

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

Economic and Environmental Wellbeing Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee

Meeting held 30 November 2016

PRESENT: Councillors Steve Wilson (Chair), Ian Auckland (Deputy Chair), Penny Baker, Lisa Banes, Neale Gibson, Dianne Hurst, Talib Hussain, Abdul Khayum, Robert Murphy, Andy Nash, Chris Peace and Martin Smith

.....

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Helen Mirfin-Boukouris and Paul Wood.

2. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

2.1 No items were identified where resolutions may be moved to exclude the public and press.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 26th October 2016, were approved as a correct record.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

5.1 Adrian Milward raised the following questions regarding the Flood Protection Programme:-

(a) Given the technical complexity of the design and lifetime operation of flood defences:-

(i) Does the Committee intend to ensure that they receive expert independent advice, for example, following the national model of creating a Specialist Advisory Group?

(ii) Given this project is being presented as a 'National Pilot for the National Flood Resilience Review', what independent evaluation is the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) undertaking, and how is this being reported to this Committee?

- (iii) Given that funding will impact on the chosen solutions, how is the work of the new DEFRA 'Finance from Economic Value' created expert group being reported to this Committee?
 - (iv) How are all local Members of Parliament, some of whom sit on the Government Select Committee, reviewing flooding policy, being informed and involved?
- (b) The proposals describe a wide range of strategic objectives for the scheme. Given the Environment Agency funding, described at the consultation stage, only considers one parameter (reduction in properties flooded or risk category reduced):-
- (i) How are the value of the other Council objectives, such as environmental, habitat, amenity, etc, to be evaluated and quantified in reaching a transparent and auditable evaluation of options so this Committee can be clear on what is being proposed is the best option?
 - (ii) Given this is also a 'national pilot for self-funding', what freedoms have the team asked from DEFRA, for example in terms of 'having to complete the work to fit in with the Environment Agency funding period', that is all works completed by 2021?
 - (iii) How is the work of the new DEFRA, focused on new defences financed from the proceeds of economic value, going to be applied to the Sheffield proposals of using areas of urban parkland, such as Rivelin Valley or Endcliffe Park? Does use of the different funding mechanism alter the type of defences and the timetable for implementation?
- (c) Given the scale, technical complexity, importance of the works, the national profile, the complex partnership working arrangements at local and national level, the new finance arrangements to be trialled, is this Committee satisfied that the Council has yet been able to assemble a team with the right resources and capacity to lead on this project?

5.2 Ian Kassell stated that he had already informed Arup and Partners that he owned land at Morland Lane, which currently got flooded several times a year, and questioned whether the Council would consider the land as an alternative to the proposed flood alleviation barrier, in an ancient woodland currently proposed in Totley. He also requested that he, and other land owners affected, could be kept updated in terms of the progress of the scheme.

5.3 Trevor Bagshaw requested assurances from the Council that all interested agencies, organisations or individuals be fully engaged in terms of the proposals.

5.4 The Chair stated that the above questions would be referred to relevant Council officers, with a request that they provide a written response.

6. PROTECTING SHEFFIELD FROM FLOODING

6.1 The Committee received a presentation from James Fletcher, Flood and Water Manager, Sheffield City Council, on a programme of schemes to protect Sheffield from flooding. Mr Fletcher reported that, following the devastating effect of the floods in 2007, both in terms of the impact on property and lives, and the economy and growth, and due to the increased risk of repeat flooding, and the City's topography, action was required to improve the City's flood defences. Mr Fletcher reported that the plans, which were to be funded through an £83 million Government Investment Programme to 2021, involved a catchment-wide approach, with a wide range of options, which would protect the City's communities, help grow the economy and transform its waterways. In terms of progress, Mr Fletcher reported that work had commenced on building defences in the Lower Don Valley, which were scheduled to be completed by Summer 2017 and, following meetings with the Government, at which funding had been identified, and with Sheffield having been chosen to be the pilot Core City for flood protection, plans had now commenced in terms of delivering the larger programme. The programme included options to both keep flood water out of the City, by undertaking measures regarding upland management, natural flood management and holding water in reservoirs, as well as options to store flood water temporarily in the City's open spaces. A number of potential flood water storage areas had been identified, and which included Endcliffe and Millhouses Parks. As part of these options, improvements would be made to the parks, including soft re-landscaping, better drainage and better facilities.

