

IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION
Tuesday 10 December 2024

Present:- Councillor McKiernan (in the Chair); Councillors Adair, Ahmed, Baggaley, Beresford, C. Carter, Castledine-Dack, Havard, Jackson, Jones, Mault, Rashid, Stables, Thorp and Williams; along with Mrs. K. Bacon.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Beck, Cowen and Tinsley and Mrs. M. Jacques.

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

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

33. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 22ND OCTOBER, 2024

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 22nd October, 2024 be approved and signed by the Chair as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest to report.

35. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

The Chair invited members of the public present to read out their questions.

(1) From Ms. S. Yousaf - Within the operational plan, land at View Valley had been mentioned. Where was this land and what was the size of this site?

The Head of Legal, Registration and Bereavement Services confirmed the land referred to as 'Valley View' in the operational plan was located below the main car park, at the other side of the existing boundary fence and was approximately thirteen acres in size. This would be used for an extension to the cemetery with burial sections to be created for all faith and non-faith interments.

In a supplementary question Ms. Yousaf asked when was it likely that there would be public consultation in relation to this land and when was it likely that work would commence on this land?

The Head of Legal, Registration and Bereavement Services confirmed that it would very much depend on what Dignity would do by way of consultation along with the Council. It had been identified as land at the moment, but once consultation was to commence members of the public would be informed along with the Muslim Burial Committee.

(2) From Mr. A. Azam - Annual Bereavement Services Update - Dignity Operational Plan - Having read the Operational Plan issued from Dignity to the Council as of 9th September, could the Council and Dignity explain how they have managed to get themselves into this position?

The Head of Legal, Registration & Bereavement Services confirmed the Council were required to provide the land for Dignity to develop into a useable cemetery. The need for burial land was to be identified by Dignity in the Strategic and Operational burial plans. As these were only formally received at the end of 2023 the Council have had to base need for land on areas that were noticeably running low on capacity.

Representatives of Dignity were also invited to respond and they confirmed that Dignity have reviewed the structure of the organisation over the last eighteen months to provide its crematoria and cemeteries with a full board and executive committee. The purpose of the change was to ensure strategic decision making and capital expenditure could be undertaking in a timely manner, particularly where partnership agreements were in place.

The thirty-five year plan, which was supported by the Operational Plan was a more recent submission by Dignity to the Council to ensure discussions and long-term agreements could be achieved to meet community needs. This was submitted in September 2024, and Dignity was eager to discuss next steps with the Council and were currently awaiting their response.

The Dignity/Council contract was produced in 2008 and many changes in demographics, social-economic and culture expectations have taken place since then. The new executive board structure reflected this and allowed the discussions and decision making to take place with the Council at the correct level.

Moving forward the expectation was that with the Council and Dignity were far more joined up, which would ensure all capital investments were completed ahead of schedule.

In his supplementary question Mr. Azam referred to the other questions he had submitted, but went on to ask given that there was £4 to £5 million if expenditure required could an updated operational plan be received from Dignity that took everything into consideration so everybody had a true reflection of what was needed within Rotherham's Borough.

Representatives from Dignity confirmed they had submitted proposals to the Council and were in discussions and negotiations. At this stage Dignity were not really in a position to expand on this any further. The submission took place in September and with ongoing discussions the decision was still awaited.

The Chair advised the additional questions would be responded to in writing.

36. 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.

37. BEREAVEMENT SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT

Consideration was given to the Annual Bereavement Services Report presented by Bal Nahal, Head of Legal, Registration and Bereavement Services, which provided an update on the Council's Bereavement Services cemetery chapels, digital autopsy contract, boundary and capital works and management of the contract between Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council and Dignity Funerals Limited, addressing recommendations made at Improving Places Select Committee on 12th December, 2023. The recommendations addressed in this report were those which are the responsibility of the Council.

Background information on when the Council entered into a thirty-five year contractual agreement with Dignity Funerals Ltd (Dignity) for the provision of bereavement services for Rotherham were outlined. This partnership saw Dignity take on the responsibility for capital works and maintenance of the East Herringthorpe cemetery and crematorium along with the maintenance of the eight other municipal cemeteries located throughout the Borough. The Council retained cemetery chapels, associated buildings, and boundary walls on some cemetery sites.

Dignity was contractually required to provide annual assurance to the Council that Key Performance Targets (KPTs) were being met and Service Improvements (SIs) were being made. This was documented each year by the production of an Annual Performance Report (APR).

