

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD
Wednesday 11 May 2022

Present:- Councillor Clark (in the Chair); Councillors T. Collingham, Baker-Rogers, Cowen, A Carter, Elliott and Pitchley.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councillors Baum-Dixon, Burnett, Cooksey, Wyatt and Yasseen.

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

27. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr T Collingham declared a personal interest as co-signatory of the petition to improve road safety on Cumwell Lane/Kingsforth Lane. He remained present for the debate on the call for action but did not take part in the Board's consideration of the issue and its resolution.

28. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

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

29. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no items that required the exclusion of the press or public.

30. PETITION - IMPROVE ROAD SAFETY ON CUMWELL LANE/KINGSFORTH LANE

At the Council meeting on 13 April 2022, it was noted that a petition had been received in respect of a request to the Council to improve road safety on Cumwell Lane/Kingsworth Lane. As the petition had 622 valid signatures under the Council's petition scheme, it was referred to Overview and Scrutiny Management Board for review.

The Chair welcomed Cllr Ball to the meeting as Lead Petitioner. Cllr Collingham joined Cllr Ball as a signatory to the petition, having declared an interest in this item. The Cabinet Member for Transport and the Environment and officers were also welcomed.

The Chair opened by offering the Board's condolences to those affected by the recent fatal accidents. Following this, she outlined the process for consideration of petitions in accordance with the Council's petition scheme.

The Chair invited to Cllr Ball to present the call for action. He noted with regret the need to submit the petition. Referring to previous serious accidents including some fatalities, he stated that the lanes were used as

a shortcut between villages. Residents and professionals had approached him to raise concerns about road safety. He noted that the actions taken by the Council to date were welcome however, it was the view of the petitioner that the installation of an average speed camera would act as a greater deterrent and lead to reduced speeds on this stretch of road. Cllr Collingham speaking in support of the petition, cited widespread public backing to the concerns raised.

Board Members were invited to ask questions of Cllr Ball, as the Lead Petitioner. Clarification was sought if there were actions other than the installation of an average speed camera that could be taken by the Council to improve road safety. In response, the Lead Petitioner noted that proposals including the installation of barriers, road resurfacing, and introduction of speed limits had been made. Whilst these would offer additional safety measures, it was his view that average speed restrictions would be an effective deterrent. He further clarified that Council officers had been responsive to requests to meet to discuss proposals. While this was welcome, the petitioners asked that the proposals be translated into clear measures to improve road safety in the local area.

The Chair invited the Cabinet Member for Transport and the Environment to outline his response. In opening, the Cabinet Member also offered his condolences to the families and friends in respect of the two recent fatalities. He stated that the Council was committed to taking this matter seriously and this could be demonstrated by what the Council has done, was doing and what future action the Council had planned to address concerns.

He noted that a meeting had been organised with ward members and officer to discuss action taken and forthcoming plans. An offer was made to organise another meeting to keep members abreast of developments and inform future working. The Cabinet Member reminded the Board and ward members that the Council was obliged to follow statutory processes in respect of changes speed limits, including consultation with the public and statutory undertakers, which necessarily would take time to conduct.

The Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment outlined that swift action was taken following the accident, including an immediate road closure, changes to signage, regular inspection and engagement with site owners. Steps had been taken to enact Traffic Regulation Orders which involved following a legal process. Other actions included improving and replacing road studs, improving verges, installation of speed activated signs and warnings including 'cross hatching' outside key sites on the road.

The Interim Head of Transport Infrastructure outlined that the Road Safety Investigations Team and Road Safety Measure Team were looking proactively at incidents to identify safety mitigations across the road network. In respect of the matters under consideration at this meeting, action was in train prior to the petition being submitted. The officers were

working closely with South Yorkshire Police, ward councillors and local communities to identify solutions. It was noted that informal enquires had been made to ascertain the feasibility of installing average speed cameras. However, in doing so it was outlined that wider consideration was needed to locating cameras in places where safe maintenance could be undertaken.

The Chair invited Cllr Ball to put questions to the Cabinet Member for Transport and the Environment and officers following the contributions. Cllr Ball thanked the Cabinet Member and officers for providing details of its proposals and looked forward to their implementation. Cllr Ball referred to previous concerns raised by ward members regarding road safety and asked if the issue had been taken seriously by the Council at the time. The Cabinet Member stated that the authority had acted prior to the petition's submission following the first fatal accident but as outlined, some measures had taken time to implement because of legal process. He welcomed the petition as adding greater weight and focus to this important issue.

