighbourhood Hubs Service. It was noted that this would ensure that the Service continued to meet the needs of Rotherham residents and also that the Council met the statutory service requirement. It was noted that the current strategy was due to end in 2019 and therefore a new strategy would be required for the period to 2025. In introducing the report, the Cabinet Member for Cleaner Greener Communities indicated that the service was doing very well with increased usage for the first time in years and satisfaction with the service had reached 99%.

Members sought assurances in respect of how the consultation would capture the views and opinions of children and young people across the borough. In response, officers explained that specific focus groups were planned, as well as engagement with the Youth Cabinet. It was recognised that there were differing needs across the age groups amongst children and young people and the consultation would be a valuable source of information in respect of refining the future service offer. In response to a supplementary question, it was confirmed that the service would go into schools to reach a broader number of children and young people.

Clarification was sought in respect of how the service ensured that knowledge of good practice and successes were shared. In response, it was confirmed that managers and supervisors met regularly to bring together examples of good practice which would then inform the annual events programme. It was recognised that the service tried to have an offer that met the needs of local communities, but was also generally consistent across the borough.

Resolved:-

1. That Cabinet be advised that the recommendations be supported.
2. That a sub-group of Overview and Scrutiny Management Board be established to scrutinise the outcomes of Phase 1 of the consultation prior to the start of work on the final service offer.

230. CONSULTATION ON DRAFT REVISED STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Consideration was given to a report presented for pre-decision scrutiny by the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment ahead of its determination at the Cabinet meeting on 20 May 2019. It was reported that the requirement to prepare a Statement of Community Involvement was set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The Statement of Community Involvement set out how the Council involves local communities in planning for the future of the Borough through the preparation of the Local Plan and other planning policy documents, and the determination of planning applications. The report recommended the authority go out to consultation on the draft document for a four week period, before returning to Cabinet for approval and adoption.

Members considered the paper to be a good report, with a well argued document for consultation. By way of comment, it was suggested it would be beneficial to highlight to the public that if they had concerns about a planning application, it would be advisable to look to deal with issues via conditions, rather than seeking outright refusal. It was felt that this could be clearly conveyed and may result in a more constructive engagement in the planning process.

Resolved:-

1. That Cabinet be advised that the recommendations be supported.
2. That further work be undertaken to ensure that the consultation document outlines the specific power of planning conditions in addressing concerns raised in respect of individual applications.

231. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION - SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY (SEND), SUFFICIENCY AND INCREASE IN EDUCATIONAL PROVISION - PHASE 2

The Chair of the Improving Lives Select Commission presented recommendations arising from that commission's scrutiny of the SEND Sufficiency proposals. She reported that there had been a thorough discussion in respect of the sustainability of the strategy and the commission had been very supportive of the recommendations. Members had highlighted the need for a further piece of work on autism in Rotherham, as the borough was an outlier in respect of statistical data.

Resolved:-

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

232. URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair advised that there were no urgent items of business requiring the consideration of the Board.

Furthermore, as this was the final meeting of the 2018/19 municipal year, the Chair took the opportunity to pay tribute to Councillors Evans, Brookes and Sansome who would cease to be members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board in the new municipal year.

233. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**Resolved:-**

That the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board be held on Wednesday 5 June 2019 commencing at 11.00 a.m. in Rotherham Town Hall.