

SCRUTINY BOARD (STRATEGY AND RESOURCES)

MONDAY, 17TH JULY, 2023

PRESENT: Councillor A Khan in the Chair

Councillors G Almass, H Bithell, S Burke,
D Chapman, B Flynn, T Hinchcliffe,
W Kidger, A Parnham, M Robinson and
E Thomson

15 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals.

16 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There was no exempt information on the agenda.

17 Late Items

There were no late items.

18 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations.

19 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

There were no apologies.

20 Minutes - 19 June 2023

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

21 Matters Arising

Minute 10 – Sources of Work

The work programme had been updated to reflect the discussion. A report on Attendance Management and Employee Mental Health would be brought to the September meeting.

Minute 11 – Performance Report

Members had received an update following the issues relating to the KPI on Education Health Care Plans. This will be considered by the Scrutiny Board

(Children & Families) as part of the inquiry in EHCPs and the Board would receive further updates as this work develops in 2023/24.

Minute 12 – Being Our Best – Our Organisation Plan for 2023 Onwards

Members had received information on the menopause toolkit.

Minute 13 – Work Programme

Budget action plans would be addressed in the 2022/23 Financial and Treasury Management Outturn Report which are considered later on this meeting agenda.

22 Leeds 2023 Progress Update

The report of the Chief Officer, Culture and Economy provided the Board with an update on the LEEDS 2023 Year of Culture.

The update focussed on the following:

- Programme structure
- Signature projects
- Partner projects
- Research and Evaluation
- Impact
- Beyond 2023
- Fundraising and sponsorship
- Consultation and engagement with Elected Members.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Eve Roodhouse, Chief Officer, Culture & Economy
- Karen Murgatroyd, Executive Manager – Leeds 2023
- Cllr Jonathan Pryor, Executive Member for Economy, Culture & Education
- Kully Thiari, Creative Director and CEO Leeds 2023
- Abigail Scott Paul, Director of External Relations Leeds 2023

The Board was given an overview of events and opportunities for involvement that had happened to date which included the Awakening Event at the outset of the year and signature events that had been held. Detail of upcoming and current events was also highlighted.

A presentation was delivered on Leeds 2023 Year of Culture. The following was highlighted:

- Data relating to impact and engagement – this was available on the Leeds 2023 website.

- Events and projects during ‘My Leeds Summer.’
- Engagement with schools and young people. Over 40% of schools had been involved so far and it was hoped to reach 75%.
- Volunteer involvement – volunteers had been recruited from across all wards and had worked with other organisations across the city.
- Media coverage – national and international.
- Digital reach and engagement – there had been a large number of online interactions.
- Evaluation so far and economic impact.

Thanks were expressed to all Members who had been involved and to the Leeds 2023 team for the success to date.

In response to comments and questions from the Board, discussion included the following:

- Updates to Community Committees – Members were asked to share details of events through their wider networks where possible.
- Members congratulated the Leeds 2023 team and in particular the Neighbourhood Hosts for their work in staging events and involvement at a local level,
- Leeds 2023 had been designed to help people, develop skills and drive ambition with young people playing a particularly big part as a result the full impact of this may not be seen for a number of years.
- Age profile data was being collected and members were interested in participation of over 60s in the year so far.
- The experience in Leeds would help to support other local authorities in West Yorkshire with culture related events, notably Bradford and Kirklees.
- There would be an economic legacy with increased spending this year but also future benefits of attracting business to the city with employment opportunities in the cultural sector.
- Information on a ward basis with regards to engagement, events and financial benefits was requested.
- The Inclusive Growth Strategy was currently being updated and culture would be included as an area that was prioritised for investment.
- There were cultural organisations coming to Leeds including a northern hub for the British Library, a national poetry centre and other arts organisations.
- Examples of partnership work with local organisations, neighbouring cities and partners in Europe.
- There would be increased work and targeting of schools that have not been involved yet and Members were ask for support where there may be gaps.
- There had been support from WYCA through financial investment of £1.5m to support a specific project. The West Yorkshire Mayor had also been supportive of the program.
- There had been significantly less funding than cities who had done a year of culture under the European or UK program, Leeds has been

delivering the programme without the support of a wider European or UK city of culture banner. Given this context and the wider challenges posed by the pandemic and now increased cost of living pressures, the funding envelope secured by Leeds 2023 has been a significant achievement.

- KPIs – It was on track to meet the target to double the Council’s investment in Leeds 2023. It was difficult to predict performance in relation to the KPIs at this stage as the year was only half way through but there were positive signs.
- Fundraising for the Hibiscus Rising statue – fundraising was still in progress and could continue after the installation of the statue.
- Each signature event had a creative skills programme and there would be a Creative Skills Fair later in the year. There were also several young people involved in work placements. Members requested Details on the Creative Skills Fair.
- Full details on grants and employment creation would not be known until a full evaluation at the end of the year.
- Ensuring children had access to music, performance and the arts.

