

North Local Area Committee

Meeting held 26 September 2023

PRESENT: Councillors Alan Hooper (Chair), Penny Baker, Lewis Chinchen, Craig Gamble Pugh, Mike Levery, Janet Ridler, Ann Whitaker, Richard Williams and Alan Woodcock

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Vicky Priestley, Robert Reiss and Julie Grocutt.

2. EXCLUSIONS OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

2.1 There were no items of business identified where the public and press may be excluded from the meeting.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 There were no declarations of interest from Members of the Committee.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 The minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 27th June 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

5. UPDATE ON REFERRALS TO POLICY COMMITTEES

5.1 There had been no referrals to Policy Committees

6. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

6.1 The Committee received the following questions from Members of the Public prior to the meeting;

Question from Simon Ogden

*“Stocksbridge Town Deal Trails Project
Stocksbridge Town Deal Board has recently announced a decision to abandon a £2.75m project to construct the remaining missing links in the Upper Don Trail between Langsett and Wharncliffe, providing most of a safe, off-road active travel route linking Stocksbridge and Oughtibridge including the over 1,000 new homes being built in the valley. The project would also put Stocksbridge at the centre of a network of walking, cycling and horse-riding trails, helping to deliver its ambition to be the Outdoor Town in the Outdoor City.*

The Trails project has now apparently been replaced by a vague proposal to improve existing paths around the south side of Underbank Reservoir which does little for the wider connectivity or active travel. Although not explicit it appears that much of the funding is likely to be diverted to other projects. Yorkshire Water PLC is named as the only partner although their financial commitment is unclear and not secured.

The only published explanation given for this major change is a single reference to 'cost increases and other issues' with the original project. However, no Board papers have been posted showing any evidence of these, comparative business cases or cost benefit justification for the decision as would be the case for any Council project. Board meeting agendas and reports are not published in advance of meetings but several months after they take place, the most recent being May. Minutes are sparse on fact or detail. Alternate monthly meetings are classed as 'workshops' and not recorded at all. No dialogue has taken place with the Town Council or any other stakeholders other than Yorkshire Water PLC on the axing of the Trails project or the alternative. There has been no discussion of how to reduce costs or overcome other problems of the original approved Trails project. Although the Town Deal is an independent entity it is entirely serviced by City Council Officers, the Council is the Accountable Body for its funding and has two representatives on the Board. STD's own Terms of Reference commit it to following City Council procedures and standards of decision making. Will local members and the Council therefore as a matter of urgency take responsibility to ensure that

- a) All papers or reports justifying the decisions of the STD Board are immediately made available for public scrutiny as required by their own terms of reference.*
- b) Genuine public and stakeholder consultation is carried out by the Board prior to confirmation of any final decision on the Trails Project, as was promised in the Board's own minutes and their recent public statements.*
- c) Agendas, Minutes and supporting Reports for all Board Meetings, past and future, are published in full and in a timely and transparent manner in line with City Council practice and Nolan principles."*

In response Councillor Williams advised that following Mr Ogden's previous communication with him, he had referred the matter to the relevant Officer, and Kate Martin was looking into it. Councillor Chichen stated that she had also previously spoken to Mr Ogden and agreed that further clarity was needed.

Members raised concerns that this section of the trail was not progressing when other sections were, they were keen that the matter be followed up through the appropriate channels at the Council, who were the lead partner on the project.

6.2 *Question from Christopher and Elizabeth Birkby*

"We live at Laurel Cottage. Whilst the postal address is Woodside Lane, our vehicular access is along a long drive which runs parallel with Woodside Lane, about twenty yards apart, and exits into Norfolk Hill.

There is no public footpath on our side of the road and so the exit is straight into the highway. As with Woodside Lane, the sight lines to the right and left are

partially blocked, and we have to edge into Norfolk Hill in order to have a full view. The drive is shared with two other properties, Inglewood and Woodlands.

For many years we have had a sign at the end of the drive requesting motorists not to park opposite the drive. This has only been partially successful, and we are noticing that an increasing number of drivers are ignoring the sign and parking immediately opposite the entrance. Norfolk Hill is not a particularly wide carriageway and when vehicles are parked opposite the drive, it reduces the available carriageway to a little over one vehicle's width. This creates a potential hazard. Whilst over the years we have had some near misses, we have, fortunately, managed to avoid a collision with the traffic on Norfolk Hill.

We are bringing this to your attention because of:

** The increasing number of vehicles parked opposite the drive. Whilst this makes it difficult for us to get in and out of the drive, there is a real danger of a serious collision;*

** The increasing number of electric vehicles which we cannot hear. Given the partial visibility as we drive into Norfolk Hill, we have to rely on the sound of approaching vehicles. We can usually hear petrol and diesel engines but not, of course, electrically powered engines;*

** The number of vehicles driving down Norfolk Hill, often at speed, no more than two or three feet away from our exit. This is often prompted by the narrowed carriageway caused by vehicles parked opposite, but it causes a potential danger as we are obliged to ease out slowly in order to have full visibility up and down the road.*

Matters would be eased significantly if vehicles were prevented, in some way, from parking opposite the drive.

We should be grateful if you would bring this to the attention of the appropriate authority."