Monthly performance meetings were also taking place to keep performance matters under regular discussion and where appropriate, matters escalated to the internal Council officers contract meeting or the Dignity/Council Project Liaison Group Meeting. A performance management framework was also used to monitor performance and updated following each meeting looking specifically at the KPTs and progress against in year Service Improvements Dignity have agreed to make.

By utilising the mechanisms in place within the contract for performance management, Bereavement Services continued to levy financial penalty charges to Dignity Funerals Ltd where performance failures have not been resolved within the rectification period as defined in the contract for the severity level of the failure.

In addition to monthly performance meetings, Bereavement Services

regularly undertook cemetery inspections and scrutinised high priority matters closely, cemetery expansion proposals and burial capacity availability across the Borough.

Bereavement Services worked with professional partners, which included Dignity, on a range of different matters including overall death management around the processes and systems in place for the bereaved and the deceased and managing high volumes of deaths during seasonal peaks in death rates.

Bereavement Services were working together with libraries to provide 'death cafes' at Rotherham Central Library once a month to provide a space for the public to go and speak about all things life, death, and life after loss. Bereavement Services were working with other professional partners across the bereavement sector to attend these events and discuss different matters with attendees. Details of these death café events will be shared on the Council's digital communication platforms. This would also enable signposting to external events such as Dignity's Christmas Carol service, Remembrance Day service and public open days at the crematorium.

In the 2023-24 financial year, the Council's Bereavement Services completed several capital projects within a combined investment value of £194,768, which included funds of:-

- Maltby Cemetery Lychgate - £25,160
- Maltby Cemetery Perimeter Fence - £47,037
- Greasbrough Lane Cemetery Perimeter Fence - £75,255
- High Street Cemetery Works - £47,316

The independent review of existing provisions in bereavement services and cemetery standards in Rotherham for those of the Islamic faith was in the final stages of completion. Confirmation of the final investment in this project and the report would be circulated to the next meeting.

The cemetery chapels were located at Moorgate, Masbrough, Haugh Road and Town Lane cemeteries. All were in a varying state of disrepair. During 2023/2024 Masbrough, Moorgate and Haugh Road chapels all had slate guards fitted to prevent slipping roof tiles.

The Cemetery Chapels Working Group had also met several times in the last twelve months and as a result of these working group sessions, an options paper had been prepared for Cabinet to consider all options and available funding with the associated estimated costs involved for each chapel, including reference to work with any friends or community groups and external funding streams available.

On 16th September 2021, following a successful six-month pilot, the Council implemented a contract for Digital Autopsies, in conjunction with City of Doncaster Council and Coronial Services. The aim of the Digital

Autopsy process is to improve efficiencies in the autopsy process and to improve the service which bereaved families receive.

Digital Autopsy meant the conducting of a post-mortem in a computerised environment using digital tools. As the cause of death could be established quickly, usually within forty-eight hours, the deceased's body could be released to families more quickly than the traditional invasive method. It was also less distressing for the grieving family than the traditional method.

To date, the Digital Autopsy service has been positively received by professionals and it was delivering faster decision-making on Coronial cases and significantly reducing the number of invasive post-mortems required. It was important to note that some deaths must be investigated by an invasive autopsy due to the circumstances surrounding the death so there would never be a 100% success rate in Digital Autopsy utilisation.

The existing digital autopsy contract would come to the end of its term on 31st March 2025. The existing contract had consistently exceeded KPI targets, performing at a high level and delivering an excellent service to the deceased in their care requiring autopsy services.

The Chair invited representatives from Dignity Funerals Limited to introduce their Annual Report which provided a performance update on the contractual agreement between Dignity Funerals Ltd and the Council for 2023-24 and background history and how the contract originated was outlined.

Two recommendations had been outstanding from the performance report. The first related to customer surveys and feedback from operational details which would commence in January, 2025. Providing feedback via the QR code required further publicity. It was noted that Dignity had made the decision not to chase surveys as it was not appropriate where loved ones had been lost.

The second recommendation related to the undertaking of regular religious training. A contract was in place with Tassibee who fully understood religious awareness. Training took place on 9th October, 2024 and awareness sessions were ongoing. No further formal training for Dignity staff was required at this time.

With regards to the annual performance report submitted in March, 2024 there were seven KPI's designated as red, but this had since reduced to two. Following the recent submission of the plan had seen this performance improve further.

