

Strategy and Resources Policy Committee

Meeting held 18 October 2023

PRESENT: Councillors Tom Hunt (Chair), Fran Belbin (Deputy Chair),
Angela Argenzio, Dawn Dale, Douglas Johnson (Group Spokesperson),
Ben Miskell, Shaffaq Mohammed (Group Spokesperson), Zahira Naz,
Joe Otten, Richard Williams and Mike Levery (Substitute Member)
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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Martin Smith.

2. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

2.1 The public and press will be excluded from the meeting before discussion takes place on item 15 on the agenda on the grounds that, if the public and press were present during the transaction of such business, there would be a disclosure to them of exempt information as described in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 The minutes of the previous meetings held on 2 August 2023 were approved as a correct record.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

5.1 There were no public questions or petitions.

6. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

6.1 A schedule of questions to the Chair, submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16, and which contained written answers, was circulated. Supplementary questions, under the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 16.4, were asked and were answered by the Chair.

7. RETIREMENT OF STAFF

7.1 The Director of Policy and Democratic Engagement submitted a report on Council staff retirements.

7.2 (a) places on record its appreciation of the valuable services rendered to the City Council by the following staff in the Directorates below:-

<u>Name</u>	<u>Post</u>	<u>Years' Service</u>
<u>Children's Services</u>		
Dominic Batten	Child Protection Co-Ordinator	36
<u>City Futures</u>		
Lucy Bond	Area Team Leader	32
Shirley Adams-Johnson	School Crossing Patrol Supervisor	36
<u>Neighbourhood Services</u>		
Janice Bell	Neighbourhood Support Team Leader	20
Glyn Clewes	Facilities Manager	38
Charles Monkman	Investment Assistant	42

(b) extend to them its best wishes for the future and a long and happy retirement; and

(c) directs that an appropriate extract of the resolution now made, under the Common Seal of the Council, be forwarded to those staff with over 20 years' service.

8. WORK PROGRAMME

8.1 The Committee received a report containing the Committee's Work Programme for consideration and discussion. The aim of the Work Programme is to show all known, substantive agenda items for forthcoming meetings of the Committee, to enable this committee, other committees, officers, partners and the public to plan their work with and for the Committee. It was highlighted that this is a live document and Members input to it was invaluable.

8.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Strategy and Resources Policy Committee:-

(a) that the priority issues for the Committee, as agreed at the meeting on 28 June 2023, and presented at Appendix 1 be noted;

(b) that the Committee's work programme, as set out in Appendix 1 be agreed, including any additions and amendments identified in Part 1;

(c) that approval be given to the consideration of cross cutting issues as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report; and

(d) that the referrals from Council (petition and resolutions) detailed in Section 2 of the report be noted and the proposed responses set out be agreed

9. WHITE RIBBON PLAN AND NEW STRATEGY

- 9.1 The Director of Operational Services presented a report setting out the background to the White Ribbon campaign and the Council's involvement in the campaign to date.

The report sets out the Council's proposed Action Plan for activities to promote the national White Ribbon Campaign which aims to end violence against women and girls. The Action Plan will be submitted to the White Ribbon Campaign to secure the accreditation of Sheffield City Council as an organisation and confirm the whole Council commitment to taking action to end violence against women and girls

- 9.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Strategy and Resources Policy Committee approves the Council's White Ribbon Action Plan to be submitted to White Ribbon UK for the purposes of seeking White Ribbon accreditation.

9.3 Reasons for Decision

- 9.3.1 Both men and women can use violence in their families, relationships or in the community. All violence is unacceptable. But the behaviour that leads to male violence against women is a specifically gendered problem rooted in discrimination and prejudice. White Ribbon is trying to deal with this specific problem.

- 9.3.2
- Around 6000 people seek support from domestic abuse services in Sheffield each year, and around 90% of them are women.
 - The Independent Sexual Violence Advisor Service sees over 600 clients a year and 87% are women and girls.
 - There have been 19 deaths in Sheffield since 2011 that have met the criteria for a statutory Domestic Homicide Review (including suicides) – 16 of these were women and in 17 of these deaths the abuser was a man.

- 9.3.3 We know that much violence against women and girls is not reported or disclosed to agencies and sadly for some it is part of everyday life, something they just put up with. This could range from street harassment, or sexual harassment at work to rape. The problem does not stop with physical violence. It includes other forms of emotional violence and psychological – from sexist joking, to sexual harassment at work, to other domineering forms of behaviour. By remaining silent about these things, some men are allowed to poison our communities and working and learning environments.

9.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

- 9.4.1 White Ribbon is the only accreditation process focussing on violence against women and girls for local authorities. The alternatives were to do nothing or to develop our own framework.

