

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

Economic and Environmental Wellbeing Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee

Meeting held 14 January 2020

PRESENT: Councillors Denise Fox (Chair), Ian Auckland (Deputy Chair),
Dianne Hurst, Alan Hooper, Abdul Khayum, Bryan Lodge,
Mohammed Mahroof, Barbara Masters, Ben Miskell, Martin Smith and
Paul Turpin

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Neale Gibson, Moya O'Rourke, Sioned-Mair Richards and Chris Rosling-Josephs.

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 THE PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 12th November 2019, were approved as a correct record and, arising therefrom, further to a query raised by Councillor Martin Smith, with regard to the report on the update on the financial position of the Sheffield City Trust, the Policy and Improvement Officer (Alice Nicholson) reported that this item had been scheduled for the Committee's meeting to be held on 17th March 2020, at which a report on the updated financial position was to be submitted, and which would also include details of any action and activity taken place since October 2019.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

5.1 Members of the public raised questions as follows:-

5.2 Kevin Leah

5.2.1 Please could I and other volunteer litter pickers at the Ponderosa, discuss the plans for improvement and investment of the Ponderosa Park, Uppertorpe, with the Committee, at its next meeting to be held on 17th March 2020. The volunteers would like to discuss the ongoing work following the 2018 public consultation.

5.2.2 The Chair stated that the Committee would discuss the request and a response

would be sent to Mr Leah.

5.3 Brian Holmshaw

5.3.1 I would like to ask, with reference to the proposals regarding the Station/Sheaf Valley, as part of the presentation to be made at this meeting, whether the dual carriageway that was shown as being on previous versions of the illustration, was still there? It was between Park Hill and the Station, and if built, would further isolate the communities beyond the tram tracks at this point.

5.3.2 Edward Highfield (Director of City Growth) stated that proposals for this area were included as part of the HS2 Masterplan, and reference would be made briefly to such plans as part of the presentation at this meeting. Mr Highfield added that a report was due to be submitted to the Cabinet, at a meeting to be held in March 2020, seeking endorsement to the Masterplan.

6. CITY CENTRE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

6.1 The Committee received a presentation from Edward Highfield (Director of City Growth) and Tammy Whitaker (Head of Regeneration and Property Services) on 'Regenerating our City Centre'.

6.2 Edward Highfield stated that the information in the presentation represented a series of very broad proposals, together with details of progress. He added that the City Centre was very important in terms of commerce, retail and leisure, as well as being a major economic driver within the City Region economy. He stated that, whilst there were many other elements to the City Centre, the presentation primarily focused on its proposed physical regeneration.

6.3 Tammy Whitaker stated that the overall aim was for the City Centre to become a vibrant place of ambition, creativity and inclusiveness, and she referred to a map, which was displayed at the meeting, which highlighted the locations within the City Centre where regeneration and development activity had taken place, and was planned, between 2019 and 2021. Ms Whitaker referred to a number of recent successes with regard to development in the City Centre, relating to commercial and residential development, university investment and creating sustainable places. She also referred to a number of priority areas in terms of future development, which included West Bar, the Station/Sheaf Valley, Castlegate and Fargate/High Street, and reported on proposals regarding City Living, which included the provision of affordable, sustainable and high-quality accommodation in and around the City Centre area. Ms Whitaker stressed that many of the schemes discussed during the presentation were not Council-led, but were private sector-led schemes where the Council had an enabling and facilitating role.

6.4 Members of the Committee raised questions, and the following

responses were provided:-

- It was accepted that proposed development schemes in the City Centre were reliant on the private sector, and therefore, the buoyancy of the market. At the same time, it was acknowledged that the private sector had been instrumental in terms of driving forward a number of development schemes. Regeneration was a long-term, iterative process, and there would always be regeneration opportunities in large cities such as Sheffield. The Council's role was to encourage and support the private sector, and sometimes, this would involve taking risks.
- In terms of any regeneration plans, it was necessary to find out what was important to, and for, the City. There was also a need, through effective communication and marketing, to sell the City internationally, which would hopefully result in further visitors and investment. Marketing Sheffield was currently responsible for this area of work, and there had been a significant shift in terms of the quality of advertisement and promotion material over the years, which included greater use of social media.
- There had been a major change over the last 20 years in terms of how the regeneration of the City had been led. Around 20 years ago, there was the Sheffield One Masterplan, which comprised seven major projects, the majority of which were public sector-led schemes. Now, the investment in the City Centre was mostly private sector-led. However, it was important to learn the lessons of over-reliance on major investors. It had been considered that the most effective way to implement regeneration was to make progress incrementally, whilst ensuring that there was still an overall vision.
- Phases 1 and 2 of the Grey to Green element of the Creating Sustainable Places initiative had only been part-funded by the European Union (EU). It was not clear how the Shared Prosperity Fund, which was to replace the EU funding programme would work. The Grey to Green schemes often acted as a catalyst for private sector funding and investment, and it was believed that such schemes would remain as a key priority for the City, given the current climate change ambitions.
- There were still plans, as part of the redevelopment of Castlegate, to create a public park around the site of the former Sheffield Castle, with the remains of the Castle being a key part of the plans. Such plans also included residential and employment proposals. The scheme needed to be commercially viable and deliverable, and the Council would commence the process of looking for a development partner during 2020.

