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SCRUTINY BOARD (INFRASTRUCTURE, INVESTMENT & INCLUSIVE GROWTH)

WEDNESDAY, 6TH APRIL, 2022

PRESENT: Councillor P Truswell in the Chair

Councillors J Bentley, N Buckley, K Dye,
J Illingworth, L Martin, M Shahzad and
P Wadsworth

64 APPEALS AGAINST REFUSAL OF INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS

There were no appeals.

65 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no exemptions.

66 Late Items

There were no late items.

67 Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

68 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies were received from Cllrs Gettings, Hussain and Sharpe.

Cllr Illingworth attended as a substitute for Cllr Sharpe.

69 Minutes - 17 February 2022

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting on 17 February be approved as an accurate record.

70 100% Digital Leeds

The report of the Chief Digital and Information Officer set out the latest annual update on the Council's 100% Digital Leeds digital inclusion programme.

The report outlined some of the varied ways in which the programme aims to deliver improved outcomes for people in Leeds through digital inclusion. It also highlighted the increased recognition of digital inclusion as an 'enabler' to deliver many of the strategic priorities of the Council.

Those in attendance for this item were:

- Jason Tutin (Digital Learning & Development Manager)
- Amy Hearn (Digital Inclusion Co-Ordinator)

The Chair introduced the item by reflecting upon the development of the digital inclusion agenda since the Board originally considered the issues via an inquiry in 2015.

He noted the national recognition of the work taking place in Leeds and the role of the Digital Learning & Development Manager in shaping the 100% Digital Leeds programme.

It was noted that in previous years the Board has considered a 'Smart Cities' report alongside the 100% Digital Leeds update. Members were advised that this had been postponed due to the ongoing restructure of the Integrated Digital Service and the development of the City's new Digital Strategy.

The Scrutiny Board requested that an update on the work previously badged as 'Smart Cities' be provided to members in the new municipal year.

Jason Tutin informed the Scrutiny Board that the 100% Digital Leeds team is now part of the Integrated Digital Service and will be part of the Digital Change function in IDS following the service restructure.

Jason highlighted a higher prevalence of digital exclusion amongst people who are experiencing broader social exclusion for a range of reasons including long-term health conditions, poverty, homelessness or disability.

The Board was advised that the 100% Digital team has always taken a 'furthest first' approach to digital inclusion, working with partners who support some of the most digitally excluded people in the city.

The Board considered how an individual's digital inclusion journey changes over time and the solutions may also differ at different stages of their life.

It is estimated that tens of thousands of people in Leeds are likely to be digitally excluded and these figures are expected to rise once the period of the covid-19 pandemic is taken into consideration.

Jason reiterated that the vision for the service is that everyone in Leeds should have equal opportunity to use digital tools, technology and services in the right way for them.

Members discussed the importance of supporting organisations who already have trusted relationships with people who are digitally excluded.

Jason updated members on:

- work with residents and staff in Leeds care homes
- support for the Older People's Digital Inclusion Network.
- work with Beeston and Middleton Local Care Partnership to develop a local network of Digital Health Hubs.
- work funded by the NHS Leeds Clinical Commissioning Group to increase digital inclusion for people with learning disabilities and autism.

- work with prisoners to equip people with the digital skills required to find a home and access employment upon release.
- Support for the Community Calling Campaign in Leeds, which gifted smartphones to people who were digitally excluded.

Jason and Amy outlined the complexity of embedding digital inclusion within the support provided to people experiencing homelessness.

It was noted that the team will only engage with regional or national work if it is judged to have a direct benefit to people in Leeds who are digitally excluded.

Members drew comparisons with earlier and ongoing work to support literacy to enable people to access wider social and economic benefits.

Amy outlined the challenges and complexity of measuring the impact and outcomes of the work of the 100% Digital Leeds team. Members were keen that where measurable data is available it should be used to evidence the impact of the team. Members welcomed the use of case studies to illustrate the wide-ranging benefits an individual can experience through improved digital access.

The Board discussed the likelihood that those who are digitally excluded are also likely to be the heaviest users of some key public services. It was suggested that increasing digital inclusion for some people could create capacity within 'in person' channels in council and health services to ensure resources are directed as efficiently as possible.

It was agreed that digital inclusion is an important tool to help tackle poverty and inequality.

Members discussed the wide spectrum of digital inclusion, including being able to access information about decisions that will affect local communities.

RESOLVED - Members agreed to:

- a) endorse the approach being taken to increase digital inclusion across the city through the delivery of the 100% Digital Leeds programme under the leadership of the 100% Digital team in IDS.
- b) That the Board should continue to provide oversight of the 100% Digital Leeds programme by receiving update reports on an annual basis.

71 Inquiry Finalisation: Consideration of outstanding matters

The Report of the Head of Democratic Services set out the progress to date with the Scrutiny Board's inquiry into the prevention of death and serious injury on the roads.

