

SCR - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON:

THURSDAY, 29 OCTOBER 2020 AT 2.00 PM

ONLINE MEETING VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS



Present:

Councillor Colin Ross (Chair)	Sheffield City Council
Councillor Allan Jones	Doncaster MBC
Councillor Penny Baker	Sheffield City Council
Councillor Jeff Ennis	Barnsley MBC
Councillor Brian Steele	Rotherham MBC
Councillor Duncan Anderson (Reserve)	Doncaster MBC
Councillor Julie Grocutt (Reserve)	Sheffield City Council
Councillor Adam Hurst (Reserve)	Sheffield City Council
Councillor Phillip Lofts	Barnsley MBC

Officers in Attendance:

Dr Ruth Adams	Deputy Chief Executive	MCA Executive Team
Steve Davenport	Principal Solicitor & Monitoring Officer	MCA Executive Team
Christine Marriott	Statutory Scrutiny Officer	MCA Executive Team
Gillian Richards		
Stephen Batey	Head of Mayor's Office	SCR Mayor's Office
Colin Blackburn	Assistant Director - Housing, Infrastructure and Planning	MCA Executive Team
Jonathan Guest	Senior Economic Policy Manager	MCA Executive Team
Karl Sample	Senior Programme Manager	MCA Executive Team
Pete Zanzottera	Active Travel Project Director	MCA Executive Team

Apologies:

Councillor Austen White	Doncaster MBC
Councillor Dawn Dale	Sheffield City Council
Councillor Peter Rippon	Sheffield City Council
Dr Dave Smith	SCR Executive Team
Gareth Sutton	SCR Executive Team
Mark Lynam	SCR Executive Team

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted as above.

The Chair thanked the substitute members for their attendance and welcomed Cllr Lofts to his first meeting of the Committee.

2. **Urgent Items/Announcements**

None.

3. **Items to be Considered in the Absence of Public and Press**

None.

4. **Declarations of Interest by any Members**

None.

5. **Reports from and Questions by Members**

None.

6. **Questions from Members of the Public**

None.

7. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting Held on 24 September 2020**

Cllr Ennis suggested that a letter be sent to Cllr Ken Richardson, who had been replaced on the Committee by Cllr Lofts, thanking him for all his work on the Committee. This was agreed.

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2020 be agreed as a true record.

8. **Matters Arising**

Cllr Jones stated he felt that the question as to the role of the Traffic Commissioner in the process of implementing the recommendations of the Bus Review had not been answered clearly. The Chair agreed stating that the Committee was not clear on exactly what the demarcation of roles and responsibilities were between the various organisations in the process and asked for clarity of the roles of the MCA, SYPTTE and the Traffic Commissioner.

ACTION: That a written response from the relevant officer as to the role of the MCA, SYPTTE and Traffic Commissioner within the process of implementing the recommendations of the Bus Review be circulated to members of the Committee.

Cllr Jones expressed concerns regarding the governance of the process and the Committee's role within this. It was agreed that his concerns would be addressed in the written response requested above.

C Marriott updated members with regard to actions from the previous meeting.

S Edwards was liaising with Operators and Local Authorities via the Bus Partnership on points raised by Cllr White and the enforcement of bus lanes and would provide an update at some point in the future.

He had also made contact with Cllr Baker to invite her to meet to discuss the issues raised around communications.

M Lynam would update the Committee with regard to the environmental issues raised by Cllr Steele after the meeting of the Bus Improvement Board later in the week.

9. **Forward Plan of Key Decisions**

The Forward Plan of Key Decisions was provided for information and to give Members the opportunity to ask questions.

No questions were raised by Members.

10. **Evaluating Outcomes and Value for Money from Active Travel Projects**

A report was considered which provided an overview of the current evaluation of value for money appraisal for active travel work and the work to procure an evaluation and monitoring package in autumn 2020.

Members were reminded that on 9 May 2020 the first announcement of the Emergency Active Travel (EAT) fund was made. This was followed by two tranches of funding for an overall allocation of £7.1m. Tranche 1 was for quick implementation of temporary and trial schemes to be implemented by the end of September 2020. This bid was not subject to a value for money (VfM) assessment due to the timescales involved. The Tranche 2 bid was submitted on 9 August 2020 but Members noted that the announcement had been delayed. This bid was subject to a VfM assessment, details of the bid were not public, but the information would be shared with the Committee outside the meeting.

Action: P Zanzottera to circulate details of the Tranche 2 bid to Committee members.

