

Economic Development and Skills Policy Committee

Meeting held 7 September 2022

PRESENT: Councillors Martin Smith (Chair), Ben Miskell (Deputy Chair), Paul Turpin (Group Spokesperson), Kurtis Crossland, Jayne Dunn, Tom Hunt, Barbara Masters, Henry Nottage and Minesh Parekh

1. WELCOME AND HOUSEKEEPING

1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2.1 There were no apologies for absence.

3. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

4.1 There were no declarations of interest made.

5. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

5.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 20th June 2022 were approved as a correct record.

6. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

6.1 Question regarding Workforce and Skills Gap

Jean Miller asked the following question:

Everyone recognises that we will immediately face a workforce and skills gap once money becomes available for retrofitting, and that this gap cannot be filled quickly. If we look around us we see that Manchester is training over 1000 people through its Retrofit Academy, Harrogate College has its retrofit courses and North East Derbyshire is training retrofit apprentices through its retrofit programme. What provision is Sheffield Council making for such training? What provision is being built into the Gleadless Valley Master Plan?"

In response, the Chair responded that:

We do recognise that this is a gap in Sheffield and we are working with partners to close it.

The Local Plan and new Council housing – The Local Plan is currently under consultation. It outlines the minimum requirements for developments to meet to gain planning permission. These standards go above and beyond the national building regulations updated this year to reduce carbon emissions. The workforce building these developments will need to be trained to the correct standards to meet the requirements. All new Council Housing developments also work to those same higher standards. With plans to build 40,000 new houses in Sheffield in the coming 17 years, this will create significant training opportunities for the existing workforce as well as apprentices and new entrants to the industry.

We are working with Sheffield College to develop its retrofitting curriculum. The College are developing a 5000 sq metre Sustainable Construction Centre which is expected to be ready by 2025 if not before. In the meantime, we are in discussion to lend them empty Council buildings to train apprentices and other learners in retrofitting and then provide them with experience of “live” projects as we improve our existing large estate of housing, offices, schools etc. The College representatives have provided a specification for the vacant building(s) and are visiting the various options.

The Council have agreed a £3m budget to install additional renewable technologies onto buildings in our estate which will create further training opportunities for these students and apprentices.

We are also working closely with the MCA as they develop both their Retrofit Taskforce as outlined in the Mayor’s manifesto and the new Skills Strategy, for which one of the key themes is “green” jobs and training. We are exploring opportunities created by the devolution of the Adult Education Budget to direct funds towards retrofitting and other environmental training such as Electric Vehicle technology.

The Gleadless Valley Masterplan includes plans to both take advantage of Sheffield-wide employment and skills programmes by running them in Gleadless as well as locally developed projects.

7. WORK PROGRAMME

- 7.1 The Economic Strategy Manager presented the Work Programme and drew Members attention to the Pride in Sheffield item referred from Full Council, along with the response provided by the Equalities and Engagement Team.
- 7.2 Councillor Turpin noted that there was no mention of a Green Job Strategy within the Work Programme and requested that it be added. A discussion took place regarding cost of living and business recovery which would be the focus of the November meeting of the Committee.

7.3 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY** that:-

1. the Committee's work programme, as set out in Appendix 1 be agreed, including any additions and amendments identified in Part 1;
2. consideration be given to the further additions or adjustments to the work programme presented at Part 2 of Appendix 1;
3. Members give consideration to any further issues to be explored by officers for inclusion in Part 2 of Appendix 1 of the next work programme report, for potential addition to the work programme; and
4. the referrals from Council (petition and resolutions) detailed in Section 2 of the report be noted and the proposed responses set out, be agreed.

8. **DEVELOPING A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO CULTURE IN SHEFFIELD**

- 8.1 Culture has moved organisationally within Sheffield City Council from Leisure to Economic Development, opening up new opportunities to use culture to make Sheffield a great and inclusive place to work, study, invest, and live.

The report proposed some strategic actions which would strengthen the cultural leadership role of Sheffield City Council and help the sector to develop.

Surriyah Falconer, Vice Chair of Sheffield Culture Collective and Jo Towler, Executive Director of Music in the Round attended the meeting a gave a short [presentation](#) on adopting Sheffield Cultural Collective Strategy.

The importance of SCC acting in an ambassadorial role and being the accountable body for proposals was stressed to encourage more bid proposals which it was hoped would lead to more funding being awarded in the city.

- 8.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Economic Development and Skills Policy Committee:-

1. Formally adopt the Sheffield Culture Collective Strategy on behalf of Sheffield City Council as an interim, while SCC works with partners to develop a full city Culture Strategy;
2. Note the submission of three Expressions of Interest to the Create Growth Fund; Cultural Development Fund 3; and Place Partnership Fund; and
3. Support in principle the creation of a Cultural Feasibility Fund through external funding sources such as SYMCA.

8.3 **Reasons for Decision**

- 8.3.1 Three strategic actions were proposed in the report:

Action 1: Adopt a clear strategy which can underpin funding applications in the sector.

Action 2: Engage with immediate external funding opportunities

Action 3: Support the creation of a Cultural Feasibility Fund and project pipeline

8.3.2 These actions will help to create a context where the cultural sector can develop further and SCC can show cultural leadership:

- The adoption of an interim Strategy will give clarity and confidence to funders
- SCC's clear support with external funding bids will improve the likelihood of success
- A Cultural Feasibility Fund will start to create a cultural project pipeline, and will begin to address inequalities in provision and access to resources.