Further progress had been seen with the completion of the cemetery plans in digital format and would all members of the public to identify relatives electronically. Landscaping of the Muslim burial area was

ongoing with continued work on the marking of graves. Improvements had also been made to the ground maintenance at Moorgate Cemetery alongside the Friends Group and local schools would be asked to assist with the nature trail at the High Street Cemetery.

Significant work has been undertaken to improve this Children's Memorial area with trees having been removed to enable light for plant growth. The memorial and paths have been cleaned and capital expenditure agreed for the installation of a butterfly tower for memorial plaque.

Dalton Trinty Croft Primary School have planted snowdrops to promote a sustainable approach to flowers in the area and would return in March, 2025 to sow the wild flower garden to attract more insects etc to the area and maintain the 'Butterfly garden' theme. This garden could be used for children's ashes scattering if families request. In addition, the Letter to Heaven post box had been purchased and was to be erected in this area once the works were completed.

Boundary work had been completed at Masbrough and Hall Rose adjacent to schools to ensure safeguarding and safe concerns met. Maintenance and asset management plans were nearing completion and these live documents would help to address performance and ensure the tracking of activities.

Drainage works were also now complete at all sites and an area cleared at East Herringthorpe Cemetery for a natural burial area.

The submission of the Green Flag application would be undertaken ahead of the target date of 31st January, 2025. Following research and advice a number of bio-diversity activities and wild life and flower surveys were required for success and,, therefore this work had been completed prior to submission. There were now bees on site and it was proposed to have two more hives from April, 2025. More sustainable planting would be undertaken to reduce the need for bedding plants.

Community engagement was very important and additional engagement activities friends groups was encouraging wider engagement. Attendance at the Death Cafes had also helped gather information. A number of events at East Herringthorpe had taken place and work with the three local schools was ongoing.

Planning was all in hand at the Crematorium to ensure compliance. Private gardens at the Crematorium remained popular and two new plaque towers were scheduled to be erected with a fountain at Valley View.

100% contract of availability had been achieved for all cemeteries along with the book of remembrance, the Crematorium and office services.

Dignity were, therefore, dedicated to supporting the Council and

communities and the deceased loved ones of Rotherham.

Councillor Sheppard, Deputy Leader, confirmed the Council would continue to seek assurance that working together with Dignity for families and friends could visit sites and the memorials of their loved ones.

A discussion and answer session ensued and the following issues were raised and clarified:-

- The level of financial penalties was appalling at £218,000, but this had been over £700,000 for last three years. Whilst standards had been improved what were Dignity doing to reduce performance failures moving forward.

Dignity confirmed they had identified the importance of the Crematorium and the structure in place now supported the wider context of Dignity. The new structure support would filter through and provide more assurance to the Council and public going forward. Looking at the penalties this had since reduced significantly since the new structure was in place.

- Over last three years Dignity had been fined over £700,000 for non-compliance so what had the £700,000 spent on.

Officers confirmed some of the money had been directed back into the service and used to supplement resources, boundary fences and works at different cemeteries and some of the funds had gone back into the Council's main budget. Financial penalties were within contracts to manage performance so it was simply not about the money. The contract was managed by the service to ensure full compliance and for activities to be undertaken on time.

- Concerns about the frequency of routine maintenance on burial sites in different areas of the borough, when for example the one in Masbrough was scheduled for sixteen cuts each year. How could the Council ensure that routine maintenance was maintained when large fines were being imposed. Some of funds had returned to the main budget, but this seemed counter-productive and was not helping the situation. It was more about moving money around rather than ensuring the level of services was improved.

Officers explained the contract allowed the Council to impose financial penalties in relation to performance which was monitored. It was not about the Council choosing to change the imposition of penalties, but more about the funding for managing the contract. Discussions were currently ongoing about budgets.

The Deputy Leader explained it was also about recognising the different sites across the borough and the different levels of treatment they required throughout the year. For example, the High

Street in Rawmarsh was a closed cemetery and whilst it was kept tidy and access maintained, it was allowed to develop into a natural graveyard thus not requiring the same level of grass cutting as others.

- The graveyards referred to were both closed graveyards; one maintained by Dignity the other by the Council. Details of concerns around the Masbrough graveyard were shared about whose responsibility it was for boundary treatment next door to the school when there were confusion of how the capital generated by fines could be used. In addition, there were issues with security, off road bikes going through cemetery and people parking up and using the cemetery as a car park during pick up and drop off times around the school. Approaches had been made to Dignity as to how this could be moved forward with the Council and partners and see how make more secure.