The Committee was informed that Active Travel schemes were appraised through a DfT mechanism – Active Modes Appraisal Toolkit (AMAT). This was a spreadsheet-based tool that relied on a limited number of inputs about a scheme, details of which were contained within the report.

Members noted that a key issue for all schemes going through AMAT was to have an accurate estimate of current users and an uplift in numbers based on a clear precedent.

In nearly all cases in South Yorkshire there was very little data on cycling numbers and almost no data on walking. Members noted that although cordon counts and other manual counts gave some numbers, these often under-represented the numbers of active travellers. Also, because very few high-quality schemes had been built and in place for long enough, it was difficult to

have clear precedents for the uplift in numbers.

The MCA Executive was moving to procure a monitoring and evaluation package for Active Travel which would be used for the remainder of the financial year to collect data and best practice. In answer to a question from Cllr Anderson it was noted that this package would also allow the health and wellbeing benefits of walking and cycling to be measured

Members noted that the active travel design guidelines adopted by the MCA included the inclusion of automatic cycle counters in any new cycle track longer than 500m. The monitoring and evaluation report would be relied on to help advise how the number of active travellers could be more accurately captured and create a series of local precedents that could be used for future schemes.

Cllr Lofts questioned whether there were any plans to retro-fit cycle counters or any money available for other counting methods such as video technology.

P Zanzottera informed Members that there was no finance earmarked for this at present but it could be a recommendation in the future. Retro-fitting would be difficult as it would involve digging up the cycle path but other technologies could be looked into.

The Committee was informed that in working with TfGM their Programme Entry Appraisal Tool (PEAT) had been identified as something that could add value to the way active travel schemes were assessed. Sustrans were also working with the MCA Executive to build a pipeline of active travel schemes that could be used for further bidding opportunities. The intention was to use a similar model to PEAT to have a set of schemes with Strategic Outline Business Cases so the VfM estimates could be made at an early stage.

The Committee discussed the costs of assessing VfM, the collection of cyclist and pedestrian data including cordon counts, tube counters and the use of video technology and how benefits to the environment and health and wellbeing were measured.

Concerns were expressed with the issue of VfM and how improvements were measured. The Committee felt that £7.1m was a substantial amount of public money and there was a need for evidence of the benefits realised and measurable outcomes for the investment of this money.

Cllr Grocutt questioned how much it would cost to develop a new VfM monitoring system.

P Zanzottera replied that overall, in terms of building the pipeline, this was being done at zero cost. There was a programme called the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and the government had funded consultants to help with the plan. One of the consultants was Sustrans who were assisting with the development of the pipeline until March 2021. The monitoring and evaluation package, which was out to tender, had an indicative value of £40,000. Part of this was to develop programme level reporting to assist with annual reporting against progress on the Active Travel Implementation Plan.

The Chair suggested a recommendation that every effort was made to ensure

that baseline data for walking and cycling was obtained. This was agreed.

RESOLVED – That the Committee:

- i) Note the contents of the report.
- ii) **RECOMMENDS that every effort is made to collate baseline data for walking and cycling so that value for money could be ascertained.**

11. **Climate Emergency - Progress to date**

A report was submitted which provided an update on the progress made since the Climate Emergency declaration in November 2019 and provided responses to specific questions raised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee was informed that a Climate Response Framework had been developed and presented to the MCA Board in January 2020. The Framework provided a high-level approach for delivering on the declaration and include the 'Net Zero Target' date of 2040.

It was noted that an integrated approach was required to meet the target with three key areas which were transport, industry and commerce and housing, each of which were responsible for approximately a third of emissions.

In July 2020 Urban Foresight had been commissioned to help prepare the Net Zero Programme which prioritised actions and the phasing of those actions and the interdependencies needed to maximise impact.

An Action Plan of projects had been developed and part of the work had been to understand any barriers and obstacles that Local Authorities and other partners across the region faced to deliver against the projects and the Framework.

The main barriers were found to be capacity, particularly within Local Authorities, finance and a lack of knowledge as to what was available.

Potential projects would fit within the five categories of the SCR Climate Response Framework which were:

- Leadership
- Carbon Reduction
- Carbon Capture
- Climate Adaptation
- Climate Economy

K Sample explained how each element fitted into the Framework.

The projects had been prioritised using a framework developed by Urban Foresight.

The Committee discussed:

- How the Net Zero Programme linked in with Local Authorities who and all set their own targets to get there and what help and support was available.
- The number of charging points for electric vehicles, low emission public transport targets, the use of hydrogen and other alternative fuels and supporting local innovative companies in these areas.
- How the SCR response to the Climate Emergency would integrate with Central Government's policies and strategies.
- The need to engage the public in the process and how they could be actively involved.
- The progress made in the 11 months since the Climate Emergency declaration.
- The support available for low income families.
- The importance of the prospectus for housing and energy efficiency; and
- Quick wins, for example early deliverable brownfield housing schemes and active travel programmes.