- 9.4.2 Doing nothing is not an option given the increasing focus on ending violence against women and girls in recent years following high profile deaths, prominent agencies and organisations being found wanting in their responses, and scandals

involving public personas. Having already signed up to be a White Ribbon registered organisation, the Council needs to develop and deliver a plan to meet this commitment and become White Ribbon accredited.

- 9.4.3 Developing our own framework would be more resource intensive and less effective when there is a ready made campaign that is supported by many local authorities and other organisations across the country and internationally.

10. DELIVERY PLAN - URGENT PERFORMANCE CHALLENGES ANNUAL REPORT

- 10.1 The Chief Operating Officer submitted a report setting out an annual overview of the corporate performance framework and providing a corporate performance update concentrating on the period from Quarter 2 2022/23 to Quarter 1 2023/24. Progress towards key priorities defined as Urgent Performance Challenges in the Our Sheffield - Delivery Plan are reported alongside actions underway for each priority to sustain and improve performance.

- 10.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Strategy and Resources Policy Committee:-

(a) notes the performance overview of Sheffield City Council key performance priorities (Delivery Plan - Urgent Performance Challenges);

(b) agrees to continue to receive regular reports providing an overview of performance against the organisation's key priorities, describing performance challenges, interventions taken, and the results of changes made; and

(c) consider, and ask all other policy committees to consider, if issues raised in this performance report and identified in the Delivery Plan should have further scrutiny through the scheduling of time on the appropriate committee work programme.

10.3 Reasons for Decision

- 10.3.1 To ensure that Strategy and Resources Policy Committee contributes to the performance management process and drives improvement across the organisation.

10.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

- 10.4.1 There were no appropriate alternatives to consider in the course of the work described and the recommendations that are made.

11. CUSTOMER SERVICES IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE

- 11.1 The Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services submitted a report providing a Customer Services (Contact Centre) Improvement Plan update and to consider comments and suggestions for further improvement.

- 11.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Strategy and Resources Policy Committee:-

(a) notes the content of the Customer Services (Contact Centre) Improvement Plan update and the progress being made in respect of ongoing improvement; and

(b) notes that a corporate customer services strategy is in the process of being developed

11.3 **Reasons for Decision**

11.3.1 Customer Services continually seeks to be fully transparent about our performance and whether and how this is improving. This paper provides the opportunity for Strategy and Resources Policy Committee members to contribute their thoughts and ideas as we work to develop further plans to ensure continuous improvement of the service offered by the Customer Services Contact Centre.

11.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

11.4.1 Customer Services management are constantly developing and testing alternative approaches in seeking to improve our performance and the services we provide to our citizens. This is exemplified by the recent Contact Centre Improvement Workshop which will result in an action plan which highlights some potential alternative approaches.

12. **REINFORCED AUTOCLAVED AERATED CONCRETE (RAAC) IN COUNCIL BUILDINGS**

12.1 The Executive Director Neighbourhood Services presented a report outlining the Council's approach to the assessment of its buildings for Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) and the actions it will then take to mitigate those issues. The report describes a measured and prioritised programme of work to ensure that the most 'at risk' properties are assessed first. The work to assess educational establishments has already begun and work on the one school identified to contain RAAC has already been completed.

12.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Strategy and Resources Policy Committee:-

(a) notes the strategy to identify, assess and manage Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete in the Council's estate; and

(b) notes that the Council currently only has sufficient revenue funding for assessment surveys and must identify further funding for any necessary remedial work required.

12.3 **Reasons for Decision**

12.3.1 Work has already begun to assess the Council's properties in line with the above strategy. The Committee are therefore recommended to note and comment on this report.

12.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

12.4.1 Given the nature of the issue, no alternative options have been considered.

13. AGENCY STAFFING PROVISION

13.1 The Chief operating Officer submitted a report setting out the need for a continuous Agency Staffing Service and providing background on the current service. The report proposes the commission of an Agency Staffing Service from an external provider and explains why this service is needed and cannot be delivered in-house.

13.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Strategy and Resources Policy Committee approves the commissioning of the Agency Staffing Service from an external provider over a period of 5 years and for an estimated value of £65m, as set out in the report now submitted.

13.3 Reasons for Decision

13.3.1 To commission an external provider to provide the service for 5 years for an estimated value of £65m to:

- ensure continued access to an Agency Staffing Provision that supports the Councils service delivery requirements.
- minimise the risks that were identified during the consideration of alternative options.
- ensure statutory services are delivered and to avoid significant pressure placed on existing employees.

13.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

13.4.1 Provision of an In-house Service. The provision of an in-house service has been considered but due to the factors set out in the report, in particular paragraph 1.18 this option has been discounted.