8.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

8.4.1 **Do Nothing**

By undertaking none of the proposed actions, the cultural sector in Sheffield will continue to experience under-investment from external funders and SCC will suffer ongoing reputational damage in its cultural leadership.

8.4.2 **Develop an SCC Cultural Strategy without adopting the Culture Collective Strategy as an interim**

It will take a number of months to craft an effective city Cultural Strategy. If we waited for the creation of a new document without having an adopted strategy document, this would continue to undermine external funding bids and reduce clarity and profile for culture. The Sheffield Culture Collective Strategy was developed for a particular purpose with 19 local organisations and individuals, and does not include all the elements (e.g Net Zero) or methodology (co-creation) which would feature in a city Culture Strategy. However, the general approach and priorities of the Collective Strategy are in line with Council policy, and provide a valuable immediate strategic hook for strengthening the cultural landscape in the city.

9. **BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR YEAR 2023/2024**

9.1 The report set out the budget pressures and risks facing the services that are the responsibility of the Economic Development and Skills Policy Committee (EDSC), and a budget action plan to mitigate these as far as possible in the 23/24 financial year.

It provided recommendations for approval which will allow the services to contribute to Sheffield City Council's ability to set a balanced budget.

Councillor Ben Miskell informed the meeting that whilst Labour Group colleagues intended to vote in favour of item 1.4.3, entitled 'more effective and efficient delivery of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities', following discussions with Councillor Mick Rooney and Councillor Dawn Dale, Co-Chair's of the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee, further assurance and clarification was sought.

Whilst the proposal fell within the scope of the Economic Development and Skills Policy Committee, we understand that statutory responsibility for the impact of this proposal falls on Councillor Rooney, who under Section 19 of the Children's Act 2004 is designated as the named Lead Member for Children's Services. The statutory guidance for local authorities from 2013 stated that despite our current committee system, Councillor Rooney had political responsibility for 'the leadership, strategy and effectiveness' of the wider service and is democratically accountable'.

Councillor Ben Miskell raised that Councillors Rooney and Dale had flagged concerns and say that they were still awaiting a full briefing on the proposal. This was troubling, given the recent Ofsted inspection on SEND provision and the written statement of action that has been drawn up following this.

Kevin Straughan, Head of Service Lifelong Learning, assured Councillor Miskell that briefings of Councillors Mick Rooney and Dawn Dale were scheduled to take place, along with a briefing of the whole Education, Children and Families Policy Committee.

9.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Economic Development and Skills Policy Committee:-

1. Note the Council's challenging financial position;
2. Note the pressures and risks identified in relation to the Economic Development and Skills Policy Committee budget for the 23/34 financial year and commit to work with officers to mitigate these risks where possible;
3. Note the work undertaken over the summer to develop the Budget Action Plan; and
4. Approve the budget action plan to deliver savings for 23/24 of £525K, against a pressure of £595K, for submission to the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee.

9.3 **Reasons for Decision**

9.3.1 A balance has been sought to strike a balance between meeting the budget challenges in Committee and still delivering as much impact as possible for Sheffield's economy and residents in line with the priorities set in the one-year plan and Business Recovery Plan. The contribution and commitment of the Service in supporting the city economy through covid has been noted, and losing

the momentum built as we face a cost-of-living crisis would be damaging to the broader City economy.

9.3.2 Furthermore, removal of the services and budgets would also dramatically reduce the City's ability to bid for and win external funding, which maximises the Council's investment.

9.3.3 This is the preferred option as it allows the Committee to contribute substantially to the Council's budget position. Further options can be considered by Strategy and Resources Committee with the EDSC, as the range of options across all Committees are considered together.

9.3.4 In setting this Budget Action Plan the intended outcome is to continue to deliver services which are pivotal to economic development within the city and support the wider regional economy and maximise our limited financial resource by working in partnership and bringing in external funding.

9.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

9.4.1 **Do nothing**

By undertaking none of the proposed actions, we would be unable to contribute to delivering a balanced budget.

9.4.2 **Deliver Balanced Budget**

Make further savings by accepting the options, currently rejected, by the Committee.

9.4.3 **Offer greater budget savings by stopping services**

Make further savings by stopping non statutory services.

10. **ECONOMIC RECOVERY FUND UPDATE**

10.1 Sarah Lowijones, Economic Policy Officer, gave a [presentation](#) which updated the Committee on the work carried out so far on the Economic Recovery Fund. The presentation gave an overview of the ERF and a summary of activity which had taken place over the summer. It also gave information on how the next phase would be developed.

10.2 Members complimented officers on the work done to implement the first phase of the ERF and the projects that had benefitted. The Economic Policy Officer thanked Members and explained that the quick implementation of the first round had been a learning curve and that the Council was looking to implement the second round in the new calendar year to allow due diligence on bids received. It was hoped to speed up the process of getting grants distributed this year.

10.3 In the longer term, it was hoped to hand over administration of the project to the

LAC's. The fund was about economic recovery, so needed to be focussed where the economic activity was.

10.4 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That Committee note the presentation.

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