Members agreed that it would be appropriate to look at alternative measures, including signage for concealed driveways, and traffic calming. The matter would be raised with Highways by the LAC Manager and Mr and Mrs Birkby would be advised of the response.

- 6.3 The Committee received the following questions from Members of the Public at the meeting:

Question from Rachel Dyson

Ms Dyson expressed concerns about road safety on the A57 at Hollow Meadows following a recent accident.

Ward Councillors advised they would discuss this further with her after the meeting.

7. NORTH COMMUNITY PLAN

- 7.1 The report which recommended the approval of the draft North Community Plan was presented by David Luck, North Local Area Committee Manage, this included a presentation, which had been previously published with the agenda. The presentation gave background information on the area, outlined the LAC consultation responses and the priorities which had arisen from them.

Members welcomed the acknowledgement that there were some people who were struggling economically within areas which were otherwise considered to be affluent and that there was a wide array of different needs in the area.

- 7.2 **RESOLVED:** That the North Local Area Committee: -

- a) Approves the North Community Plan as a statement of the priorities of the area, subject to any amendments being agreed by Members at the meeting on 26th September 2023; and
- b) Authorises the Community Services Manager to produce a final version of the Community Plan document, incorporating any amendments approved by the LAC at its meeting of 26th September 2023, and to publish it on the webpages of the North Local Area Committee; and
- c) Notes that future LAC decisions relating to funding must fit with the priorities set out in the Community Plan and following engagement with the community.

7.3 Reasons for Decision

The proposal to approve the North LAC Community Plan is recommended on the basis that the Plan provides a clear framework in how the LAC will direct its resources to address key issues identified through community consultation.

7.4 Alternatives considered and rejected

A key element in establishing LACs is the principle that each LAC will develop a Community Plan. An alternative would have been to retain the previous plan but it is important to carry out fresh consultation and update plans to ensure they are an up to date summary of local issues and priorities. The proposed plan builds upon the previous plan agreed in March 2022 and the work that has taken place since it was adopted.

8. NORTH LAC BUDGET

- 8.1 The report which set out details of the spend in respect of the initial budget of £100,000 for 2022/23, described funding allocated to the LAC for 2023/4 and set out proposals for its allocation and expenditure for 2023/4, in line with the North LAC Plan, was presented by David Luck, North Local Area Committee Manager.

A presentation was delivered, which outlined that the budget would be divided into two funds, the “Greatest Need Fund” and the “Big Idea Fund”. Additionally, the North LAC had been allocated an additional £37,100 to address the Cost of Living. This was being divided between the CAB (Citizen’s Advice Bureau) advice line and a new North Cost of Living Fund.

- 8.2 **RESOLVED:** That the North Local Area Committee:

- a) Notes the expenditure against the £100,000 budget to address local priorities in the North LAC as detailed in the report and
- b) Agrees the use of the 2023/24 LAC budget of £25,000 per ward as described in the report and
- c) Agrees the use of the 2023/24 £37,100 LAC Cost of Living budget as described in the report namely that 50% of the North’s allocation (£18,550) is awarded as a grant to Citizens Advice Sheffield to support its advice line with the remaining 50% (£18,550 used to create a new North Cost of Living fund) and
- d) Authorises the Community Services Manager, in consultation with the Local Area Committee Chair, to finalise the eligibility criteria and make decisions, following engagement with the relevant Ward Members, on the award of the grant funds proposed of up to £5,000.

8.3 **Reasons for Decision**

The North LAC is asked to note the use of funding as per the previous decision of September 30th 2021 and agree further expenditure to address the identified local priorities.

8.4 **Alternatives considered and rejected**

This is in line with the previous decision of September 30th 2021 regarding expenditure below £5000, the North Community Plan agreed on March 9th 2022 and the proposed new North Community plan for 2023/24.

9. BRADFIELD PARISH COUNCIL UPDATE

- 9.1 Councillor Penny Baker gave a verbal update as follows:
- Crime had been increasing, in particular burglaries, aggravated burglaries and car theft. Rural property was particularly affected.
 - The Parish Council had purchased 5 automated Car Number Plate Recognition Cameras which would help the Police to trace any suspicious vehicle activity. These were in the process of being set up. Their locations would not be disclosed and they could be moved around.
 - The Police continued to work with local volunteer groups on crime reduction.
 - There had been a lot of events over the summer such as the Worrall Gala and Music Festival. Councillor Baker offered her thanks to all the volunteers who had been involved.

10. CITY GOALS

- 10.1 A presentation was delivered by Laurie Brennan, Head of Policy, Sheffield City Council. The presentation outlined the aim of developing a long-term plan for a thriving city economy and the engagement process which had been carried out to arrive at the draft goals.

Attendees split into groups to discuss this further, and the webcast was paused whilst this took place.

11. RACE EQUALITY COMMISSION

- 11.1 A presentation was delivered by Ed Sexton, Senior Equality and Engagement Officer, this discussed what steps were needed to achieve an anti-racist city, following the recommendations of the Race Equality Committee which had stated that "Race and racism remain significant throughout the life course of Sheffield citizens." The Council's response included the setting up of the race Equality Commission who had prioritised 6 areas, Business and Employment, Civic Life and Communities, Crime and Justice, Education, Health, and Sport and Culture.

Attendees split into groups to discuss what steps were needed to achieve an anti-racist city, and the webcast was paused while this took place.