SCRUTINY BOARD (INFRASTRUCTURE, INVESTMENT & INCLUSIVE GROWTH)

WEDNESDAY, 7TH APRIL, 2021

PRESENT: Councillor P Truswell in the Chair

Councillors N Buckley, L Cunningham,
N Dawson, K Dye, J Goddard, M Shahzad,
J Taylor and P Wadsworth

CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chair thanked Members of the Board for their contributions over the previous year. Particular thanks were made to Councillor Neil Dawson who was attending his final Scrutiny meeting before standing down from his position in May. Members of the Board wished Councillor Dawson all the best for the future.

86 APPEALS AGAINST REFUSAL OF INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS

There were no appeals.

87 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There was no exempt information.

88 Late Items

There were no late items.

89 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations.

90 Minutes - 17 February 2021

Further to Minute 74 - Referral to Scrutiny, Members were informed that a letter had been sent to Councillor Walshaw as Development Plans Panel Chair with the Board's recommendations. It was noted that further discussion to the Local Plan Update had been delayed until May 2021.

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 February 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.

91 Digital Inclusion

The report of the Chief Digital and Information Officer provided the Board with an update on the Council's and City's progress towards making Leeds the most digitally inclusive city for everyone. It highlighted the System Leadership role of the 100% Digital Leeds team working with colleagues from the NHS, health and care, the third sector and the Wider Council.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Councillor James Lewis – Leader of the Council
- Councillor Mary Harland, Executive Board Member for Economy & Culture
- Leonardo Tantari – Chief Digital & Information Officer
- Stephen Blackburn – Digital & Innovation Manager
- Jason Tutin – Digital & Learning Development Manager
- Ali Kaye, Leeds Older People's Forum
- Caroline Otienno, Leeds Community Healthcare

The following was highlighted:

- The growth of digital inclusion during the pandemic and the impact of the pandemic on those who were digitally excluded.
- The role of community organisations in supporting people and how the Digital Leeds team supported those organisations to assist with digital inclusion.
- How to evidence the growth in digital inclusion and how digital inclusion could support organisations and communities.
- The use of digital inclusion in reducing health inequalities – access to services and support for self-management.
- Access to equipment, connectivity and other barriers to digital inclusion.
- Work with other partners and the creation of a Digital Inclusion toolkit.
- The Board was informed of the work carried out with Leeds Older Peoples Forum. There had been a phenomenal demand for supporting older people to become digitally inclusive during the pandemic. Reference was made to the need to support staff within the organisations that supported older people and the outcomes achieved.
- Work with Leeds Community Healthcare – development and implementation of virtual consultation. Numbers of virtual consultations had gone from 137 in April 2020 to over 3,000 in February 2021. There was a need to ensure that digital options were available to as many people as possible.

In response to Members comments and questions, the following was discussed:

- Concerns regarding the sharing of sensitive data and scams with the rise in people accessing digital services and what safeguarding measures are in place. Work had been done with children and young people particularly those who had previously not accessed online services. There had also been work with adults with learning

disabilities and their carers. There was a need to work with staff and volunteers of third sector organisations to promote online safety.

- Loaned out electronic equipment and the upkeep and maintenance of this equipment along with security of the equipment. There had been an increase in the number of lending schemes provided by community organisations. The Council were due to review the provision of loaned out equipment.
- The need to be able to have a choice between digital services and face to face when normal services are resumed and the use of a blended approach.
- Data poverty and the provision of Wi-Fi for all. Details of schemes and work with housing and the Digital Leeds team were reported as well as work at national level and discussions with broadband providers.
- Getting to support people who were not being reached by other organisations.
- Future provision for children without provision at home – work was being carried out on a regional basis.
- Language barriers - work had been carried out with third sector organisations and other organisations who support those who didn't use English as a first language to address this.
- Thanks were expressed to all who had been involved in supporting the growth of Digital Inclusion in Leeds.
- Sustainability of the 100% Digital Leeds initiative – there was a priority to restructure the digital teams.

RESOLVED –

(1) That the strategic priorities of the 100% Digital Leeds programme to make Leeds the most digitally inclusive city for everyone be endorsed.
(2) That the significant achievements to date of the 100% Digital Leeds team and their work with partners from all sectors to increase digital inclusion across the City be recognised.
(3) That it be agreed that the 100% Digital Leeds team continues its systems leadership role for digital inclusion on behalf of the Council and the City, with the strategic priorities, leadership and governance for 100% Digital Leeds being formally managed by DIS.
(4) That the Board continues to provide oversight of the 100% Digital Leeds programme by receiving progress reports.

92   Smart Cities

The report of the Director of Resources and Housing provided an update on the progress made on the Council's smart cities programme, Smart Leeds, since the last update in February 2020.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Councillor James Lewis – Leader of the Council

- Councillor Mary Harland, Executive Board Member for Economy & Culture
- Leonardo Tantari – Chief Digital & Information Officer
- Stephen Blackburn – Digital & Innovation Manager
- Jason Tutin – Digital & Learning Development Manager

The following was highlighted:

- Development of a City Digital Strategy – this would support the Council's objectives on the climate, inclusive growth and health & wellbeing. Open workshops had been held and it was envisaged that the first draft of the strategy would be available by autumn 2021.
- Cyber security.
- Connectivity – to provide full connectivity to all areas of Leeds. Ongoing work with network providers, introduction of 5G and provision of free Wi-Fi in community buildings.
- Data and analytics – provision of data and how this could be used to support services.
- The Smart City Priority Areas – Health and Wellbeing; Travel & Transport; Housing Standards & Growth.
- Innovation challenges and use of the White Rose Hub.
- Opportunities for digital learning.

In response to Members comments and questions, the following was discussed:

- Provision of free Wi-Fi in retirement life schemes – the need to promote the availability of this. There was some concern that residents may not have known about the availability of this.
- Data ethics – how data was collected, used and stored.
- Collection of real time data and how this could be used – potential for congestion charging was discussed as an example. Further reference was made to the use of monitoring air quality data.
- There was an increased awareness of the Smart Leeds programme across the Council.

RESOLVED –

(1) That the next-generation data platform Proof of Concept work, that will investigate how the council can improve data management, sharing and analysis, and that will help inform the business case and viability of scaling across the organisation and partnering with others be supported.

(2) That the approach in ensuring that digital and data ethics and bias considerations are regarded as a **key priority** and that council staff are furnished with the right data and technological skills to understand how data that is being managed and how technology is/will be used to manage it, interpret it, and increasingly, make decisions on it be supported.

(3) That the continued approach for the council to play a leading smart cities role at a national level and through collaborating with partners from all

sectors (e.g. universities, other councils, tech companies), continues to promote Leeds as one of the UK's leading smart cities by testing and trialling new technologies that can lead to improved outcomes for citizens be endorsed.

(4) That the approach being taken to promote Leeds as a city of innovation excellence with the Smart Cities IoT Development Centre, Digital Skills Academy and Tech Start-up support that will be co-ordinated from the new White Rose Innovation Hub be endorsed.

(5) That the approach to deliver a city digital strategy that is signed up to by other leading actors in the city from all sectors, and which supports and underpins the councils 3 pillars of Inclusive Growth, Health & Wellbeing and Climate Emergency be supported.

93 Work Schedule

The report of the Head of Democratic Services asked Members to consider the Board's Work Schedule.

A copy of the schedule was appended to the report along with recent Executive Board minutes.

RESOLVED – That the work schedule be noted.

94 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Thursday, 24 June 2021 at 10.30 a.m. (Pre-meet for all Board Members at 10.15 a.m.)