REOLVED – That the report and progress made be noted. Along with plans for Leeds 2023 to return to the Scrutiny Board later in the 2023/24 municipal year with a focus on legacy and evaluation.

23 People Management Update

The report of the Chief HR Officer provided an overview and update on a number of key people management activities, particularly the Council’s approach to managing employee performance and the work taking place to develop a balanced approach – Let’s Talk Openly About Performance.

The report also provided a progress update following the Board meeting in March with regards to the management of attendance.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Andy Dodman, Chief HR Officer
- Claire Matson, Head of Human Resources
- Mariana Pexton, Director of Strategy and Resources
- Cllr Debra Coupar, Executive Member for Resources

The Board was given a presentation which focussed on the following two main areas:

- Management of Attendance
- Management of staff performance

Reference was made to the Being Our Best plan and what was expected from leaders and managers through the related Be Your Best Management Development Programme. Issues highlighted included the following:

Minutes approved at the meeting
held on Monday, 18th September, 2023

- Leadership training
- Appraisal management and regular supervision
- Health and Safety
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)
- Managing staff performance – the Me, We, and Us Approach
- Support available for managers and leaders including training.

In response to questions and comments from the Board, discussion included the following:

- Interventions and support for aspiring managers, new managers and more experienced managers.
- Mandatory EDI training for all 2,200 managers was almost complete.
- All directorates were committed to managing employee performance. There was support for hybrid workers and there was an expectation that all staff would attend the workplace on a regular basis. Evidence had shown more one to one contact between managers and staff where homeworking was involved, albeit by remote means.
- There were organisation design principles to ensure that numbers of staff to be managed were reasonable and appropriate. The Board requested more information on manager to staff ratios.
- For more formal issues staff and managers are encouraged to meet in person.
- Information was requested regarding the number of managers that had left through the early leaver's initiative from the 25 mentioned in the report.
- Annual and mid-year appraisals were generally supported by more frequent, supervision meetings to ensure regular 'check ins' on performance and wellbeing and to ensure that any issues raised in appraisals are flagged and have been part of ongoing discussion.
- There were checks and balances to ensure that fairness was a part of performance management.
- Targeted support to tackle days lost to absence has been rolled out successfully and there was scope for this support to be moved to other areas where absence rates are higher.
- There would be further information in September's update about attendance management, alongside details from the Staff Survey.

RESOLVED –

- a) That the content of the report and the ongoing work to develop a Managing Staff Performance toolkit that will support managers to build a culture where everybody is comfortable having regular open conversations about performance be noted.
- b) That the progress made in reducing the levels of sickness absence be noted.

24 2022/23 Financial and Treasury Management Outturn Reports

The report of the Head of Democratic Services provided the Board with the outturn position for the 2022/23 financial year covering the General Fund revenue budget and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) at Appendix 1 and the treasury management position at Appendix 2.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Victoria Bradshaw, Chief Finance Officer
- Councillor Debra Coupar, Executive Member for Resources
- Mariana Pexton, Director of Strategy and Resources

Highlights from the report included the following:

- There was an overspend of £12.4 million which was a reduction of £3.9 million reported in April.
- Main areas of overspend were in Children & Families. Pressures included spending on looked after children. This was a position that was being experienced nationally.
- There was also overspending in Communities, Housing and Environment and this included Environmental Services and the Welfare Benefit Service.
- There were areas of underspend in the strategic budget and within the schools DSG.
- The figures reflected the pay award and increased costs of energy.
- Update on the capital budget.
- The treasury account had a £6m underspend which was largely a result of prudent borrowing and securing lower interest rates.

In response to comments and questions from the Board, discussion included the following:

- Housing Revenue Account – there had been overspending due to general pressures such as increased costs of material and labour. There had also been an increase in tenant arrears.
- All budget saving plans were robustly checked with input from Finance/HR/Legal Services/Asset Management where appropriate. There would be a report to Executive Board providing further updates and a number of the plans had already been achieved.
- Transformation programme – this was needed to deliver services within the resources available. There was funding available from capital receipts for service transformation towards this.
- Early Leaver's Initiative – If there was any required this would be on focussed areas linked to service reviews and where ELI was justified.
- There would be ongoing budget challenges due to inflation staying higher than expected, the pay increase being higher than budgeted for and the impact of increased interest rates.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the content of the Financial and Treasury Management Outturn reports for 2022/23 be noted.
- (2) Consider how the priorities highlighted in the Scrutiny Board's discussion might inform decisions about future work programming.

25 Work Programme

The report of the Head of Democratic Services set out the 2023/24 work programme for the Board. The report reflected comments made at the June meeting under both the sources of work item and the first version of the work programme report.

It was reported that issues relating to the Housing Revenue Account would fall under the remit of the Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities) and a response would be provided in terms of whether Strategy and Resources Board was able to consider any elements of this given its remit on budgetary and financial matters

RESOLVED – That the report and work programme be noted.

26 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Monday, 18 September 2023 at 10.00 a.m. Pre-meeting for all Board Members at 9.30 a.m.