Details of concerns were to be emailed and discussed further with the Deputy Leader.

- The same kind of questions to Dignity were being asked continually, so had consideration been given to terminating the contract early.

The need to deliver the contract successfully was explained by the Deputy Leader and to ensure compliance and rely on Dignity to perform so there were no longer financial penalties.

- An update was requested on the expansion and improvements at Wath Cemetery when it was reported that works would start by the end of 2024. None had yet started.

Dignity confirmed the capital expenditure was still subject to discussions with the Council. Wath still had a number of sufficient burial plots for at least eighteen months to two years so the expansion was in line with the required plot times.

A revised date would be provided in due course once the discussions were complete with the Council.

- Did the Council feel Dignity had let them down and should discussions take place to look for another contractor given the long contract timeframe as it was worrying with the financial penalties being imposed.

Officers confirmed negotiations were ongoing and all options would be considered.

- Did Rotherham need to be in partnership with Doncaster with regards to the digital autopsy contract or could Rotherham choose to seek a contract alone?

Officers explained it was value for money to be in a partnership with another Local Authority. However, if it was believed necessary Rotherham could procure its own contract. At the moment Doncaster was leading on the procurement process.

- It would be most helpful if a list of the different types of funerals could be included and highlighted in the next annual report.

Dignity would look to see how this could be included.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and the contents noted.

(2) That the Annual Performance Report from Dignity Funerals Limited be received and the contents noted.

(3) That the contents of the Annual Performance Report 2023-2024, the Five-Year Plan and the Operational Plan from Dignity Funerals Limited be noted.

(4) That the findings of the independent report for those of the Islamic faith be provided for the next meeting.

(5) That notification be received once the revised date for the extension to Wath Cemetery was available.

(6) That for all future annual reports the different types of funerals carried out be included.

(7) That procurement details be shared on the outcome of the Digital Autopsy Contract.

38. FLOODING ALLEVIATION UPDATE

Consideration was given to a presentation by Richard Jackson and Andy Saxton, which provided detail on the Council's Flood Risk Management works across the borough and the Six Priority Flood Alleviation Scheme Projects.

The presentation highlighted:-

Part A:- Overview of ongoing flood risk management works across the borough:-

- Section 19 - Storm Babet.
- Community Engagement.
- Next Steps – Catcliffe.
- Investigations carried out following Storm Babet.
- Projects Delivered in Treeton, Thorpe Salvin, Thrybergh, Brampton-en-le-Morthen and Todwick.

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- Planned Works in Stone, Swinton, Aughton, Firbeck and Wath.
- Road Gully Maintenance.
- Connected By Water.

Part B:- Progress Update on the Six Priority Flood Alleviation Scheme Projects:-

- Six Priority Flood Alleviation Schemes.
- Surveys and Landowner Engagement.
- Rotherham Renaissance Flood Alleviation Scheme.
- Parkgate & Rawmarsh Flood Alleviation Scheme.
- Whiston Brook Flood Alleviation Scheme.
- Eel Mires Dike Flood Alleviation Scheme.
- Catcliffe Pumping Station.
- Culvert Renewal Programme.
- Culvert Replacement Programme.

A question and answer session ensued and the following issues were raised and clarified:-

- Could the exact location of the Parkgate and Rawmarsh FAS water storage area be confirmed. From the map it would appear it was located very near some residential properties that also flooded, so it was important the surface water did not encroach onto existing residents.

Officers confirmed the location and explained about maximum water levels before overflows into the embankment. The overflows would not get up to property levels. An exact drawing of the location would be provided.

- The six priority schemes were agreed in 2021, but when were these schemes going to be delivered and had funding been secured.

Officers confirmed some funding had been allocated from the Environment Agency, but this was subject to business cases being submitted. Not all the schemes were fully funded as yet. Further funding for these schemes was being sought so until funding was allocated and secured it was difficult to give a timeframe for schemes to be delivered.

Officers were confident the schemes would be delivered and had been prepared for ready status. However, discussions were ongoing with the Environment Agency and other departments about securing capital investment as part of the budget process. Hopefully over the next two years the flooding alleviation schemes would be secured.

- Which of the schemes had the highest priority?

Officers confirmed there was no priority of the six schemes as they all would make a difference to communities. A commitment was secured in the previous budget to deliver Whiston Brook and Eel Mires Dyke Schemes. The schemes were committed to be delivered.

