

**IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION
Tuesday 19 April 2022**

Present were Councillors Wyatt (Chair), Atkin, Bennett-Sylvester, C Carter, Cowen, Ellis, Havard, Hughes, Jones, Khan, McNeely, Sansome, Taylor and Tinsley.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Burnett and Hunter.

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

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

66. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 22 MARCH 2022

Resolved:-

1. That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 March 2022 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

67. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

68. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

The Chair advised that there were no members of the public or representatives of media organisations present at the meeting and there were no questions in respect of matters on the agenda.

69. 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.

70. CCTV UPDATE

Consideration was given to an update report in respect of use of CCTV assets tactically throughout the Borough. The presentation included an overview of CCTV projects as well as case studies of CCTV results, particularly in respect of enforcement procedures around fly-tipping. The report provided an overview of the local position in relation to CCTV capabilities within Rotherham from existing assets, with a focus on upgrades utilising existing assets the Council already owns.

In discussion, Members requested more information around the procedure if perpetrators do not pay. The response from officers noted that the Courts chase the payment, and the Council monitors and ensures payment of fixed penalty notices.

Members requested information in respect of mean time to repair CCTV units. The response noted that average downtime was 4 weeks, with additional time to install. In future, the units will be interchangeable, so that one can be taken down and another put up in the same visit.

An example was provided by Members to illustrate a question around control and inventory of CCTV assets. The response from officers described an interactive map showing where assets are. The Home Office funding had resulted in acquisition of assets which become the Council's own, which means that, in the short term, there was uneven distribution of assets, which were to become more evenly distributed in future.

Members also expressed interest in whether the CCTV cameras assist the police around speeding. The response noted that occasionally, enforcement around other types of infractions including parking enforcement and other nuisances have been assisted by CCTV technology, with potential for wider use as a deterrent.

The desire for Members to be informed of the location of CCTV assets in the wards was noted. Members were invited to get in touch with the service if they would like a demonstration or greater understanding of asset placement within wards.

Members also expressed interest in the best way to feed back information around perceptions of safety for women in Clifton Park. The response cited the new Community Safety Strategy, with a lead officer for each of several designated areas of focus. The service worked closely with the teams utilising the Towns and Villages Fund along with the Council's own investment monies.

Members requested more information around the approach to planned maintenance. Officers conveyed that the service is looking into a longer-term maintenance contract, as currently, redeployable CCTV units are maintained on an ad hoc basis.

Some communities may underreport crime and anti-social behaviour; Members wished to know how the service takes this into account. The response from officers noted this is an area the service are keenly aware of, proactively utilising information and intelligence submissions that come into the service via a variety of channels. Officers emphasised the importance of residents to have the trust and confidence in the service to report issues.

More clarification was requested around the data collection and timescales to be able to show the effectiveness of CCTV. The response from Members noted the ambitious timescale, with just over a year until the first phase of this contract is due to be completed.

Further assurances were requested around timely repairs. The response illustrated that, without live viewing capability, it is only upon officers'

visiting a camera unit that it becomes noticeable that it requires repair. With live viewing, this will improve. This investment will be used to see a longer-term relationship with maintenance outcomes. If wards have purchased their own cameras, it could be useful to residents to understand the moneys required to support ongoing repair and maintenance, as the service works with ward members to resolve these needs on a ward by ward basis.

Members expressed interest in the potential benefits of having access to real-time footage of hotspots rather than reviewing. The response from officer noted that the South Yorkshire Police are responsible for staffing that area of the CCTV infrastructure. Those operators have plans to make use of a variety of approaches tailored for the specific area, such as virtual trip wires, such as on scrub land or waste land, drawing a virtual line around an area, that if crossed within a set time parameter beams live feed into an incident control room. These assets, however, are not redeployable.

Data protection before crime prosecution, seemed to Members an obstruction to the police which officers were invited to comment upon. The response noted that the Crime Disorder Reduction Act makes it clear that, where there is a clear use to deter crime, it is warranted to release certain information. The service works with information governance around this.

Members requested clarification in respect of environmental crime, if businesses and community buildings or private residents collect private CCTV footage, whether that information becomes usable. The response described how doorbell cams and dash cams can be used wherever possible; although, there is a balance in terms of how much time and resource can be used on small infractions or small fly tips. These often have to be backed up by a statement from the camera owner, and sometimes these images do not meet the threshold for quality.

Members also requested information around whether the cameras were insured. Officers noted that the Council only insures assets that are of a great enough value that it justifies the expense to insure. It was noted that people can now report through South Yorkshire Police to report crimes, for those who do not wish to call the 101 phone line.