Cllr Collingham asked that a progress report be submitted to scrutiny on the implementation of the proposals outlined. He expressed some concerns about the amount of time taken to respond to the incidents. In response, the Strategic Director asked that assumptions are not made about the circumstances of the fatal accidents until the coroner had concluded their enquiries. He stated that the authority gave regards to specific incident information spanning a number of months to establish if there are clusters or patterns and had taken action accordingly. He reiterated that officers had met with ward councillors to seek intelligence and share information and committed to keep them updated.

The Chair opened the discussions to other Board Members. Clarification was sought as to why a speed limit of 50mph was proposed rather than a lower limit (e.g. 40mph) and if measures such as the removal of road marking to reduce speeds had been considered. It was outlined that the management of road markings and speed limits followed Department for Transport (DfT) regulations. The removal of white lines would not be recommended on the road in question because of its classification and the risk of increased hazards. Speed limits were also determined on based the road's classification. A speed limit survey was conducted in February which demonstrated that average speed was between 45- 55 mph for most drivers (85th percentile) which would justify a speed limit of 50mph. This measurement was in line with DfT and Police guidance. The Chair queried if the survey had been undertaken at different times of the year when lighting and other conditions may be different. The Cabinet Member gave a commitment that this would be undertaken.

Assurance was given that a priority was given to the implementation of the proposals outlined within tight timescales. A commitment was given to providing further updates.

Further details of what assessments had taken place to establish the feasibility of average speed cameras were requested. It was outlined that the Speed Camera Partnership operated across South Yorkshire and early assessments had been shared with them. The authority was pressing for this road to be prioritised, however, the decision to install average speed cameras were made ultimately by the Speed Camera Partnership. Extensive work needed to be undertaken prior to installation, including site surveys, maintenance access, and levels of investment. It was expected that the process for installing average speed cameras could take up to two years to come into operation. It was noted that the Borough did not have any average speed cameras currently. A further question was asked to clarify if any benchmarking had been undertaken with comparative authorities which have average speed cameras in operation.

Clarification was sought if there were any plans to improve street lighting. Whilst there were no plans to install additional lighting, road studs along the centre of the road were being replaced to improve road marking visibility at night.

It was noted that there had been previous fatal accidents on the road. Further details were sought on lessons learnt from these accidents.

Prior to opening the debate on the merits of the call for action, the Chair requested that a seminar takes place to inform members of current road safety issues and how concerns can be raised. It was stated that one was planned to take place in the near future.

Members were invited to debate the issues raised in the discussions. The petition was given unanimous support with the following recommendations endorsed by the Board.

Resolved:

1. That the call for action as outlined in the petition be supported.
2. That the following proposed actions outlined by the Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment be supported:

Proposed measure	Programming information	Anticipated implementation date
Reduce the existing speed limit along Kingsforth Lane, and Cumwell Lane (including sections of Sandy Lane and Newhall Lane to 50mph)	Subject to TRO process. On Officer Decision Forward Plan. Consultation to start in May 2022	August 2022
Reduce existing speed limit through Newhall to either 20mph or 30mph (subject to consultation and legal advice)	Subject to TRO process On Officer Decision Forward Plan. Consultation to start in May 2022	August 2022

Resurface Kingsforth Lane (Thurcroft side)	To be programmed and implemented by RMBC managed by Network Management	Start of June 2022
Remove existing central road studs and replace with bi-directional solar powered intelligent white units throughout	To form part of the Local Safety Scheme intervention measures	June 2022
Replace damaged, or missing highway signage	To form part of the Local Safety Scheme intervention measures	June 2022
Cut back vegetation to maintain forward visibility of the signs	To form part of the Local Safety Scheme intervention measures	June 2022
Provide edge of carriageway road markings and refresh existing	To form part of the Local Safety Scheme intervention measures	June 2022
Refresh existing centre line markings including Sandy Lane and Newhall Lane give way junctions.	To form part of the Local Safety Scheme intervention measures	June 2022
Provide red surfaced hatched markings at the dedicated right turn lane to the Landfill site entrance.	To form part of the Local Safety Scheme intervention measures	June 2022
Replace any missing verge marker posts	To form part of the Local Safety Scheme intervention measures	June 2022
Provide new verge markers (approx. 30 No.) at 5m centres opposite the fishing pond.	To form part of the Local Safety Scheme intervention measures	June 2022
Provide 10m red surfaced patches at each existing SLOW marking and any additional specified SLOW markings	To form part of the Local Safety Scheme intervention measures	June 2022
Arrange for the cut back and/or removal of any self-seeded vegetation/ shrubs/ trees from the verges that may interfere with visibility	To form part of the Local Safety Scheme intervention measures	June 2022
Installation of two Solar Powered Vehicle Activated Signs either side of the	To form part of the Local Safety Scheme intervention measures	July 2022