6.2 Mr Fletcher referred to other options, which included containing more water in the City's rivers, which would involve building more defences that enhanced the riverside and removing obstructions to help water flow. He referred to resilience measures, which included reducing the impact when flooding occurred and improving emergency planning and response arrangements, as well as warning systems, keeping rivers cleared and well-maintained and ensuring that properties were more resilient to flooding. Mr Fletcher concluded by referring to the next steps, which included deciding on the various options by January 2017, working with interested groups and affected parties to develop the options in early 2017, submitting the case for investment to the

Government in Summer 2017, developing detailed proposals and consulting further with the public in 2018, with the aim of construction taking place during 2019 to 2021.

6.3 The Committee also heard contributions from other relevant agencies and organisations, in terms of their involvement in the programme, as follows:-

6.4 Yorkshire Water

6.4.1 Granville Davis, Head of Asset Strategy, reported on Yorkshire Water's role in terms of the management of reservoirs, and provision of drinking water, indicating that whilst reservoirs had other benefits, they were primarily used for the supply of drinking water. In terms of water management, he stated that, as and when required, water was released into water courses downstream. Yorkshire Water was currently planning for the future in terms of looking at how it could deal with a potential deficit in its water supply, in the light of the forecast increase in population. The Company was also involved in a national programme, working with partners, to look at broader issues regarding reservoirs.

6.5 Moors for the Future Partnership

6.5.1 John Scott, Director of Conservation and Planning, Peak District National Park, gave a presentation on Natural Flood Management, an appraisal prepared for the Environment Agency by the Moors for the Future Partnership, of current evidence from the DEFRA-funded multi-objective flood management demonstration projects that had been initiated in 2009, as part of DEFRA's response to the Pit Review of the 2007 floods. The aim of the projects had been to generate evidence to demonstrate how integrated land management change, working with natural processes and partnership working, could contribute to reducing local flood risk, while producing wider benefits for the environment and communities. Mr Scott reported on the three projects – Making Space for Water (Kinder Scout, Derbyshire), Slowing the Flow (Pickering, North Yorkshire) and From Source to Sea (Exmoor, Somerset), which had been running for five years, indicating that the main message from the projects had been that landscape flood management techniques were effective, and should be used together with engineered hard defences.

6.6 Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust

6.6.1 Liz Ballard, Chief Executive, Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust, gave a presentation on the work of the Trust in connection with flood risk management. Ms Ballard stated that the Trust was a partner on the Waterways Strategy Group and, in partnership with the City Council and Groundwork, the Trust formed the River Stewardship

Company, which involved the local community and businesses in works regarding in-channel river maintenance, which included a number of benefits, mainly to reduce the build-up of rubbish which could block small channels and bridges. The Trust also worked with the Moors for the Future Partnership, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and the National Trust, through its Wildscapes Consultancy, to deliver programmes that helped improve the moorlands for water storage. The Trust established and led the Living Don Partnership, which included working with organisations, on land and water across the region. The Trust also had strong local networks in the community and invested and drew down funding, into its nature reserves and projects across Sheffield and Rotherham that helped to reduce flood risk, such as at Centenary Riverside. In terms of the flood protection proposals, Ms Ballard stated that there was a need to consider all the options for flood risk management, including soft engineering and natural flood risk management, alongside the more traditional hard engineering projects. Ms Ballard highlighted the opportunity to access a new Government fund of £15m, specifically allocated for natural flood risk management schemes. She also asked for improved dialogue between all the agencies involved, and all the different communities affected, and expressed concerns regarding the adverse impact of some of the proposals on heritage and ancient woodland sites in the region. Despite her concerns, she stated that the proposals provided an excellent opportunity to improve flood management in the area.

6.6.2 Despite the concerns, she stated that the proposals provided an excellent opportunity to improve flood management in the area. She concluded by indicating that the Trust had been successful in obtaining £4 million, as part of a landscape partnership bid, which would be used for a number of initiatives and projects, including natural flood risk management. She asked the Council to work with the Trust on this project, and to explore establishing a wider “strategic flood protection partnership” in Sheffield that could involve the many knowledgeable people in the City to help better protect the City from future flooding.