- The commitment to Catcliffe was commended, but when would an update be provided to residents on schemes and the viability of them. Residents were keen to be engaged in next steps.

Officers anticipated having three next steps by June, 2025 and would provide an update in due course.

- Officers were thanked for the tremendous amount of work that had gone into all the schemes, but the land ownership map appeared very complicated. Was there any further insight or proposed timeframe for when the Laughton Common scheme could be developed.

Officers reiterated this would depend on funding and would come down to discussions with Members to determine priorities. Not everything could be done at once and there would be many issues that come into play, like land ownership.

- The planned works at Recreation Road at Wath was this funded and was there a timescale. In terms of the bunding would this be natural or manmade.

Officers explained funding had been secured and the bunding was to be a natural earth embankment with works programmed next year.

- Land at Treeton had been addressed by the local farmer so was there any progress.

Officers explained that in terms of Shoreland Drive there were two issues; one of works already carried out and the other was the farmer's land. Some work had been undertaken to look at the culvert, but on investigation nothing could be found. Flows had now been diverted around the property via a natural ditch.

- Did the syphon system at Woodhouse Mill live up to expectations.

Officers confirmed this had not yet been fully tested, but the Environment Agency gave assurance that measures taken were appropriate.

- With regards to land ownership did officers have any idea on how long it would be before work could start at Whiston and would this have to be done by Compulsory Purchase Order.

Officers confirmed negotiations with the landowner were ongoing and approaches were being made as to which parcels of land could be purchased over the next few weeks.

Landowners were optimistic and had not shown any negativity towards the scheme. It was hoped the situation could be mutually resolved without resorting to Compulsory Purchase.

- The scheme to raise Treeton Bridge was this purely to stop debris getting stuck or was it part of the bigger scheme with the uplands.

Officers explained that the plans involved lifting the bridge by 900 mm and with this remaining below the embankment would help the flow and, therefore, increase defences. The modelling proposals were downstream.

- More recently the ford at Hague Lane in Wentworth had resulted in flooding along the road.

Officers confirmed the ford at Hague Lane was designed to flood the road. However, it was quite silted at the moment.

- Was it anticipated that the recently laid surface along Rockingham Road would require excavation for the culvert project.

Officers confirmed the surface would have to be interrupted again for the relay of a new highway drain from the Woodman down to Horsehair Park. It was an ambitious scheme, but was required due to the manhole covers being blown.

- Reference had been made to the mapping system of gullies. Whilst this would eventually be accessed by the public, could the data be sent by Ward to each Ward Councillor.

Officers confirmed the detail would be index routed and based on Wards. It was hoped to have this mapping completed by March, 2025 and would be sent on to Ward Members.

- With there being no priority for the schemes and there was no guarantee funding would be secured and prices could increase, was the funding required just from the Environment Agency or Central Government.

Officers confirmed that most of the funding would come via the Environment Agency and some from Council resources. Not all funding had been secured and there was still a need for funding bids to be submitted, but this was dependent upon completion of the final designs and accurately detailed costs.

- The Commission wished to place on record thanks and appreciation to the service for their incredible amount of work, particularly following Storm Babet and the amount of investigations undertaken.
- The road gully maintenance mapping technology was very good and would have the functionality that members of the public and members could feed into.
- The funding for the big six alleviation schemes were necessary, but perhaps Central Government should assist with funding for the major projects.

Officers welcomed the comments above and confirmed that the mapping of gullies technology would be publicly available and allow for exact reporting electronically of blocked gullies.

It was also noted that Central Government funding had been applied for after the 2019 floods and Storm Babet and the applications had been turned down on both occasions.

The Deputy Leader reported that some departments had bridged some of the gaps on some of the schemes in order to protect residential properties, but gaps still remained.

It was hoped that with the preparatory work already completed for the schemes should the extra funding become available, the schemes could imminently be delivered once funding was secured.

- During 2022 there was a campaign arranged in the Sitwell Ward with the Environment Agency to help clear Whiston Brook. If Members started the process of seeking volunteers, would officers be willing to get involved.

Officers confirmed they were always looking for activity to get volunteers to help with maintenance work and welcomed any support.

Resolved:- (1) That the presentation be received and the contents noted.

(2) That an update on Option 1 for Catcliffe and Treeton be shared once this was available.

(3) On completion of the gully mapping exercise, the data be shared with Elected Members on a Ward basis.

