

Economic Development and Skills Policy Committee

Meeting held 8 November 2023

PRESENT: Councillors Martin Smith (Chair), Minesh Parekh (Deputy Chair), Henry Nottage (Group Spokesperson), Kurtis Crossland, Terry Fox, Brian Holmshaw, Abdul Khayum, Barbara Masters and Laura Moynahan

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 No apologies for absence were received.

2. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

2.1 It was noted that the appendices to item 11 on the agenda were not available to the public or press because they contained exempt information. If Members wished to discuss the information in the appendices, the Committee would ask the members of the public and press to kindly leave for that part of the meeting and the webcast would be paused.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 No declarations of interest were received.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 The minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 13th September, 2023 were approved as a correct record.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

5.1 No petitions or questions were received from members of the public.

6. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

6.1 No questions were received from Members.

7. WORK PROGRAMME

7.1 The Principal Democratic Services Officer presented the Work Programme and noted the referral from Council regarding Renewable Energy Projects.

7.2 Discussion took place around various items that could potential be included in future work programmes. These would be considered in more detail at the next work programme planning session.

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

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.

8. PRESENTATION ON MARKETING SHEFFIELD ACTIVITY

- 8.1 The committee received an update from the Service Manager on Marketing Sheffield Activity. The key theme was identified and Members were shown some of the marketing material which highlighted the brand consistency across Conference Sheffield, Business Sheffield, Invest Sheffield and Marketing Sheffield.

Examples were provided of successful campaigns, such as The University City and Look Up (an augmented reality city tour) and also how exposure created by Sheffield, as a destination, featuring in other publications had been maximised to achieve optimum benefit.

It was noted that conferences had been successful in 2022. STEAM data gathered from stakeholders indicated that visitor numbers were still lower than in 2019, pre-pandemic, but that their spend was only very slightly lower. It was acknowledged that the cost of living crisis had impacted numbers.

Positive media stories about the city were shared with the committee and highlighted as publicity that incurred no cost to the authority. Statistics from the Welcome to Sheffield website were provided, demonstrating a good level of engagement with this useful resource for visitors to the City.

It was concluded that the media campaigns, events, brand development, Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) and Destination Management Plan (DMP) all combined together to attract more visitors, deliver for events and conferences and stimulate more local businesses in line with the core strategy for growth.

9. DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

- 9.1.1 Members considered a report of the Executive Director, City Futures seeking approval for Sheffield City Council to adopt the Sheffield Destination Management Plan (with Marketing Sheffield as lead) as the official framework to continue growth around Sheffield's visitor economy and perceptions of place.
- 9.1.2 The Service Manager, Marketing Sheffield outlined the aims and objectives of the Plan. Questions were asked by Members about heritage considerations within the Plan and it was acknowledged that the Council's Destination Management Plan, its Culture Strategy and its Heritage Strategy need to align and talk to each other and further work would be carried out in this area.

9.1.3 It was highlighted that the team was working hard on bringing the Hospitality Industry together to facilitate enablement. The ambition was for more private sector involvement in the Local Visitor Economy Partnership in the form of a stakeholder group. This would help to drive the programme forward.

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

- adopts the Destination Management Plan for Sheffield (to be led by Marketing Sheffield) as the framework to inform decisions within the lifetime of the DMP around the visitor economy (and those that may impact on the visitor economy).

9.3 **Reasons for Decision**

- 9.3.1
- It provides an official framework around which we will develop strategic partnerships and cohesive planning to continue growth around the city's visitor economy and positive perceptions of place.
 - It provides a framework to inform all future decisions around the visitor economy (and those that may impact on the visitor economy)
 - It provides a plan to inform some of the council's other plans in this space eg culture, events and city brand.
 - It allows Marketing Sheffield to retrospectively meet the criteria for Local Visitor Economy Partnership status with Visit Britain
 - It ensures Sheffield has its own robust plan to dovetail into the South Yorkshire Destination Management Plan (being led by the SYLVEP and SYMCA)
 - It acts as a springboard for increased stakeholder engagement in our visitor economy plans.
 - It enables us to take longer term decisions around the future of the visitor economy.
 - It is another step towards assessing future needs within the current Marketing Sheffield structure (and addressing the financial and capacity challenges)

9.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

9.4.1 Sheffield City Council could choose not to adopt a longer-term destination management plan which would likely result in our LVEP accreditation being rescinded due to the lack of a wider south yorkshire destination management plan. Sheffield would then lose its seat at the table within the new national framework. Sheffield will not be included in the national agenda for tourism impacting both national and domestic marketing opportunities. This would have a detrimental impact on working across the South Yorkshire geographical area leaving the region with no interface with Visit England.