Fishing Ponds bend to alert drivers travelling over a pre-set speed limit to slow down		
Assess the route for appropriateness of a Vehicle Restraint System using current standards	Route assessment to take place during road closure	July 2022
Install Vehicle Restraint System	Subject to outcome of assessment	Late 2022

3. That an evaluation is undertaken by the Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment and the Speed Camera Partnership to assess the feasibility of installing average speed cameras on Cumwell Lane/Kingsforth Lane.
4. That this evaluation includes benchmarking of comparable local authorities with average speed cameras in their areas, any learning from the installation and their impact on road safety.
5. That Cabinet and the Speed Camera Partnership be asked to support the resourcing of the infrastructure required for the installation and maintenance of average speed cameras on Cumwell Lane/Kingsforth Lane should their feasibility be established.
6. That the Council's response to and lesson learnt from the fatal traffic incidents in 2018 and 2019 on Cumwell Lane/Kingsforth Lane be circulated to Board Members and the Lead Petitioner by the Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment.
7. That an update on progress in respect of the recommendations outlined, is provided to this Board in 6 months with a further report to be provided to Improving Places Select Commission in 12 months.

31. TOWN DEAL AND LEVELLING UP FUND: UPDATE AND IMPLEMENTATION

Consideration was given to a report that was submitted for pre-decision scrutiny ahead of the Cabinet Meeting to be held on 16 May 2022. It provided an update on progress and sought approval to implement the Regeneration Programme projects which have been awarded funding via the Levelling Up Fund and Towns Fund. A full list and summary of the projects was appended to the report.

The Town Deal was a £3.6bn programme seeking to 'unleash the economic potential of 100 places across the country. In January 2021 Rotherham submitted a Town Investment Plan seeking £35m for projects across Templeborough, Eastwood and the Town Centre. In June 2021, Heads of Terms were received offering £31.6m. Stage 2 of the Town Deal process required a local assurance process for each project culminating

in the submission of 'Project Summary' documentation to Department for Levelling-Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) by 27 June 2022.

The opportunity to bid to Round 1 of the Levelling Up Fund (LUF) was announced in March 2021. In June 2021 the Council submitted three bids seeking investment to support projects in the Leisure Economy, Principal Areas for Growth and Rotherham Town Centre. An announcement was made in October 2021 that Rotherham had successfully secured funding for two of the three submitted bids for the Leisure Economy (£19.5m) and Rotherham Town Centre (£20m) totalling £39.5m. In February 2022, Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) were signed between the Council and DLUHC for each of the two successful Round 1 bids, setting out the terms, principles and practices that will apply regarding the administration and delivery of the

A second round of funding was announced on 23 March 2022. The Council intended to re-submit a bid proposal for Wath and Dinnington Town Centres to this fund with a deadline of 6 July 2022.

Given the significant amount of funding involved it was requested that progress of the Town Deal and Levelling Up fund be added to the Risk Register to be considered by the Audit Committee.

Confirmation was received that the projects listed were on track for their anticipated completion dates.

The consultation regarding the 'Transforming Cities Infrastructure' relates to the transforming cities fund which is not directly linked to the report although the long-term strategic plan in and around the town centre looks at the wider strategy and objectives for the town centre and how those work. The consultation results associated with this were being assessed and would be responded to in due course.

The funding was welcomed but were the changes proposed for the town centre right for the current climate and environment or should they have been made previously. It was confirmed that the changes were part of the masterplan created in conjunction with the business sector and community. The Strategic Director Regeneration and Environment explained the Council received one of the largest Town Deals in the country along with two of the three bids for the Levelling Up Fund. In terms of the ambitions, a substantial amount was for other areas across the borough.