13.4.2 Do Nothing. The option to do nothing would mean upon the expiry of the current contract on 31 March 2024 the Council would be unable to deliver a number of critical services impacting on the citizens of Sheffield

14. INVESTMENT ZONE - BUSINESS RATE RETENTION

14.1 The Executive Director City Futures submitted a report seeking approval to secure Business Rate Retention (BRR) status for a c150ha area of land running from the City Centre to Meadowhall containing a number of sites that have the potential to increase the business rate take above the existing level (the Baseline), as outlined in this report.

14.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Strategy and Resources Policy Committee:-

(a) approves the Council securing Business Rates Retention status in relation to the South Yorkshire Investment Zone (IZ), as set out in this report, noting the final details of the Business Rate Retention Area are to be agreed with the Director of

Finance and Commercial Services in consultation with the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council, and subject to officers agreeing the pooling of any business rate growth in accordance with the below delegation; and

(b) delegates authority to the Director of Finance and Commercial Services in consultation with the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council to agree the pooling of any business rate growth.

14.3 Reasons for Decision

14.3.1 The underlying benefit that this proposal brings is the potential to secure long term additional funding to deliver a programme of economic activity in Sheffield and South Yorkshire that will grow the economy for the benefit of residents and business.

14.3.2 Both capital and revenue investments will be made over the 25-year period once positive business rate returns are achieved over the Baseline.

14.3.3 Investments will be made that:

- Provide for local economic growth within Sheffield and the region.
- Support existing local strategies with a focus on growth.
- Support the priority sector (Advanced Manufacturing) within the Investment Zone.

14.3.4 Whilst the principles of the BRR scheme have been provided by Government there remain points of detail to agree with Government and SYMCA in their role as Accountable Body for the IZ. This includes finalising the precise layout of IZ boundary, the agreeing the methodology to calculate the Baseline, the content of the BRR Investment Strategy and any requirements for pooling growth at a South Yorkshire level. These points of detail are to be delegated to the Director of Finance and Commercial Services in consultation with the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council.

14.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

14.4.1 A do-nothing option would leave the Council no worse off in that it would continue to secure any business rate growth above existing levels within the identified area but at the current rate of 49%. This income would become part of the General Fund and can be used without any restriction imposed through the IZ BRR scheme. However, the IZ BRR enables 100% retention of the business rate growth and the areas of spend considered acceptable within the scheme provide considerable flexibility to support projects and activity that the Council would likely fund without having IZ BR status.

14.4.2 Consideration has been given to including a wider area within the IZ BRR however expansion is not likely to capture any additional growth areas other than those which will likely include significant residential development. Consequently, the growth of such areas will be limited and may indeed see a net reduction in business rate income which will negatively impact on the overall position in relation to the BRR Baseline.

Exclusion of the Public and Press

RESOLVED: That the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, if those persons were present, there would be a disclosure to them of exempt information as described in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

15. MAJOR EVENT OPPORTUNITY

15.1 The Executive Director City Futures presented a report on an event hosting opportunity and to gain approval for the financial and resource contribution required from the council to support the event.

15.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Strategy and Resources Policy Committee:-

(a) approves Sheffield as the host city for the event detailed in the report now submitted;

(b) supports Sheffield City Trust (SCT), as venue operators, to host the event;

(c) approves a grant to the named organisation towards the staging cost for the event (noting we are in discussion with SYMCA in respect of a contribution from them), as detailed in the report;

(d) delegates authority to the Director of Economy, Skills and Culture, in consultation with the Executive Director of City Futures and the Director of Finance and Commercial Services and the General Counsel to enter into any associated contracts or agreements with the named organisation; and

(e) delegates authority to the Director of Parks, Leisure and Libraries in consultation with the Director of Finance and Commercial Services and the General Counsel to enter into any associated contracts or agreements with the named organisation and Sheffield City Trust to enable the Event to be held at the venue now mentioned.

15.3 Reasons for Decision

15.3.1 Recommendations are made on the basis that that this Event provides a number of positive outcomes for the people and city of Sheffield as follows:

- provides opportunities to create inclusive events for Sheffield's communities to celebrate (civic pride/community engagement)
- will drive footfall and increase dwell time in the city in support of local businesses (economic benefit)
- showcases the profile of Sheffield as a major event hosting destination

15.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

15.4.1 The option not to host the Event was considered, however in the context of the

contributions set out in section 2, and subject to contractual agreements, it would feel like an opportunity missed for the City to not support this event.

- 15.4.2 A further option was considered to look to support the event in future years. However, we cannot guarantee that this opportunity would be presented to Sheffield again, furthermore we are aware that the named organisation have returned to host Cities, once a relationship has been established.

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