

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

South West Local Area Committee

Meeting held 4 October 2022

PRESENT: Councillors Andrew Sangar (Chair), Joe Otten (Deputy Chair), Sue Alston, Roger Davison, Tim Huggan, Barbara Masters, Ruth Milsom, Shaffaq Mohammed, Minesh Parekh, Colin Ross, Martin Smith and Cliff Woodcraft

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 No apologies for absence were received.

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 14th July 2022, were approved as a correct record, with the exception of Item 5 – Public Questions and Petitions, which was amended by the substitution of the words (a) “she had already spoken to Ms Clarke, and had been told Ms Clarke had since been provided with a response, the response from Parks and Countryside below, which she read out at the meeting” for the words “whilst she had already spoken to Ms Clarke, and provided her with a response, the response from Parks and Countryside below, which she read out at the meeting, may help further”, in paragraph 5.1 (b) and (b) “flat green” for “crown green”, in paragraph 5.2 (a).

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

5.1 The Committee received the following questions from members of the public who had submitted the questions prior to the meeting, and who attended the meeting to raise them:-

(a) Paul May

1. I note there is a toolkit that the new Policy Committees have that give 12 options on how they will engage with the public. Can this toolkit be published please?

In response, the Chair stated that the " menu of options" for the public engagement toolkit were listed in each of the Policy Committees' Work

Programmes at Appendix 3. A copy of each of the latest versions of the Work Programmes, including the "menu of options", is published on the Council's website with the agenda for each of the Policy Committee meetings. The list of options builds on the experiences of Scrutiny Committees and latterly, the Transitional Committees, and would continue to develop. Councillor Sangar provided details of the link to the Council's democracy webpages that contained the details regarding meetings, agendas and minutes.

2. From the minutes from 14th July LAC meeting - six members of the public had their questions reported, and all had full answers sent to them later. I asked at the meeting on 4th July if the full answers could be published later. There seemed to be no problem with that so can they be published please?

In response, the Chair stated that most of the responses provided to the questions were set out in the minutes of the last meeting. He added that, in those circumstances where it was not possible to provide a detailed response at the meeting, a full written response would be sent, and would be included in a document to be attached to the agenda for the next meeting, under the item – Public Questions and Petitions.

3. I would like to ask that a pedestrian safety issue be revisited. If the traffic lights at the junction of Carterknowle Road and Ecclesall Road can be adjusted then there would be time for pedestrians to cross safely from one side of Carterknowle Road to the other. I presented a petition on this to the full Council some years ago. The proposal died a death. There would be a cost involved, but is this not the type of issue that can be addressed by the LAC under the safer road crossings heading?

In response, the Chair stated that the responsible body to deal with such a request would be the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee. Whilst, at present, this was not included in the LAC's Committee's Community Plan, the Committee could review the request to see if it could be included. Councillor Sangar stated that, however, it could be an issue given the limited amount of funding the Committee had. He also stated that he was a member of the Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee, and would notify relevant officers of the issue, with a request that they review the situation.

(b) Mike Hodson

I would like to ask if the South West LAC has taken notice of the failure of the Council's Highways Service to implement the requirement for a Traffic and Highways Review for Carter Knowle Road, and surrounding roads, a requirement imposed by the 2017 planning permission for Mercia School, and the failure of the Planning Service to take enforcement action on this. The review was supposed to take place when the School was 50% full, which milestone was passed in September 2021.

In response, the Chair stated that the issue would be referred to officers in the Planning Service, and that a full, written response would be sent to Mr Hodson.

(c) Maggie Riley

I wish to ask what action the South West LAC is taking to address the cost-of-living emergency as we head into the colder months, and in light of the catastrophic 'mini budget' measures set out last week, which will fail to deliver help where it is really needed.

I'm advised that Councillors Ruth Milsom and Minesh Parekh, Members for the Crookes and Crosspool Ward, have submitted a letter to the Chair of the LAC requesting a review of the community spending plan, and I support that request. In the context of spiralling inflation and likely hugely increased demand for services to mitigate the worst effects of the new PM and Chancellor's punitive policies for working people, it is surely untenable to continue with a plan now overtaken by an ever-worsening public sector financial situation. I ask that the Chair of South West LAC initiates an urgent review to ensure that the allocated £100k budget is focused on genuinely essential public services of benefit to a majority of citizens, and is not dissipated inappropriately across 'nice to have' or peripheral projects.

- 5.2 The Committee received the following questions from members of the public, who had submitted the questions prior to the meeting, but were not present at the meeting:-

(a) Arline Kersey

Please could serious consideration be given to an emergency review of the spending plan contained in the Area Plan, to take account of the cost of living crisis. I believe this review should change priorities for spending to give all possible support to all residents in the south west area who are negatively impacted by the crisis, particularly with respect to rising energy and food costs.