- Whilst the business rates in the City Centre were set by Central Government, there were a number of schemes run by the Council, where small businesses could apply for rate reductions.
- As well as local businesses, the Authority wanted to attract businesses with an international outlook, and able to trade with the rest of the world.
- Whilst it was accepted that the ethos and nature of the retail offer on Devonshire Street had changed over the years, it was believed that this had been down to the success of some of the businesses in that area, which had resulted in them outgrowing their premises, and other businesses moving in. The Council would continue to help and support local businesses grow in the City, and was actively looking for suitable areas in and around the City Centre to locate such businesses.
- It was not possible for the Authority to give any assurances or guarantee that affordable housing would be provided by private developers as part of residential developments. It was simply a case of whether it was a viable option for the developer. Whilst it was accepted that there was a need to increase the supply of affordable housing, the Authority could not guarantee, as part of the planning process, that developers provided such accommodation. Developers could challenge any requirements made by the Authority on viability grounds. Land was owned by developers and could be left vacant and undeveloped if schemes were unviable.
- No details could be provided in connection with the planned restructuring of the Planning Service as consultations were currently taking place. However, it was believed that following such restructuring, the Authority would still be in a position to deliver a modern and fit for purpose Planning Service.
- It was not expected that any change in Central Government would have any major effects on the National Planning Policy Framework, as such Framework was set fairly firm. There was no indication that there would be any specific risks.
- The Authority was currently looking at the possibility of pedestrianising further areas in and around the City Centre, through the Transforming Cities Fund. The Authority was optimistic that it would be successful in terms of a funding bid, which would hopefully result in the receipt of between £40 to £60 million over the next four years, to be used for sustainable travel. There had been no firm plans or proposals to date, but various options would be investigated, which would include wider requirements, such as amending bus routes.

- The Authority was one of many partner organisations involved in the regeneration of the City Centre, and no longer had sufficient resources or access to funds that it had in the past. It had become more of a team approach now, with the Authority now playing more of a supporting role. It was hoped that, as with the Heart of the City project, the development schemes now referred to would help to facilitate other development schemes.
- There was no set budget for development schemes in the City Centre, with each scheme being dealt with, and funded, on a project by project basis. The Authority was currently looking at key priorities, as well as funding options, including the City Region Infrastructure Fund, monies from which had been used to fund several development projects over the last few years. A sum of approximately £8 million had been set aside by the Authority for land assembly purposes, with £3 million of this having been identified specifically for residential development. In some cases, developers would express an interest following the sale of land by the Authority, or where the Authority had purchased land under a Compulsory Purchase Order and where, in some instances, the developers would pay the Authority's legal fees.
- The Authority had not yet signed any deal in connection with the proposed large office development at West Bar following recent Cabinet approval of the scheme. If the Authority took a lease, as intended, it was not likely that the office space at West Bar would remain vacant for the term of the lease and, indeed, the Authority could actually make a surplus in terms of sub-letting some of the space.
- With regard to city living, particularly in those areas where such planned developments/communities were split by major arterial roads, there were plans to create linkages by means of implementing traffic-calming measures, stopping certain uses on the roads, making improvements to road junctions and pedestrian crossings, and providing cycle paths.
- There were no detailed plans regarding the proposed City Living development within the Housing Zone North. It was envisaged that the development, planned for the area, would comprise a mix of new build and refurbished accommodation.
- There were no detailed plans with regard to the proposed development at Castlegate (Canada House). The Authority was in regular dialogue with The Music Academy, and it was likely that the development would include a mixture of Council and other external funding, such as Arts funding.

- It was planned that the various regeneration and development schemes would be prioritised, and applications for funding would be made to the Corporate Infrastructure Fund, details of which would be reported through the Cabinet process.
- Whilst every opportunity would be made to maximise the benefits from HS2, there would be significant physical constraints with regard to developing the Station/Sheaf Valley area, particularly heading to the north of the City. There were plans to take some local services off the main network and move them on to the tram/train network. Other major issues, such as flooding risks and taxis, would have to be considered.
- The Authority had submitted a bid to the Future High Street Fund, which would include funding to acquire some properties and would provide an option to open up some of the upper floors for residential development.

6.5 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the information reported as part of the presentation, and the responses to the questions raised; and
- (b) thanks Edward Highfield and Tammy Whitaker for attending the meeting and responding to the questions raised, and requests that they attend a future meeting of the Committee to report on the progress of the regeneration of the City Centre.

7. WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20

7.1 The Committee received a report of the Policy and Improvement Officer (Alice Nicholson) containing the Work Programme for 2019/20.

7.2 Further to issues raised by Members of the Committee, the Policy and Improvement Officer reported that a report on the flood defence programme could be added to the Work Programme, and that consideration would be given to a briefing paper on the issue raised by the member of the public, with regard to Ponderosa Park.

7.3 RESOLVED: That the Committee notes the information now reported, and approves the Work Programme for 2019/20.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

8.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Tuesday, 17th March 2020, at 4.30 pm, in the Town Hall.