39. THRIVING NEIGHBOURHOODS ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

Consideration was given to the Thriving Neighbourhoods Annual Report 2023/24 and detail provided on progress on the delivery of the Thriving

Neighbourhoods Strategy and the Neighbourhood Working model.

The high-level Delivery Plan for 2023/24 (and a Full Equality Analysis) were presented to the Improving Places Select Commission in October 2023. The Delivery Plan combined the Council Plan's Outcomes and Commitments along with the common themes coming out of the 2023/24 ward priorities and identified the contribution from the Neighbourhoods Team and Elected Members in their community leadership role within their wards.

The Delivery Plan also referenced existing relevant Council strategies, programmes and plans. The detailed delivery of activity was captured within the 25 Ward Plans which Elected Members and the Neighbourhoods Teams reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

A range of Performance Indicators were recorded throughout the and performance and impact were also captured through case studies and stories that were included in the Members' ward reports, the Good Practice Guide, ward e-bulletins and other media channels.

To support this report officers provided a presentation which provided information on:-

- The Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy.
- What it wanted to achieve.
- LGA Corporate Peer Challenge 2023.
- Councillors as Community Leaders.
- Community Engagement.
- Partnership Working.
- Significant Events – Community Recovery.
- Impact on Activity.
- Moving Forward.
- Place Based Approach.
- Strengths-Based Working.

A discussion and question and answer session ensued and the following issues were raised and clarified:-

- Thanks and appreciation were given to the Thriving Neighbourhoods Team for the incredible support they had provided to new members.
- Neighbourhoods played a key role in the incident at Manvers and the support they provided to Members and residents was extraordinary. The move from the Area Assembly model to Neighbourhood Working gave wards more flexibility and power to get things done with greater leadership within communities.
- Could the criminal activity details shared at the CAT meetings be reinstated as whilst the Police statistics were complex, the detail was

very much appreciated in the area.

Officers would look to see how data was being produced at a ward level and would look to discuss this further.

- The raising of the level of the CLF money would be very beneficial as funds currently allocated only went so far.

The Deputy Leader confirmed there were many deserving projects in wards, but as well as the CLF there was also CIL, which was another source of funding. As a Council there had been so many cuts to the budget that it would be some time before there was any opportunity to increase CLF funding.

- Accounting for the funding was an issue as the guidelines for CLF were very prescriptive on how this could be spent. Whilst suggestions could be put forward for CIL funding, it appeared any projects requiring capital requiring funding were pointed towards CLF funding. This unfortunately reduced Ward Members ability to support people for service-based activities. Perhaps this should be taken up with Finance. for certain things. Split it a bit more fairly From the CLF to capital.

Officers agreed to take this back and discuss further with Finance colleagues and the Deputy Leader.

Resolved:- (1) That the progress of the delivery of the Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy and the Neighbourhood Working model be noted.

(2) That Neighbourhoods discuss further with Finance about the £500 limited CLF barrier

(3) That consideration be given to the sharing of complex Police data at ward CAT meetings.

40. **IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION - WORK PROGRAMME 2024 - 2025**

The Governance Manager introduced the work programme report and noted that since the last meeting arrangements had now been made for a workshop on the Housing Strategy. This would review the findings of the consultation. The workshop was scheduled to take place on Thursday 12th December , 2024 at 2.00 p.m in Riverside House, but this was also available as a hybrid option. Discussions and outcomes from the workshop would feed into the Cabinet report and would not be reconsidered by the Improving Places Select Commission.

The scoping session for the School Road Safety Review was currently progressing, but due to Members' availability it was likely the first meeting

would take place in the new year. Details would be provided in due course.

With regards to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board review into grass cutting and grounds maintenance, a briefing note had now been emailed to both Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and Improving Places Select Commission asking if there were any additional aspects to those listed that needed to be included. The deadline for inclusion was 31st December and the review would then be arranged to take place next year. The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board invited a couple of Members from Improving Places to join the review.

It was also noted that a few more Members were invited to join the review into the Housing Allocation Policy.

Resolved:- (1) That the update on the Work Programme be received and noted.

(2) That Councillors Beresford, Thorp and Jones represent the Improving Places Select Commission on the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board review of grass cutting and grounds maintenance.

41. URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair in reviewing the agenda for the next meeting sought views on whether to cancel the meeting altogether or to leave the limited items as they were.

The consensus was for the meeting to remain as is.