6.7 Members of the Committee raised questions and the following responses were provided:-

- It had been accepted that there was a need for both soft measures, including the clearing of waste and debris from rivers, riverbanks and around bridges and the provision of flood storage areas, as well as engineered hard defences. It was hoped that, under the programme of works, both types of scheme could be implemented without any detrimental effect to the countryside.
- Natural Flood Management was viewed as an important element of the whole programme, and the overall package of works

would include a number of Natural Flood Management schemes.

- The official readings, as recorded by the Environment Agency, indicated that on Monday, 21st November 2016, river levels were around 10 inches off overtopping in respect of the bottom end of the River Sheaf and Porter Brook. Flood warnings had been issued. It had been considered that if the rain had continued at the same rate into the evening, there would have been a high risk of significant flooding to areas of the City Centre, including the railway station. The river levels on 21st November were at their highest since the floods in 2007.
- 81% of public responses, as part of the consultation, supported the objective to protect communities. 32% of these disagreed with the nature of the approach the Council was taking. At the consultation events, there was an opportunity for people to highlight those areas where they envisaged there would be particular issues.
- An Expert Panel was being established by the Government to deliver the Sheffield Pilot for Flood Protection. This would be made up of technical, business and funding experts. Consideration would be given to the request now made, that the Panel should include a number of local experts.
- Sheffield was looking to be a 'trail blazer' on the grounds that the proposed Natural Flood Management plans would be on a much bigger scale to any similar schemes across the country. Whilst, as part of the projects, the techniques to be used would be very similar to those used in other areas, the project would be on a much bigger scale.
- The Government had ring-fenced £15m towards Natural Flood Management options in the uplands above the City. It was hoped that this funding would be additional to the £83m Government Investment Programme.
- Discussions had taken place with Yorkshire Water to undertake a controlled release of water, from reservoirs, into water courses prior to forecast storms or periods of heavy rain to provide flood water storage during storms. This would result in there being no adverse effect on water supply as they would naturally refill during such periods. Problems occurred when storms or periods of heavy rain were not forecast as there were limits in terms of how quick controlled releases could be organised, or when forecast storms did not materialise. There was no capacity to transfer water from one reservoir to another.
- Although the public had been consulted on the options, there

were no detailed designs in place, and the options highlighted in the publicity material produced, were illustrative. For instance, there were no plans for a large concrete dam in the Rivelin Valley, and consideration would be given to the location of the flood storage area proposed in Gillyfield Wood.

- Whilst dredging rivers would help to some extent, this process would not have much of an effect in terms of extreme flooding. Also, due to the work required, and associated cost, it was not considered that this process was the best way forward. There was also little benefit to dredging reservoirs, with the practicalities and costs far outweighing any benefits. As an alternative, work was being undertaken to look at specific pinch points in watercourses, where there had been a build up of silt which had caused an obstruction.
- There had been a considerable level of partnership working in connection with the proposed plans, with a number of key internal and external stakeholder workshops held, including environmental, expert, community and “friends of” groups, where attendees had gone into considerable detail in terms of some of the options.
- In terms of people’s concerns regarding possible loss of, or damage to, the City’s heritage and/or ancient woodlands, particularly in connection with the location of the temporary flood storage areas, it was considered that there was sufficient expertise, in terms of personnel in the partner agencies and organisations, to ensure any adverse effects of proposals being developed were minimised.
- It was accepted that there was a need for all partner agencies and organisations to be aware of the effects of climate change, particularly in connection with extreme weather conditions, and subsequent flooding.
- Whilst the Council had no specific powers to demand such action was taken, it was working with developers to look to implement sustainable drainage systems as part of their developments. Good examples include close working between the Council and developers on social housing developments in the Manor, Arbourthorne and Parson Cross districts of the City.
- Although there had been consultation on the draft proposals, further consultation would be held on the detailed designs once they had been drafted.
- In terms of the potential adverse effect on temporary flood storage areas, it was the intention to create silt traps to catch silt

and debris to stop it running into the storage areas. Officers had visited a flood storage area in Centre Vale Park, Todmorden, Calder Valley, which had required very little in terms of cleaning up afterwards.

- The overall options include long-term protection, up to 2080.

