

COMMUNITIES, REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING Thursday, 26th November 2020

PRESENT: Councillor Meredith (in the Chair); Councillors Besford, Susan Emmott, Kelly, Angela Smith, West, Peter Williams, Winkler and Zaheer.

OFFICERS: D. Bowler (Assistant Director – Place), M. Robinson (Assistant Director – Economy), A. Storey (Head of Highways), M. Bramah (Climate Change Consultant) and P. Thompson (Resources Directorate)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor Blundell (Portfolio Holder – A Thriving Economy), Councillor Rowbotham (Portfolio for Climate Change and Sustainability), Councillor Cocks (Assistant Portfolio Holder – Climate Change and Sustainability), D. Cooke (Operations Manager – Rochdale Development Agency) and S. Siggers (Balfour Beatty Limited)

54 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Beswick.

55 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interests.

56 MINUTES

The Committee considered the minutes of recent meetings held 24th September and 18th November 2020. In relation to Minute 48 of the meeting held 24th September 2020 (Wardle and Smallbridge Football Club) the Committee was informed that the Council's Chief Finance Officer was due to meet Township Chairs and Vice Chairs to discuss issues appertaining to the allocation and utilisation of Township Funds. The issue relating to the future presentation by representatives of STAR was to be added to the Committee's Work Programme.

Resolved:

1. The Minutes of the Communities, Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, held 24th September 2020, be approved as a correct record, subject to the addition of Councillor Angela Smith's name of Member's being present.
2. The Minutes of the Communities, Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee held 18th November 2020 be approved as a correct record.
3. The issue relating to the future presentation by representatives of STAR, to address issues in relation to the agreement and approval of contracts, be added to the Committee's Work Programme.

57 HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE TERM SERVICE CONTRACT - PROGRESS REPORT: APRIL-OCTOBER 2020

The Committee received a presentation which detailed the performance of Balfour Beatty in relation to the Highways Maintenance Term Service Contract during the period April – October 2020. The presentation was introduced by the Council's Head of Highways and largely explained by Balfour Beatty's Performance Manager, Ms. S. Sagers.

The Committee was informed that in March 2019 Balfour Beatty had presented to members of the Council and had made eight commitments, in terms of future work patterns and operations:

- a. The offer of a 3.8% discount on future capital spend.
- b. A commitment to delivering a minimum of 20% in social value of the contract value during the two year contract extension period.
- c. A commitment to maintaining a dedicated team in Rochdale.
- d. To maintain productivity levels for routine gulley maintenance – including the provision of an additional gully cleaning waggon when required.
- e. To maintain productivity levels for pothole repairs and maintain overdue orders at an acceptable level.
- f. To work closely with the Council's Highways Team to deliver a better pothole repair service
- g. Regular reports to this Overview and Scrutiny Committee in terms of performance and social value.
- h. A detailed monthly activity/productivity report to be sent to the five Township Highway Champions and Portfolio Holder.

The Committee considered the report in detail and asked various questions of the officers presenting. The Committee broadly welcomed the report and the initiation of a regular form of dialogue between Council members and the contractors, which had begun with this presentation. The Committee requested that future presentations include more data that specifically addresses the 'key performance indicators' that are set out in the Highways Maintenance Term Service Contract itself and more detailed information with regard to lining and road marking.

Resolved:

1. That the Highways Maintenance Term Service Contract presentation be noted and welcomed.
2. That future presentations be presented to the Committee twice per municipal year and include more specific information and data relating to the 'key performance indicators' that are set out in the Highways Maintenance Term Service Contract.
3. That the next presentation to the Committee include specific information with regard to lining and road marking across the Borough.

58 THE CHALLENGE OF CLIMATE CHANGE IN ROCHDALE

The Climate Change Consultant gave a presentation to the Committee which attempted to set out the scale of the challenge faced by the Council and other agencies to meet the Climate Emergency Motion, which had previously been

declared by the Council (at its meeting on 17th July 2019: minute 15 refers). The presentation set out details of work that was ongoing, including the development of an action plan. The presentation also outlined what actions and leadership were needed to work towards fulfilling the Council's ambitions in this regard.

