



Strategy and Resources Meeting

Tuesday 21st June 2022

The Trinity Centre

7:00pm

Present:

Cllrs S Ward (Chairman), Cairns, Cooper, Mackey, Parkin, Pears and Pocock

In Attendance:

Olive O'Sullivan – Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Mary Watkins – Finance Manager

There were no members of the public and one member of the press present.

1 Election of Deputy Chairman

Resolved that Cllr Cooper be the Deputy Chairman for Strategy and Resources Committee.

2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Cllr Raut were reported.

Resolved to accept the apologies.

3 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

4 Exclusion of the Press and Public

Resolved to exclude members of the public and press during discussion of item 18 under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s3.

5 Minutes of the Previous Meetings

In response to questions from Cllr Pears the CEO confirmed that a formal response from Birmingham City Council (BCC) on the LUC report had not yet been received but there had been discussions with the Assistant Director and that a new Cabinet member had now been appointed so it was hoped this would be taken forward soon. The CEO also reported that the investment proposed with Blackrock had a risk indicator of one – low risk/low reward and fits with the Town Council's Investment Policy. The fund does not invest in potentially risky areas, in terms of the risk of reputational damage and fund exposure does not include Eastern Europe.

Cllr Cooper asked for an update on the detailed cost estimate of allotment sites, the CEO confirmed that Felton had been commissioned and the work would be started shortly.

Resolved to confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee held on 13th April 2022.

6 Matters Arising



The CEO reported discussions with senior officers at BCC regarding the formal request for the asset transfer of Hill Hook Nature Reserve and that while a formal response had yet to be received, in principle, they did not see why this could not happen.

There was no progress to report on the legal transfer of Vesey Gardens and Sutton Coldfield Allotment sites and the CEO asked for Committee's thoughts on approaching BCC to propose that the Town Council take over management of these assets, before the legal transfer takes place. The CEO also reported that there was a meeting scheduled with the Allotment Associations on 2nd July where the main agenda item would be to discuss the draft Management Agreement.

Cllr Pears asked if additional assets identified for potential transfer could be added to the request with BCC. Cllr Ward responded that there would be sessions with members from September to discuss refreshing the Strategic Plan and that requests for Devolution Deal phase two could form part of these discussions.

Cllr S Ward stated that he had requested a Leaders meeting to discuss the transfer of Vesey Gardens and the Allotments, Cllr Pocock stated that transfer of the assets had been politically agreed and that the legal transfer would be best addressed by the Leader or by the Chief Executive (CE) of BCC. The CEO responded that she would discuss this with the CE and that an invite would be extended to the CE to attend a Full Council meeting once the sessions on the Strategic Plan and Phase 2 of the Devo deal had taken place.

7 Questions from Members

No questions received.

8 Minutes of Town Centre Regeneration Partnership

Cllr Pocock asked about the next steps of the Sutton Coldfield Gateway and timeline. The CEO responded that she was pleased to report that BCC has commissioned work for the Outline Business Case (OBC) and that it is likely that results from this would be available by the end of the year which would also set out timescales for the next phases of the work.

Cllr Pocock asked when the Town Centre Regeneration Partnership Working Group would be meeting, the CEO confirmed that she would ask Jan Rowley, Regeneration Programme Director to arrange a briefing.

In response to a question from Cllr Cairns, Cllr Ward confirmed that the NHS would be invited around the table for next phases as appropriate.

Cllr Ward reported that the purchase of Newhall Walk retail park by Birmingham City Council was positive news, and that Birmingham City Council would have options to relocate businesses within Sutton Coldfield should the Red Rose undergo redevelopment.

Resolved to note the minutes from the Town Centre Regeneration Partnership held 27th May 2022.

9 Town Centre Environmental Improvement Programme

Cllr Ward presented the report, stating it was a positive opportunity to deliver short term measures as part of the overall town centre regeneration plan.

Cllr Pocock spoke in support of the proposal and said that he was keen to see consultation with public and users of the town centre to come up with creative ideas to co-design the space.



Cllr Parkin was in support of improving the welcome into the town from the railway station. He also asked that the reasons why people come to Sutton Coldfield be addressed and that work be carried out in tandem with the BID.

Resolved to approve the principle of a Town Centre Environmental Improvements Programme and consider, at a future meeting, phase one of the Programme which will focus on Sutton Gateway/Station Quarter.

Cllr Ward suggested that the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds could be used towards delivery of the Town Centre Environmental Improvements Programme. Cllr Pocock stated that Committee had previously agreed that Ward Councillors would bring proposals to Committee for consideration. Several Councillors spoke in support of using CIL funds for the Town Centre Improvement Programme. It was agreed that all Councillors would be written to asking them to submit any alternative proposals for use of Ward funds to the CEO by 30th June 2022.

