

SCRUTINY BOARD (STRATEGY AND RESOURCES)

MONDAY, 18TH OCTOBER, 2021

PRESENT: Councillor A Scopes in the Chair

Councillors B Anderson, S Burke, P Carlill,
D Chapman, S Firth, S Hamilton,
J McKenna and S Seary

14 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals against refusal of inspection of documents.

15 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no exempt items.

16 Late Items

There were no late items.

17 Declaration of Interests

No declarations of interests were made at the meeting.

18 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies were received from Cllr Flynn. Cllr B Anderson attended the meeting as his substitute.

It was noted that Cllrs Chapman and Firth would be arriving late to the meeting.

19 Minutes - 20 September 2021

RESOLVED -That the minutes of the meeting held on 20th September 2021, be approved as a correct record.

20 Matters arising

Members were advised of the following in relation to:

Minute 8 – Improving the experience and outcomes of Black, Asian and minority Ethnic colleagues at Leeds City Council

- HR would prepare a BAME update for the January 2022 meeting. A number of network groups from across the Council would be invited to ensure inclusivity of all colleagues.

Minute 9 – Electoral Services Update – voting behaviour, postal voting and turnout.

- Election information requested at the meeting has been circulated to Members.

Minute 10 – IDS – Vision, Project and Programme Management

- A report from IDS would be presented to the Board at its February 2022 meeting with further information in relation to the service desk.

Minute 11 – Future Working Arrangements, agile working and estate realisation

- 21 • To present a report on staff well being to the November 2021 meeting.
- The value of culture and creativity in Leeds' social and economic recovery from Covid-19**

The Chief Officer, Culture and Economy submitted a report to present an initial session on Leeds 2023 for the Board. It set out the aims, ambitions and opportunities that Leeds 2023 would create for Leeds in terms of recovery after the pandemic and the wider ambition around 'putting Leeds on the map'.

In attendance for this item were:

- Cllr Debra Coupar- Executive Member for Resources
- Cllr Jonathan Pryor – Executive Member for Economy, Culture and Education
- Eve Roodhouse – Chief Officer Culture and Economy
- Kully Thiarai – Creative Director and CEO Leeds 2023
- Abigail Scott – Director of External Relations Leeds 2023

The Board was shown a presentation which included:

- Benefits of culture and its impact on the economy
- The DCMS work on positive outcomes of people engaging in culture on their health.
- 2020 Cultural Cities inquiry which was undertaken in December 2020.
- The trends and opportunities for culture post Covid 19 Pandemic.
- Back-ground history of Leeds 2023 including city-wide consultation in 2015 through to 2018 where 700 people attended a meeting of full Council.
- The Grant agreement and the Governance for Leeds 2023.

Members were also shown a short video as a promotional tool call 'Letting Culture Loose'

The Board were informed of the following points:

- Leeds 2023 will raise the profile of the city both nationally and internally and aims to work with partners to provide an extraordinary and memorable year for all.
- Impact on the city would be to:
 - encourage economic growth,
 - raise social and cultural awareness
 - provide opportunities for jobs,
 - inspire children and young people,
 - improve wellbeing and social cohesion,
 - attract additional visitors and investment to the city
 - increase knowledge on the history and heritage of Leeds
 - Collaborative work and inclusivity
- So far £1.5m additional investment has been secured and 65 artists have been commissioned.

- A project called My World, My City, My Neighbourhood looks to work with 23 artists in 23 wards.
- Leeds 2023 will also look to create links with international artists.
- Funding has also been secured from British Council.

Cllr Pryor said that Leeds 2023 was exciting and would be beneficial for the city in health and wellbeing, investment in the city, creation of new job opportunities and getting children and young people into culture would benefit their future lives.

Member's discussions included:

- A need for cultural events not only to be in the city centre but also to be in the local communities, events need to cover all 33 wards
- Where possible for events to be free and easily accessible for all.
- Programme for all schools, Members wished to be kept informed of what was happening in schools.
- The Board were of the view that links needed to be in relation to access of cultural events and health and wellbeing. The Board was informed that as part of the strategy the council would adopt social progress measures to look at the impact of culture on health and wellbeing.
- Members were keen to get the message out about Leeds 2023 and the events to all areas of the city and ensure that all the community groups across the city were included. It was suggested that as part of Leeds 2023 should include the different cultures, groups and communities which make up the diverse population of Leeds. It was noted that Yorkshire Evening Post were including a section called 'Hello Leeds' which would highlight events in Leeds. Work was ongoing with tourism partners to address how events would be promoted.
- The Leeds 2023 Team need to speak with ward councillors to ensure that they know of all the events that are already happening in the 33 wards so that these events can be incorporated into Leeds 2023 and so that all residents in all communities had the chance to be part of Leeds 2023.
- More information was needed in relation to what job opportunities there will be and whether these will on a temporary or permanent basis. It was noted that a report would be circulated which showed the impact on cities such as Hull in relation to the creation of job opportunities. It was recognised that jobs would not just be created in culture but also bars and restaurants which are crucial to recovery after the pandemic. It was also noted that the economic boost needed to go beyond 2023.
- Members were of the view that Leeds 2023 needed to be proactive in working with key stakeholders in relation to tourism to increase visitors to the city. It was noted that work was already ongoing with partners and were actively looking to work with more partners.
- Members were keen to see Kirkgate Market included as part of Leeds 2023. It was acknowledged that footfall had increased since the pandemic, but work would continue to try to increase footfall.