The Committee were informed that they would have an important role to play in the development and implementation of the Borough's Climate Change Action Plan. The Committee would oversee and monitor the progress of the actions contained within the Plan. The Committee would scrutinise the Climate Change Action Plan and thereby help to ensure that the Council is meeting its aims and objectives set out in the plan to work towards net zero carbon by 2038.

Resolved:

That the presentation be noted and welcomed.

59 ECONOMY DIRECTORATE PLANS 2020-21: QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE UPDATE

The Committee scrutinised the progress at the end of Quarter 2 (1st July – 30th September 2020) towards achievement of the targets contained in the Economy Directorate Plan 2020/2021.

In accordance with the Council's performance management framework, progress toward targets contained within Directorate Plans are to be reported to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees at the end of each quarter.

11 (100%) of the actions included in the Directorate Plan 2020/2021 were still ongoing and remained to be completed by the action due date.

The Operations Director (Rochdale Development Agency (RDA)) updated the Committee on regeneration projects that were ongoing or in preparation across the Borough and of the work of RDA.

During the study period 2,628 residents had received employability support from the Council's Employment Links Service and 281 had secured new jobs. A total of 282 new jobs were created by RDA assisted companies or projects and 149 jobs safeguarded. However, the full impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Borough's employment rate figure was not yet possible to fully ascertain. Members were advised that a new Skills, Work and Health Plan had been approved by the Council's Cabinet.

In response to the recent announcement that the Wheatsheaf Shopping Centre was to remain permanently closed at the conclusion of the current 'lockdown' period, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Director of Economy updated the Committee on assistance that was available to businesses that were located in the Wheatsheaf Centre and to their employees.

Resolved:

1. The Quarter 2 (1st July – 30th September 2020) progress towards achievement of the targets contained in the Economy Directorate Plan 2020/2021 be noted.
2. The Director of Economy be requested to submit a report to the Committee's next scheduled meeting, on 18th February 2021, regarding the impact of the closure of the Wheatsheaf Shopping Centre, Rochdale.

60 NEIGHBOURHOODS DIRECTORATE PLAN 2020-21: QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE UPDATE

The Committee scrutinised the progress at the end of Quarter 2 (1st July – 30th September 2020) towards achievement of the targets contained in the Neighbourhoods Directorate Plan 2020/2021.

In accordance with the Council's performance management framework, progress toward targets contained within Directorate Plans are to be reported to relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees at the end of each quarter. 91% (21) of the actions included in the Neighbourhoods Directorate Plan 2020/2021 were ongoing and two actions had been completed.

A Member sought clarification on action no: N2010 – 'A Final sign off and action plan in place for Rochdale Digital Strategy'. The Committee was advised that the delay was partly due to the impact of Covid-19 and also that the Cabinet had recently resolved to bring the service back 'in-house', when the current customer service contract with the current provider, Agylisis, expires in March 2021.

The Committee referred to the section of the Director's report which related to fly-tipping in the Borough and proposals, which were outlined, to develop and implement a strategy to tackle fly tipping more effectively, including the use of CCTV cameras that would be procured and deployed at various fly-tipping 'hotspots' throughout the borough. It was suggested that this matter be the subject of a report to the Committee's next scheduled meeting on 18th February 2021.

Resolved:

1. That the Quarter 2 (1st July – 30th September 2020) performance report detailing progress towards achievement of the targets contained in the Neighbourhoods Directorate Plan 2020/2021, be noted.
2. The Director of Neighbourhoods be requested to submit a report to the Committee's next scheduled meeting, on 18th February 2021, regarding proposals to develop a strategy to tackle fly tipping across the Borough.

61 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved:

That the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business, in accordance with the provisions of Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

Reason for the resolution:

Should the press and public remain during debate on this item there may be a disclosure of information that is deemed to be exempt under Parts 1 and 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

62 ROCHDALE MARKET

Further to minute 28 of the meeting of the Communities, Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, held 28th November 2019, Members received a report of the Head of Internal Audit regarding issues relating to Rochdale Market.

The report examined the process by which a decision to close the market in October 2019 had taken place, understanding the current market operational arrangements and what financial information had been available to support of those decisions.

The Portfolio Holder for 'a Thriving Economy' was in attendance at the meeting and questioned the accuracy of some of the information contained within the report.

Resolved:

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the comments of the Portfolio Holder, in relation to the submitted report, be noted.