10 Town Ranger Service

Cllr Ward reported that the proposal was for the Town Ranger Service to continue for another three years “as is” and that he was keen to expand the service when there was more devolution and on completion of asset transfers.

Several Councillors spoke in support of exploring extending the remit of the Town Rangers to include functions that would require permission from BCC.

Cllr Mackey asked if the Town Council could approach Kier to see if they would be supportive of the Town Rangers carrying out some additional tasks, working within their guidelines. He noted that Kier is currently renegotiating their contract and the timing would be appropriate.

Cllr Pocock supported the suggestions and asked that a technical report behind the figures reported in 3.3 and 3.4 of the report be made available alongside further information on the operating model.

In response to a question on who can report possible jobs for the Town Rangers, the CEO confirmed that anyone can report a job via email to townrangers@suttoncoldfieldtowncouncil.gov.uk and that she would check the town council website to ensure that this information was available.

The CEO reported that formal Highway approval for the Town Rangers to carry out tasks on pavements etc had not been received but there was an informal agreement that is working well. The CEO stated that we could go back to BCC between now and August to explore what additional tasks could be put into the specification. There is possible scope in the BCC grounds maintenance contract for the Town Rangers to provide additionality and a willingness from BCC senior officers to support this.

Cllr Ward summed up that the new contract could include additional services and that Officers have discussions with BCC in advance of procurement.

Resolved to approve the approach to contract years three to five of the Town Ranger service on the basis outlined in the report and authorise Officers to progress the necessary actions.

11 West Midlands Cycle Hire Scheme

Cllr Parkin asked if the views of the friends of groups and interested parties at Rectory Park and Newhall Valley had been approached for their view on installing stations at these locations. The CEO confirmed that she attended monthly performance meetings with Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) and BCC and that the usage of each station is reviewed. TfWM and BCC have



started the process of looking at these locations and she would ensure that the friends of groups are approached about the proposals. The usage data does indicate that current users of the scheme do so for leisure purposes and that relocating low usage stations in or near parks would increase usage.

In response to a question from Cllr Parkin requesting that bikes be situated by each entrance to Sutton Park, the CEO advised that there was resistance from BCC to locate the stations inside the Park but that locations close to the gates could be explored. Suggested locations were the junction of Bellwell Lane and Four Oaks Road and Thornhill Road, the CEO agreed to raise these as possible locations.

Cllr Mackey asked if the eBikes in the scheme were performing well, the CEO reported that hire of eBikes was not as popular as anticipated and that the Town Council's social media channels would be used to make residents aware that they are available.

In response to a question from Cllr Pocock on the financial contribution to the scheme for this financial year, the CEO confirmed that the Town Council's contribution was reduced based on the income generated in the first year of the scheme.

Cllr Pears talked about the Sustrans funded cycle paths through Rectory Park and Newhall Valley Park and a cycle hire station would be a natural fit for these locations.

Resolved to note the progress report for the cycle hire scheme to date and approve the next steps as detailed in the report.

12 Risk Review

A few typographical errors were identified and have now been corrected on the Risk Register ([attached](#)).

Resolved to approve the Risk Management Policy.

Resolved to note the Risk Register.

13 Members Allowances

The CEO reported that the Members Allowances agreed in 2018 was set for electoral cycle and that the Independent Remuneration Panel will meet in October to review the level of allowance for the current municipal cycle. The CEO asked Committee to consider recommending paying allowances at the current level as these could be adjusted at the end of the year following the review.

Resolved to recommend to Full Council that payment of members allowances for 2022/23 be based on the rate previously approved and that the rate be reviewed for the current municipal cycle.

14 Community Infrastructure Levy

Resolved to note the report.

15 Strategic Plan Progress report

In response to a question on member training, the CEO confirmed that there would be training around governance and process, to be delivered by BCC and this would be communicated to members when dates had been agreed. The CEO confirmed that there would be some Allotment Policy training delivered to the Allotments Sub-Committee by Warwickshire Association of Local Councils (WALC) next week.



Cllr Parkin asked for the status of Devolution and Asset Transfers to be built into future Progress Reports.

Resolved to note the report.

16 Bank Reconciliations

Resolved to note the bank reconciliations for April and May 2022.

17 Date of the Next Meeting

20th September 2022 at the Trinity Centre.

8:16pm – end of public session

18 Exclusion of the Press and Public

a) Communications

Resolved that the CEO explore discussions with agencies that could be commissioned to support the Town Council's Communications on Town Centre Regeneration.

Resolved that the CEO explore options for freelance support to assist with routine day-to-day Communications and Town Council newsletters.

b) Consultants working with the Town Council

Resolved to recommend to Full Council that ASkills Ltd provide consultancy services for the Town Council, as needed, for the next 12 months.

The meeting ended as 8:35pm