- The Board encouraged the Team to contact them in relation to the history and heritage of local areas and for this type of information to be included as part of Leeds 2023.
- Concerns were raised in relation to pricing of events and that cost of some events may price out people if they were too expensive. It was recognised that Leeds 2023 Team also need to look at how funding for cultural events moved forward after 2023. It was acknowledged that Community Committees supported local events. However, funding for Community Committees had been reduced. It was noted that in some areas of the city, that have Parish and Town Councils, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) may provide more funding. The Board noted that work was ongoing in relation to long term funding.
- Access to events was also raised as a concern. It was suggested that public transport be subsidised so that as many people as possible could access all events. It was noted that discussions were ongoing with public transport.
- Members had noted that new sponsors had been found and welcomed the news that discussions were ongoing to make links with other partners not just in Leeds but nationally to businesses that had links with the city.

RESOLVED – To:

- a) Note and provide comments on the information provided in the submitted report; and
- b) Feedback on the plans for the refresh and delivery of the city's Cultural Strategy, including Leeds2023 as a significant milestone in the city's social and economic recovery.

Cllrs Firth and Chapman arrived at 10:45am during this item.

22 Future Waste Strategy Inquiry – Finance and Terms of Reference

The report of the Head of Democratic Services set out the Terms of Reference for a proposed joint inquiry to be conducted by The Environment, Housing and Communities and Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Boards.

In attendance for this item were:

- John Woolmer – Chief Officer Environmental Services
- Cllr Mohammed Rafique – Executive Member Environment and Housing
- Neil Evans – Director of Resources

The Board was informed that this was the first look at the joint inquiry on Waste Services, being undertaken in partnership with Environment, Housing and Communities (EHC). This followed formal delegation of responsibilities to the Board at its meeting held in September to look at the finances involved in expanding recycling services. A copy of the Terms of Reference for this joint inquiry was attached to the submitted report at Appendix 1.

The remit of this Board is to keep discussions to recycling, associated costs and how expansion of services might be funded as well as examination of the existing budget which was appended to the submitted report at Appendix 2.

Members were informed that the National Waste Strategy would set out options for recycling and what the Council will be legally required to collect. The service was still waiting for clarification from Government as to what services would be required and what funding would be provided.

Member's discussions included:

- Additions to the Terms of Reference in relation to the remit of this Board. To include resources, end of day reports on missed bins, costs of private involvement in the service.
- The Board suggested that experts be invited in relation to options for recycling, sharing of best practice and how waste can be reused.
- Cost and resources of different waste services
- Funding of future projects in relation to recycling
- Options in relation to co-mingled waste collection and recycling
- Impact of wet waste in black bins and how that affects the RERF in terms of efficiency and cost
- More information was requested on the RERF generally with a view to considering the issue at the Board's November meeting
- Planning required on how the service will look in the future. The Board was of the view that the service would require more funding to operate an effective and efficient service.

The Chair suggested that discussions should take place with Cllr Anderson, Chair of EHC Scrutiny Board and PSA's in relation to the Terms of Reference and inviting experts and external providers to meetings.

RESOLVED – The Chair to note possible additional areas for consideration and to liaise with Cllr Anderson to ensure one of the Scrutiny Boards considers all items. The Board was content to continue to pursue this work item and gather further evidence in future before making recommendations.

23 Budget 2021/22 Financial Health Update, Financial Challenge and Medium Term Financial Strategy

The Board considered the submitted report of the Head of Democratic Services for the Budget 2021/22 Financial Health Update, Financial Challenge and Medium -Term Financial Strategy.

In attendance for this item were:

- Victoria Bradshaw – Chief Officer Financial Services
- Neil Evans – Director of Resources
- Cllr Debra Coupar – Executive Member for Resources

Appended to the report were the Medium -Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and an update in respect of financial health in the revenue budget and Housing Revenue Account (HRA). Both were presented to Executive Board in September.

