

COMMUNITIES, REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING Tuesday, 6th July 2021

PRESENT: Councillor Besford (in the Chair); Councillors Cocks, Susan Emmott, Kelly, Angela Smith, Winkler and Zaheer

OFFICERS: M. Robinson (Assistant Director – Economy), D. Bowler (Assistant Director (Place), M. Bramah, C. Highton, H. Walton, C. Woods (Neighbourhoods Directorate) and P. Thompson (Resources Directorate)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: D. Corbett (Balfour Beatty) and C. Norwood (Rochdale Development Agency).

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Beswick, Emsley, Terry Smith, West and Peter Williams.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Further to the Council's Code of Conduct, Councillor Zaheer declared a personal interest in respect of Minute 7 below (The Challenge of Climate Change in Rochdale), as she was currently the Chair of the Council's Audit and Governance Committee, which was due to receive the audit report, referred to in that minute, at a future meeting.

3 MINUTES

Resolved:

That consideration of the Minutes of the meeting of Communities, Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, held 15th February 2021, be deferred to the Committee's next scheduled ordinary meeting on 28th September 2021.

4 HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE TERM SERVICE CONTRACT - PROGRESS REPORT: NOVEMBER - MAY 2020/2021

The Committee received a presentation which detailed the performance of Balfour Beatty in relation to the Highways Maintenance Term Service Contract during the period November 2020 – May 2021. The presentation was introduced by the Council's Head of Highways and largely explained by Balfour Beatty's Performance Manager, Mr. D. Corbett.

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 gully 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 establishment of a dialogue between Council members and the contractors.

Resolved:

That the Highways Maintenance Term Service Contract presentation be noted and welcomed.

5 CASTLETON STATION AREA SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD)

The Committee scrutinised a report of the Director of Economy which advised Members that as part of the Council’s Rail Corridor Regeneration Strategy, a draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) had been produced for the Castleton Station area to support the continued regeneration and renewal of the area by providing detailed planning and design advice. This report seeks the views of the Committee on the content of the Draft SPD as part of a consultation along with key stakeholders.

The meeting was informed that the regeneration and improvement to Castleton represented a strategic priority for the Council and as such formed a significant part of the Council’s Rail Corridor Regeneration Strategy which sought to bring forward vacant land and buildings around existing rail stations and to promote sustainable urban living, access to public transport and reduced car dependency.

The Council was looking to promote transit led integrated development and place making around stations across the borough, with the aim, in this case, of unlocking the dormant potential of Castleton station through dynamic urban regeneration and the creation of a ‘Transport-Orientated Community’.

The regeneration plan for the Castleton area included the following initiatives: improvements to the Railway Station; proposals for a tram service – train services operating between Oldham and Bury via Heywood; the extension of the East Lancashire Railway Heritage Line; a Cycle Corridor/Bee Network on Manchester Road; improvements to the station’s car parking and the opening up of the canal to promote tourism and recreation through the regeneration of several residential and commercial development sites.

Castleton Station's redevelopment and regeneration potential was seen as an important vision offering residents and businesses opportunities to develop a sustainable community with a vibrant mixture of living, working and recreational opportunities.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

6 PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDERS

The Committee scrutinised a report of the Director of Neighbourhoods that informed Members that on 30th March 2021, a report had been presented to the Council's Cabinet regarding the current Public Space Protection Order (PSPO); which was due to expire on 23rd July 2021. Accordingly the Cabinet was due to meet on 15th July 2021 to consider a three year extension to the PSPO.

The report contained reasons to seek an extension for the current PSPO. The Cabinet, on 30th March 2021, agreed to commence a process to extend and vary the current Public Space Protection Order 2018, maintaining the same restricted area, subject to the following:

- Ensuring the Council is satisfied that the criteria for an extension and a variation has been met;
- The undertaking of a public consultation;
- The undertaking of an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA);
- That a further report being submitted to Members to help inform the final decision as to approve the extension and variation or not.

Members of the Committee were provided with an overview of outcome of the public consultation and the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) to help inform a final decision as to whether to the proposed extension and variation is agreed, or not.

The Committee were informed that further representations on the proposals had been submitted by Liberty and these had been circulated to Members.

In considering the submitted report, Members of the Committee commented that Cabinet members made the following comments:-

- a. More information could perhaps have been added to the EIA in relation to mitigating any potential impact on protected groups such as the LGBT community and armed forces veterans;
- b. Concerns regarding possible effects on organisations such as Scouts/Cadets that undertake regular charitable collections;
- c. Concerns over the usage of electric scooters, especially when they are being used on footpaths;
- d. The Committee endorsed the approach that was proposed in terms of offering vulnerable people packages of multi-agency support;
- e. Further data was requested on the breakdown of the demographics of respondents to the consultation;

Resolved:

That the Cabinet, at its meeting on 15th July 2021, be recommended to approve the criteria for an extension, for three years, to the Rochdale Borough Council Rochdale Town Centre Public Spaces Protection Extension and Variation Order 2021.

7 THE CHALLENGE OF CLIMATE CHANGE IN ROCHDALE

The Committee scrutinised an Internal Audit report into the issues surrounding the ongoing 'climate emergency' which the Council had declared on 17th July 2019. The report described how the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change had published a report in 2018 which noted the impact of global warming of an increase of only 1.5C would have a catastrophic impact on climate change, for example, extreme heat, drought and flooding. If global warming continued at the current rate, this increase would expect to be reached between 2030 and 2052.