The Chair asked how many electric vehicle charging points the £2.6m mentioned in the report would deliver. K Sample informed the Committee that there would be 229 across South Yorkshire of which 197 would be 'fast' and the remainder 'rapid'.

Cllr Ennis stressed the importance of public involvement and commented that the public should be actively encouraged to submit ideas to achieve the net zero target, particularly following the statement made by Mayor Jarvis at the January MCA meeting. The SCR needed to be a listening forum as well as a delivery forum.

Cllr Ross referred to the report and noted that the MCA had declared a climate emergency in November 2019 which had recognised the need for urgent action.

He noted that during the 11 months since then a Climate Response Framework had been developed, a consultancy firm had been appointed, the Net Zero Partnership Board had only met twice, and the Net Zero Programme was still in draft form. He asked for assurance that the climate emergency was really being taken as urgent action.

C Blackburn replied that there was work going on behind the scenes to secure funding, develop programmes, to deliver programmes and to support businesses in their decarbonisation programmes. These included:

- Secured significant investment for public transport and active travel, all of which contributed to the climate agenda.
- Work was being progressed with LA officers on the Green Homes grant.
- A prospectus for the £40m brownfield housing fund which set out what was hoped to be achieved in new housing had been recently been signed off by the Housing and Infrastructure Board.
- Engagement with industries and business around supporting their achievements e.g. bids for the Clean Steel Fund; and
- Looking at MCA stock to see how energy efficiency and decarbonisation could be achieved.

It was noted that the draft Net Zero Programme would be received the following day giving MCA officers two weeks to make comments before the final draft was produced at the end of November.

At its first meeting the Net Zero Programme Board had a scoping session to understand the role of the Board. At the second meeting the Board had begun looking at Programme and had received a presentation on the Programme from the consultants.

Cllr Jones commented that there was a lot of interest in brownfield housing and requested a link to the prospectus for this.

The Chair suggested that in future all reports should include a Climate Change Impact Assessment. This was agreed.

RESOLVED – That the Committee:

- i) Note the progress in delivering the Net Zero agenda.
- ii) **RECOMMENDS that all future SCR reports contain a Climate Change Impact Assessment which would be carried out when assessing all programmes and projects.**

12. **Recovery Action Plan - update**

A report was submitted which considered how increasing Covid-19 restrictions being introduced at a national level and the developments in relation to the Brexit deal were affecting the SCR Economic Recovery Plan.

Members were informed that a Renewal Action Plan (RAP) had been developed which outlined the activities for economic development to respond to the Covid-19 situation.

Implementation plans were in development to cover the next 12 to 18 months and were focused primarily on immediate relief to people, employers and places.

Another focus was securing the funds to deliver the activities contained within the RAP.

The paper also covered the uncertainties caused by Brexit. Officers were monitoring any developments in negotiations to determine the future EU UK trade relationships and the possible impacts on SCR.

Members noted that since the paper was written, South Yorkshire had moved from Tier 2 to Tier 3 but at this stage there were no plans to amend the RAP.

The Committee discussed:

- Concerns around the leisure, retail and recreation industries and the further support that would be needed.

- The funding situation and the gap between what was available and what was needed. **The Committee requested a briefing paper on this.**
- Replacing 'non-secure' jobs that had been lost with more secure, well paid jobs with the opportunity for progression, for example within the 'green' sector.
- The preparations for Brexit. It was noted that at the Audit Committee earlier that day it had been agreed to prepare a briefing paper on Brexit preparations, **this would be shared with the O&S Committee.**
- The importance of the availability of data on exports to the EU to help businesses with their preparations for Brexit. It was noted that resources were being put in to targeting businesses which may need assistance.

With regard to the Tier 3 funding of £41.3m, the Committee was informed that £30m would be deployed to support businesses that remained open and did not qualify for support from Central Government and the remaining £11.3m was earmarked for local track and trace capacity boosting and other public health related issues.

It was suggested to invite Mayor Jarvis to the next meeting of the Committee to explain the latest position on Covid-19 and the funding situation.

Members of the Committee felt that it was important that they were kept abreast of financial allocations and implications even in advance of the next meeting via an interim briefing paper.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

The Chair thanked Members, substitute Members and officers for their contribution to the meeting.

The next scheduled meeting of the Committee would be on Thursday 28th January 2021 at 2pm.