(b) Matthew Killeya

Will the South West Local Area Committee consider an immediate pausing of its spending and commit to undertaking an emergency spending review, with a view to directing funding towards Community Hubs and other measures designed to help alleviate the cost of living crisis for local residents?

In response to the three questions above, the Chair stated that the present cost of living crisis was a great concern to everyone, and one which the Council's Strategy and Resources Policy Committee had identified as a key task to look at as part of its Work Programme. In addition to this, a cross-party group of Councillors, together with a Gold Command had been established to look at how the most vulnerable residents of the city could be helped. In terms of the work of the South West LAC, Councillor Sangar stated that the LAC Team had organised a residents' survey in September, 2021, to which a large number of responses had been received, and the LAC Community Plan had been drafted based on such responses, as well as the views of Council officers and Members of the LAC, and had been formally approved at the LAC's meeting in March,

2022. Councillor Sangar stated that updates on the Community Plan would be provided at future meetings of the LAC, in January and March, 2023, with a report of the LAC's spend being provided at the meeting in January, 2023.

- 5.3 Maggie Riley stated that whilst it may only be a relatively small amount of funding available, this would be important to those people who needed help.
- 5.4 Councillor Shaffaq Mohammed stated that the Committee would welcome public questions on this issue, and that such questions, together with the letter from Councillors Milsom and Parekh, should be referred to the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee for consideration. He believed that there was a need for a co-ordinated response to the cost of living crisis, and welcomed the establishment of the cross-party Member Group and Gold Command Group, highlighting the need for uniformity across the LAC area. Councillor Mohammed stressed that there were proposals in the LAC's Community Plan in terms of spend to address the cost of living crisis.
- 5.5 Julie Kitlowski (Totley Library) stated that there was an urgent need for someone to co-ordinate a programme in terms of identifying warm spaces in the city, which may not necessarily require any funding from the LAC's budget.
- 5.6 Councillor Manesh Parekh stressed that the present position represented a crisis, and that the Council could not simply rely on a city-wide response. He stated that the LAC had a budget, and a responsibility to help the most vulnerable in the area, and believed the Committee should undertake a review of its spending plans to date given that it was an emergency situation.
- 5.7 Councillor Ruth Milsom stated that simply referring the issue to the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee for consideration was not adequate, and that whilst she accepted that the LAC had agreed its anticipated expenditure for 2022/23, the cost of living crisis represented a major change, which should be reflected in terms of the LAC's spending priorities. She referred to the lack of clarity in terms of how many warm spaces could be supported in the Committee's area, and made reference to the fact that there were no obvious buildings in the Crookes and Crosspool Ward which could be used as such spaces. She considered that if the LAC was to proceed with the expenditure, as agreed in its Community Plan 2022/23, it could be too late to help those most in need. Councillor Milsom referred to the establishment of the Community Hubs in 2023/24, indicating that, given the urgency of the situation, this timescale needed to be brought forward.
- 5.8 Councillor Joe Otten stated that whilst he appreciated the urgency of the situation, he believed that there was a need for a clear steer with regard to the expectations of the LACs in dealing with the cost of living crisis. He made reference to the relatively small amount of funding available to the LAC, and highlighted that it was the role of the LAC to encourage the Council to work with the local community in terms of identifying those groups which, or individuals who, needed urgent assistance. He referred to the excellent work undertaken during the Covid-19 pandemic. Councillor Otten also welcomed bringing the timescale forward with regard to the establishment of the Community Hubs.

- 5.9 Councillor Huggan stated that if the LAC was to amend its spending plan at this stage, and focus on the cost of living crisis, this would create more work and difficulties for the LAC Team.
- 5.10 Councillor Colin Ross stated that the majority of the LAC's funding for 2022/23 had already been committed, and that, in the LAC's Community Plan, there were already plans to provide aid for the most vulnerable in the community. He added that a considerable amount of funding will be allocated to the Gold Command which was to be established to address the cost of living crisis.
- 5.11 The Chair summarised the discussion, indicating that (a) the letter from Councillors Ruth Milsom and Manesh Parekh be noted, (b) the LAC would look at how some of its allocated funding could be re-prioritised in order to help the most vulnerable in the community and (c) arrangements be made for full, written responses be sent to Maggie Riley, Arline Kersey and Matthew Killeya.

6. SOUTH WEST LOCAL AREA COMMUNITY PLAN 2022-23 - UPDATE

- 6.1 The Local Area Committee (LAC) received a presentation from Tania Bustamante (South West Local Area Committee Manager) on an update on the progress in respect of the South West Local Area Community Plan 2022/23.
- 6.2 Ms Bustamante reported on the spend under the three priority areas – Transport and Highways, Local Environment and Community and Neighbourhood, and referred to the grants available under the South West Area Ward Pots.
- 6.3 The Committee noted the information now reported as part of the presentation.

(NOTE: That, at the close of the meeting, Members of the Committee and members of the public had the opportunity of speaking to representatives of various Council Services and Council partners, at stands set up in the venue.)

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