At the full Council meeting on 17th July 2019, Rochdale's councillors approved a Climate Emergency Declaration. The main aim of the declaration was that the Council (and the wider borough of Rochdale) would aim to be carbon neutral by 2038. The Council recognises the scale of the challenge to be unprecedented, with 97.5% of emissions within the borough beyond the Council's direct control.

The government's target was to be carbon neutral by 2050, but the Authority recognises the leadership role it has in the Borough and had set the target for 2038 which aligned with the target by the Mayor of Greater Manchester.

A report to Cabinet on 28 January 2020 by the Director of Neighbourhoods entitled 'Response to Climate Emergency' was approved. This report set out a framework for delivery, suggesting what actions and leadership was needed to work towards the ambitions of the Council's declaration.

This work was in its early stages, moving from the declaration, through the delivery of investment, policy initiatives from the Government and alignment with the Greater Manchester (GM) Five Year Environment Plan and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Council was to build actions from these initial plans in their drive towards achieving carbon neutrality by the target date of 2038.

The audit report entailed a brief high-level review to ensure that initial steps were being taken and that the foundations were in the process of being laid from which future work can be done.

At a more detailed level the scope established assurance with regard to: a Climate Emergency Officer post; a Climate Emergency Business Group; a Climate Emergency Working Group; a detailed Climate Emergency Working Plan; and that the Council's Plan/Strategy is aligned with the Greater Manchester Five Year Environment Plan. Another initiative that was under review was a proposal was for Rochdale Borough Council to establish a

scrutiny committee that was dedicated wholly to issues surrounding and relating to the Climate Emergency.

In an effort to address this issue, the Chair suggested that he meet with the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Council's other two Overview and Scrutiny Committees (Corporate and Health, Schools and Care) to consider ways that the authority can effectively scrutinise the Council's response to the Climate Emergency.

Resolved:

That the Committee's clerk be requested to convene a meeting between the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Council's three Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Sustainability and the Climate Change and Sustainability Project Manager, to examine effective ways in which the Authority can scrutinise its response to the Climate Emergency that was declared on 17th July 2019.

8 ECONOMY DIRECTORATE - QUARTER FOUR 2020/2021 PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Committee scrutinised the progress at the end of Quarter 4 (1st January – 31st March 2021) 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 relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees at the end of each quarter.

64% (7) of the actions included in the Directorate Plan 2020/2021 had been completed whilst 36% (4) were still ongoing but were expected to be completed during the early stages of 2021/2022. It was noted that some directorate plan actions had been delayed, with some work being paused, due to the unforeseen impacts of Covid-19 during the whole of 2020/2021. Some actions were to be carried over into the directorate plans for 2021/2022, where they will continue to be monitored until completion.

Resolved:

That the Quarter 4 (1st January – 31st March 2021) progress towards achievement of the targets contained in the Economy Directorate Plan 2020/2021 be noted.

9 NEIGHBOURHOODS DIRECTORATE QUARTER FOUR 2020/2021 PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Committee scrutinised the progress at the end of Quarter 4 (1st January – 31st March 2021) 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 the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the end of each quarter.

39% (9) of the actions included in the Directorate Plan 2020/2021 were complete, whilst a further 61% (14) of the actions are not fully complete and the action due date had passed. A major factor for the delay of some of these actions was Covid-19 and the outstanding actions would be carried over into the Directorate's Plan for 2021/2022 where they would continue to be closely monitored until their completion.

The Committee noted and welcomed the commitment to develop and implement a strategy to tackle fly tipping, in the Borough, more effectively. It was noted that fly tipping was becoming an increasing problem and that the Committee would have the opportunity to scrutinise the proposals prior to their consideration by the Council's Cabinet.

The Committee also noted the commitments in the report relating to reducing the prevalence of homelessness in the Borough and on developing a more transparent and equitable housing allocation policy. It was noted that the Committee, at a later meeting during the municipal year, would receive a comprehensive report on housing issues.

Resolved:

That the Quarter 4 (1st January – 31st March 2021) progress towards achievement of the targets contained in the Neighbourhoods Directorate Plan 2020/2021 be noted.

10 GREATER MANCHESTER ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STRATEGY

The Committee scrutinised a report of the Director of Neighbourhoods which was ultimately to seek the approval of the Cabinet, at its meeting scheduled to be held 27th July 2021, for the Borough to join the Greater Manchester Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy.

The Committee was informed that the strategy was a sub-strategy of an already approved Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040. Access to electric vehicle charging infrastructure was a part of an initiative to 'decarbonise' transport and fell in line with national Government's commitment to end the sale of petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2030.

Resolved:

That the Cabinet, at its meeting to be held on 27th July 2021, be recommended to approve the Greater Manchester Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy for adoption.

11 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.

**12 ECONOMY DIRECTORATE - QUARTER FOUR PERFORMANCE REPORT
- ROCHDALE DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

The Committee scrutinised a confidential appendix to the report of the Director of Economy which examined progress, at the end of Quarter 4 (1st January – 31st March 2021), towards achievement of targets contained in the Neighbourhoods Directorate Plan 2020/2021, insofar as they affected the activities of Rochdale Development Agency.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.