9.4.2 Sheffield City Council could choose not to adopt a longer-term Destination Management Plan and deliver short term campaign style activity. This would likely stifle the opportunities for growth in the visitor economy through lack of a clear vision. It would reduce the likelihood of significant private sector engagement through what could be perceived as a lack of ambition or credibility. Other key

strategies would suffer without a holistic view of how Sheffield can grow its visitor economy.

10. CITY MAJOR EVENTS PLAN

- 10.1.1 Members considered a report of the Executive Director, City Futures seeking approval for the development of a new major events plan.
- 10.1.2 The Director of Economy, Skills and Culture gave an overview of the current events programme, its economic impact, and its brand and reputational benefits. The fragmented budgets for events were noted, as well as resource pressures faced by the team. The committee heard that more could be done to maximise investment and have a greater impact such as the creation of an events commissioning function and financial backing for event bids.
- 10.1.3 It was moved by Cllr Smith and seconded by Cllr Moynahan, as an amendment, that the recommendations submitted be amended by the addition of a recommendation with the wording “Request that officers examine and report back on the potential for enhancing and developing the Major Events Plan, what costs would be associated with this, and how it this could be delivered”.

The amendment was put to the vote and carried.

(NOTE: The result of the vote was FOR – 9 Members; AGAINST – 0 Members; ABSTENTIONS – 0 Members.)

10.2 RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Economic Development and Skills Policy Committee:-

1. Note the current events programme (including the wider economic impact of events in Sheffield) and sets out the need for a proactive major events plan that contributes to the Council’s strategic aims, including Destination Management Plan and the Culture Strategy set out in this report
2. Note the interim position on how events are commissioned and how they are funded.
3. Approve the development of a new major events plan.
4. Note that future updates and decisions will be brought back to this committee as required.
5. Request that officers examine and report back on the potential for enhancing and developing the Major Events Plan, what costs would be associated with this, and how it this could be delivered.

10.3 Reasons for Decision

- 10.3.1 With events becoming central to many of our city strategies it is necessary and timely to;
- Note the impact of the current major events programme
 - Note the challenges versus our aspirations in this space
 - Consider the opportunities for us to ‘do events better’
 - Support the considered interim position on principles of which events we support and how we finance them as compiled by the City Events Group

led by Kate Martin Support/Commission a fully costed and resourced events plan to inform our future work on events.

10.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

- 10.4.1 Continuing as we are would likely see costs spiralling, opportunities needing short term emergency budgets and other longer term opportunities to capitalise on events lost.

We could focus only on 'no cost events' but this would remove Sheffield's ability to bid for significant national and international events.

11. **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SKILLS BUDGET REPORT: OPTIONS FOR 2024/25 BUDGET**

- 11.1.1 Members considered a report of the Executive Director City Futures setting out new financial pressures facing the Economic Development and Skills Committee in 2024/25, and budget options including savings, fees, grant and other income available to the council to offset these pressures.

- 11.1.2 During consideration of this item of business, and in order for Members of the Committee to ask questions of the report, it was

RESOLVED: That the public and press be excluded from the meeting and the webcast be paused before further discussion takes place 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.

The meeting was re-opened to the public and press, and the webcast was recommenced, prior to the decision being taken by the Committee

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

1. Note the recommendation approved at the Strategy and Resources Committee in September that "Policy Committees will be asked to develop savings / additional income options that cover their service pressures" and to "require Policy Committees to report at their meetings in November on how they can balance their budgets."
2. Note the new financial pressures and risks within the Economic Development and Skills Committee
3. Note the options proposed to mitigate these pressures and that they will be presented to the Strategy and Resources Committee as part of the Council's budget for 2024/25
4. Note the financial risks beyond March 2025 with the end of the Shared Prosperity Fund, and agree to work with officers in coming months on plans to mitigate these risks where possible.

11.3 **Reasons for Decision**

- 11.3.1 We have sought to strike a balance between meeting our budget challenges in Committee and still delivering as much impact as possible for Sheffield's economy and residents. Removal of services and budgets would dramatically reduce the city's ability to bid for and win external funding, which maximises the Council's investment. This is the preferred option as it allows our committee to contribute significantly to the Council's budget position, without stopping important economic delivery services. Options in this report and further ideas may be considered by Strategy and Resources Committee with the EDS Committee, as the range of options across all Committees are considered together.

In making this recommendation, 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.

11.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

11.4.1 **Do not make any budget savings**

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

11.4.2 **Deliver Balanced Budget**

Make further savings by accepting the options, currently rejected, by the Committee to stop / reduce non statutory services.