6.8 The Committee received questions from members of the public in attendance, as follows:-

- (a) Katherine Elsdon questioned what the recovery period would be in terms of the temporary flood storage areas in the Porter Brook and Mayfield Valley areas.
- (b) Faye Musselwhite referred to possible enhancements in the Rivelin Valley area, including the suggestion of large dams, and questioned what exactly had been proposed in this area.
- (c) Sue Shaw, Rivelin Valley Conservation Trust, made reference to the information circulated as part of the consultation, which referred to the construction of 11 metre high walls in the Rivelin and Loxley Valleys, and questioned whether this was the case.
- (d) John Gommersall stated that, whilst he welcomed the proposals, as a result of the devastation caused by the floods in 2007, he had concerns regarding the cost, and potential adverse effects on the City's heritage and wildlife. He also made the point that one of the main reasons for the flooding in Hillsborough in 2007 was due to a failure to keep the riverbanks clear of debris and foliage. He stated that the public needed assurances, in the form of cost benefit analysis.

6.9 The Chair stated that written responses would be provided to the questioners.

6.10 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the information contained in the papers now circulated, the information reported as part of the presentations and the responses to the questions raised;
- (b) acknowledges the concerns raised by members of the public and representatives of agencies and organisations, both as part of the consultation and at this meeting, regarding the potential adverse effect of the proposals on the City's heritage and ancient woodlands, particularly in the light of the comments now made in terms of the illustrations on the plans used as part of the consultation;

- (c) requests:
- (i) that officers work with partners to look at the possibility of establishing a formally constituted Partnership Group, comprising representatives from all relevant agencies and organisations, as well as members of the public, to look at all aspects of flood management, including natural flood management and whole catchment approach;
 - (ii) Councillor Bryan Lodge (Cabinet Member for Environment) to lobby the relevant Secretary of State to give consideration to amending current planning policy, making it mandatory for developers to install sustainable urban drainage systems as part of future developments;
 - (iii) assurance, in going forward, post this consultation stage, that all relevant organisations are fully engaged in the development and decision-making process by the Council, on proposals, and that there is a cost benefit analysis of all the options, including hard engineering works and organic solutions;
 - (iv) that, for clarity, future consultation information materials use all river names, not just upstream names; and
 - (v) that detailed designs of all the proposals under the programme be referred back to this Committee for comment, prior to submission to the Government; and
- (d) thanks those Council officers and representatives from other agencies and organisations, as well as those members of the public, in attendance.

7. ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE TASK GROUP DRAFT SCOPE

- 7.1 The Policy and Improvement Officer submitted a report on the proposed establishment of a Task and Finish Group on Economic Landscape in Sheffield, the draft outline of which would involve a multi-approach to consider what business needs were in Sheffield, within the economic landscape, and the City's economic role in Sheffield City Region. The report also set out a proposed timeline in terms of the Group's inception meeting, and its report to this Committee in 2017.
- 7.2 Councillor Lisa Baines expressed an interest in being a member of the Group, and suggested that its membership should include a representative of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). The Chair indicated that he would like to Chair the Task Group, and

Councillor Martin Smith expressed an interest in also being a member.

7.3 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the contents of the report now submitted, together with the expressions of interest in terms of the membership of the Economic Landscape Task Group; and
- (b) requests Members to contact the Policy and Improvement Officer (Alice Nicholson), (i) indicating if they wished to become a member of the Group and (ii) providing (A) comments/feedback on proposed terms of reference, scope and areas for exploration, and on the proposed timeline and (B) suggestions in terms of potential stakeholders to which the Group could call evidence from.

8. WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17

8.1 The Policy and Improvement Officer (Alice Nicholson) submitted a report attaching the Committee's draft Work Programme for 2016/17.

8.2 In response to a query by Councillor Robert Murphy, Ms. Nicholson stated that the item on the Green Commission had been temporarily withdrawn from the Programme as she was waiting information on the item, and gave assurances that it would be included in the Committee's Work Programme, under the items to be scheduled.

8.3 RESOLVED: That the Committee notes the contents of the report now submitted, together with the comments now made, and approves the draft Work Programme for 2016/17.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

9.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Wednesday, 25th January, 2017, at 5.00 p.m., in the Town Hall.