It was felt that the borough lacked single occupancy accessible flats/houses within the town centre therefore it was queried if the housing planned for the town centre was correct, with the right mix of properties for the community. It was confirmed that the residential element of the town centre had been considered including how to encourage a diverse range of young and old and those with different needs.

It was queried what communication had been carried out with the other stakeholders to inform them of what bids had been submitted. The Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment explained that they had been liaising with local ward Members which would then be developed into proposals however a lot of work had been carried out previously to maximise the opportunity.

It was asked if external feedback had been sought regarding why some of the bids were not successful in round 1 and had officers reflected upon why those bids had not succeeded. It was confirmed that feedback was received from officials within government for the 1 bid that hadn't been successful and it was due to be considered by Cabinet in June.

Clarification was sought on what democratic oversight there was of the Town Deal Board who retain oversight of this project, who do they provide updates to. The Town Deal Board was put in place as part of the government's requirements for this fund. The Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy sits on the Board along with the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment with the minutes of meetings being available to members of the public. It was clarified that the Council delivered the projects through its structures and assurance framework.

Resolved that:

1. That Cabinet be advised that the recommendations be supported.
2. That progress of the Town Deal and Levelling Up fund be added to the Risk Register.

32. **HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND**

Consideration was given to a report that was submitted for pre-decision scrutiny ahead of the Cabinet Meeting to be held on 16 May 2022.

The Leader introduced the report indicated that the Household Support Fund was discretionary funding that the Governance allocated to support cost of living issues. The first round was used to pay for free school meal vouchers during school holidays, with around 11,000 children benefiting. It was also used to provide some additional support to voluntary partners Christmas meal appeal along with providing additional Council Tax support within the last year.

The Government announced a further 6-month allocation in its Spring statement of around £2.5 million pounds for Rotherham with slight changes to how it could be administered. It indicated that at least 30% of the funding had to be used for families with children and at least 30% of the funding to be used for people of a pensionable age. The funding needed to have been allocated by September 2022.

The proposal was to continue the free school meal voucher offer through

to October 2022. Some additional funding would be set aside to the discretionary payments fund for energy bills which could be expanded to give some flexibility in terms of support to pensioner households. This would provide grants of up to £150 for pension households to be used in a flexible way.

The remaining balance of the allocation would need to go towards households of a pensionable age however the application process for the energy bills fund would need to be in operation prior to decisions being made on the remaining funding.

Clarification was sought as to how the Council would ensure this funding reached all areas of the borough. The Leader confirmed that the funding was allocated to individual households rather than being geographically based. Discussions were being undertaken as to how be able to reach all communities.

It was queried how the Council would ensure the funding was being allocated to those most in need. In response it was explained that the priority was to make the decisions that could be taken easily to enable funding to be accessed in those areas immediately and then ascertain how vulnerable pensioners can supported to access the funding.

It was noted that other support is also required for households, such as support with prescriptions, dental treatment, eye tests, period poverty however the challenge would be how to identify those in need and what support could be provided to them via this funding in such a short space of time.

In response the Leader explained that the Council did offer a large amount of support either through its own services or those of its partners however he acknowledge it could be hard for a member of the public to navigate to the relevant services for them. This could be resolved by the information being pulled together on the Council's website.

In response it was confirmed that the vouchers provided for the free school meals scheme were general supermarket vouchers.

Resolved that:

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

33. WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair explained that a session would be arranged to select topics to be considered and added to the work programme. This session would be face to face. Information regarding when this session would be held will be circulated with members in due course.

34. WORK IN PROGRESS - SELECT COMMISSIONS

This item was deferred to the meeting scheduled for June 15, 2022.

35. FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS - 1 MAY 2022 - 31 JULY 2022

The Board considered the Forward Plan of Key Decisions 1 May 2022 to 31 July 2022.

The Senior Governance Advisor noted that a suggestion had been raised at a previous meeting that the Board considered the Equalities Strategy at its June 2022 meeting.

Resolved: - That the Forward Plan be noted.

36. CALL-IN ISSUES

There were no call-in issues.

37. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no urgent items.

38. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved: -

- 1) That a special meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board will be held at 10.00am on Friday 27 May 2022 at Rotherham Town Hall to consider the Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Partnership's CSE Review Report.
- 2) That following this, the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board will be held at 10.00am on Wednesday 15 June 2022 at Rotherham Town Hall.