Members were informed of the following points:

- Following the Covid-19 pandemic the Council is facing a period of significant financial challenge. The MTFS identifies an estimated budget gap of £146.5m for the five-year period covered by the Strategy. It was noted that the Council were focussing on the next 3 years which require £126.7m of savings, the biggest impact would be in 2022/23, where savings were required of £65.4m. Proposals in relation to this would be brought to the Board in December for discussion.
- The Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) is expected on 27th October to be announced alongside the Budget. However, amounts would not be known for each council until December which would impact on how the council can plan for the savings required. It was noted that there was uncertainty about the 3 year settlement, fair funding review, business rates, rates at which council tax can be set and social care funding.
- In relation to the current financial year which was reported to Executive Board in September there was a projected £400,000 overspend not related to Covid. There is a significant overspend linked to Covid of £24.9m for which the council has received funding to mitigate this in this financial year. However, the Council was still mindful of how this would carry over for the coming years and how the economy recovers.

Responding to questions officers provided the following information:

- Clarification was provided in relation to Table 4.1 of the submitted report on the Council's Net Revenue Budget.
- Each year all services are looked at to ensure that they have the required resources to deliver an efficient and effective service. However, there are fixed costs to deliver services and the budgets are looked at in detail. Therefore, going back to zero based costing, would not necessarily deliver the required savings.
- It was recognised that as a result of Covid the Council should have a higher level of reserves than have had in previous years. It was noted that this was built into the Medium-Term Financial Strategy in detail.
- The 2030 target is around looking at the priorities for the Council around old spending decisions which are taken into account and resources are prioritised. It was noted that it was also around sensible business cases and planning for the future and paying back over a number of years.
- Table 1.1 Decrease in settlement funding 2010/11 -2021/22. It was acknowledged that it didn't include real time information or inflation. However, it would be looked at with an aim to improving how the information was presented.
- Analysis of savings as part of Early Leavers Initiative, to be circulated.

- It was acknowledged that with the increase in energy costs this could add pressure to the Council's finances, work was ongoing on this.

RESOLVED – To note the updated Medium- Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 to 2026/27.

Cllrs Anderson and Coupar left the meeting at 12:55 at the end of this item.

24 Annual Corporate Risk Management Report

The report of the Head of Democratic Services presented the Annual Corporate Risk Management Report. It updated the Board on the most significant risks currently on the council's corporate risk register with summary assurances describing the key controls in place to manage the risks and further actions planned.

In attendance for this item were:

- Tim Rollett – Intelligence and Policy Manager
- Cllr Debra Coupar – Executive Member for Resources

The Board was informed of the following points:

- Along with corporate risks there are also directorate and strategic risks. Each directorate also has its own risks which filter down to service level risks.
- Corporate risks are reviewed 4 times per year.
- The annual report was presented to Executive Board in July.

Responding to questions from Members the Board was provided with the following information:

- Controls and resources are dependent on the nature of the risk. Each type of risk is assessed looking at controls, resources and actions. Members were advised that the assessment for the strategy would be circulated to the Board.
- It was acknowledged that since the presentation of the annual report to Executive Board in July some risks had moved including the medium-term financial risk, which had been escalated by Corporate Leadership Team in August to the red zone. All risks are monitored regularly to ensure that the Council is prepare for any future impact including if there is a need to go into lockdown again. Financial aspects of risk are due to be updated again.

RESOLVED -To note the Annual Risk Management Report and the assurances given on the Council's most significant corporate risks in line with the authority's Risk Management Policy.

25 Work Programme

The Board considered the report submitted by the Head of Democratic Services and the Work Programme for the Board which was appended to the report at Appendix 1.

The main issues included the ongoing waste and recycling inquiry, plans for the Inclusion agenda and feedback from the staff networks, Freedom of Information Report item to come to November meeting, IDS Service Desk to return in February, Budget Working Group in December, and digital skills discussion from September to be covered in the contact centre item.

Member's discussions included:

- Recognition that officers had left the meeting prior to this item due to the meeting over running and clashing with cabinet. Members were of the view that given the increased workload of this Board they may need to start meetings earlier. It was suggested that meetings could start at 10:00am with a pre meet for all Board Members at 9:45. The PSA suggested that he would look at where there was a possible clash of future meetings and liaise with the Chair on starting the meetings earlier..
- Members were of the view that some of the items presented were not detailed enough and therefore took longer to discuss. It was suggested that this would be looked at for future items during the Chairs Brief, with a view to challenge initial reports where possible.
- Members appreciated that the item on Leeds 2023 was a large work item and that they would require further information. It was suggested that Leeds 2023 might need to be on the agenda for meetings scheduled in both December and February. In respect of December the PSA agreed to look into an additional meeting or working group if possible to arrange.
- It was noted that the Board wished to have Devolution added to the work programme for either February or March. They recognised that the WYCA Mayor was busy and may need to be booked well in advance of the meeting. The Chair said that he would speak with Cllr Harland the previous Chair of the Board to discuss Devolution and review the previous minutes on the subject.

RESOLVED – To note the content of the report.

26 Date and Time of Next Meeting

RESOLVED – That the next meeting of the Board will be on Monday 29th November 2021 at 10:00am (Pre-meeting for all Board Members at 9.45am).

The meeting concluded at 13:20