Resolved:-

1. That the report be noted.
2. That valuable knowledge pertaining to the use of CCTV assets be made available to CAP meetings throughout the Borough.
3. That the next update be submitted in 12 months or at an appropriate time, to include relevant timelines, targets, measurements of effectiveness, and plans and budgets for ongoing maintenance.

4. That Members interested in a demonstration and briefing in respect of CCTV assets in their Wards reach out to the service leads to make arrangements.

71. TREE SERVICE PROGRESS UPDATE

Consideration was given to an update in respect of the progress by the Tree Planting Programme, which is enhancing and extending existing woodland as well as increasing the number of urban trees. This reduces the carbon footprint and encourages biodiversity in wooded areas. The report noted the review after 1 year of the Tree Planting Protocol was trying to find a pragmatic way to approach tree planting without encroaching on residents' quality of life. The Tree Service receives 1000 requests per year.

The tree planting programme is a 2-year program. 22,000 trees were planted in the first year of the programme. The service is currently reviewing the consultation process and ensuring that Members and residents have an opportunity to feed into tree planting plans in future. Details were provided around funding and grants that were availed and utilised for this programme.

In discussion, Members noted the frequency of questions to Members around trees. Clarification was requested around maintenance assistance offered to schools and community groups. The response from officers and the Cabinet Member noted that any tree that is owned by the Council and is growing on Council land is maintained by the service via a ring-fenced fund for maintenance of trees.

Members requested further information around responsiveness of the team to service requests. The response from officers noted that the small team receives a large number of inquiries and requests. Requests can be picked up through casework as well as at the tree service email inbox.

Members requested more information around whether the service avails the moneys available and cooperative schemes that exist. The response from Members described the funding and schemes that are availed by the service in respect of tree planting.

Members expressed interest in the prioritisation of fruit trees for planting. The tree engagement officer had supervised the planting of a community orchard, and expansion of fruit tree planting was encouraged.

Members reported responsiveness of the team to requests, and indicated areas for expansion of consultation with residents related to tree planting and maintenance. The response from the Cabinet Member illustrated that,

based on time pressures associated with changing seasons and working with communities had meant that this year, the service had not been able to do as much consultation as they would have liked. One of the things that working with community groups has allowed is the integral involvement of the school children who will see these trees grow up alongside themselves. The service has further consulted experts and have taken advice around which trees are best to plant now based on the temperatures expected in future. This approach helps keep trees healthy and safe in the long term.

Members requested clarification around timescales for projected work, for example, working with private landlords. The response noted that near the end of the year, the service expected to have completed the first phases of this work. The new supplementary planning document included green spaces, ensuring that developers know the requirements to plan trees within their new developments. Larger developments have specific schemes, down to the circumference and types of trees required. The changes over 10 or 15 years occur when saplings have successfully grown into mature trees.

Members expressed interest in learning more about how planning for the tree programme going forward will take into account inequalities. The Cabinet Member and officers noted the suggestion to expand urban tree planting in the areas of greatest deprivation wherever possible. Officers noted that there is a section in the Tree Management Protocol that illustrates various things that residents can do themselves with a toolkit coming on board in the next year. Further note was made of the intersections between the tree programme and objectives associated with Children's Capital of Culture.

Resolved:-

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the value of Member and resident consultation and feedback be reflected in the review and next iteration of the Tree Management Strategy.
3. That the maintenance schedule of the Tree Service be further publicised.
4. That equalities be considered in the prioritisation of tree planting in deprived areas of the borough.
5. That opportunities for planting fruit trees be prioritised for expansion.

72. WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair summarised updates to the Work Programme and forward plan of work including an upcoming review on selective licensing, coopting members who have selective licensing areas in their wards. An initial work programme will be brought to the 7 June meeting of Places. A wider audience will be included in the ASB review.

73. URGENT BUSINESS

Consideration was given to recent reports of the flooded state of graves in the East Herringthorpe Cemetery. The Chair noted that the Cabinet Member had been made aware of the reports and of Members' desire that Dignity, Ltd. and the service be asked to investigate and report back any actions taken.

In discussion, Members further affirmed the need to rectify the situation promptly and described the distress the condition of graves had caused to members of the community and their families.

Resolved:-

1. That the concerns of Members be noted and any actions taken reported back.

74. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

Resolved:-

1. That the next meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission will take place on 7 June 2022, commencing at 1.30 pm in Rotherham Town Hall.