It was noted that Board members had identified three areas of outstanding interest following the completion of a draft inquiry report in January 2022:

- School crossing patrols
- Pedestrian Crossing Criteria
- School Streets

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Cllr Helen Hayden (Executive Member)
- Richard Jackson (Head of Service)
- Joel Dodsworth (UTMC Manager)
- Lynsey McGarvey (Principal Transport Planner)

It was noted that Nick Hunt (Traffic Engineering Manager) was unable to attend the meeting as anticipated.

Officers were invited to introduce the items relevant to their respective areas.

School Crossing Controls

Richard Jackson outlined the process for assessing applications for school crossing patrols, noting that the Council applies criteria in line with national policy to determine where resources will – or will not - be allocated.

He further noted the steps that can be taken to assess physical interventions that may be possible should an application not be successful.

Members of the Board discussed the cost of school crossing patrols, the number of requests over the last year, the number of vacant posts and the steps taken to address long standing challenges with regards to recruitment to these posts.

Members of the Board were informed that schools can now pay for the school crossing patrol service if they do not meet the criteria.

Members discussed the accessibility of information about how to submit a request to the service and details of how schools can pay for the service where an application is not successful.

It was recommended that the service should work more closely with the Influencing Travel Behaviour team to consider ways in which additional support could be provided to schools where an application for a crossing patrol is unsuccessful. It was suggested this should include options for training and education.

Members of the Scrutiny Board discussed the process for replacing patrol officers upon retirement.

Pedestrian Crossing Criteria

Joel Dodsworth confirmed that the process for evaluation of new formal pedestrian crossing requests remains the same as that considered by the Scrutiny Board in 2019 and set out in the appended report in the name of the Director of City Development (appendix 4).

The Scrutiny Board considered the new technology that is being introduced at crossings throughout Leeds, which prioritises pedestrians and provides greater clearance time to better reflect average walking speeds.

It was noted that changes in the technology used at pedestrian crossings, such as near side displays rather than traditional far side displays, is anticipated to promote inclusivity.

Members were advised that in some areas of the city new infrastructure has been put in place, but sites will need to be revisited to install additional software.

The Scrutiny Board discussed ways in which dangerous cycling can be addressed, the cost of technology used at new crossings and the advantages and disadvantages of countdown timers.

The Scrutiny Board requested that a review of accident statistics at pedestrian crossings be carried out once new technology has been installed, and that the results of that review be provided to the Scrutiny Board.

School Streets

Lynsey McGarvey updated the Board on the outcome of an 18-month trial of 'School Streets,' which began in 2020. As set out in the appended paper in the name of the Principal Transport Planner, the Highways department recommended that all but two of the Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders should be replaced with permanent Traffic Regulation Orders.

Lynsey McGarvey advised the Board that a full evaluation of the trial is underway to identify additional learning that can inform the approach to future school streets.

The Board discussed matters including:

- Increases in active travel at schools involved in the trial.
- Potential future funding for additional school streets via WYCA.
- Stakeholder feedback and the need for local support from key stakeholders.
- Limited options for enforcement in areas outside of London, with regulations currently requiring engagement from the Roads Policing Unit.
- The future role of education and training to support the introduction of school streets.
- The importance of understanding existing challenges with local parking behaviours, which could impact on the successful introduction of school streets.

- The potential to introduce school streets during school development or expansion works.
- The process for making an application to be considered for a new school street.
- The pressures on school staff who need to physically set up the school street each day, especially where a road has multiple entry points.

The Scrutiny Board expressed its broad support for the continuation of the school streets process but reiterated the importance of securing local support for new school streets and working to influence changes in poor parking behaviours.

RESOLVED – That the following recommendations be incorporated into the final inquiry report, which is to be brought back to the Board for formal approval at the start of the new municipal year:

- The Passenger Transport team to work more closely with the Influencing Travel Behaviour Team to assess options to provide additional support to schools where an application for a school crossing patrol is unsuccessful.
- To consider increasing the visibility of information on the Council's website about the process to apply for a school crossing patrol and the details of how to pay for that service if the application is unsuccessful.
- The results of a review of accident statistics at pedestrian crossings to be provided to the Scrutiny Board to understand the impact of changing technology on road safety.

The Scrutiny Board further noted the support of its members for the wider roll out of the school streets programme.

72 Temporary Road Closures: Process, Communication & Engagement

The report of the Chief Officer (Transportation and Highways) outlined the current processes for temporary road closures required in connection with work across the district. The report summarised the engagement and consultation procedures linked to temporary road closures including enhanced engagement for major projects.

The report and subsequent discussion sought to address concerns raised in September 2021 via a referral to scrutiny in the name of Cllr Matthew Robinson.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- Cllr Helen Hayden (Executive Member)
- Cllr Matthew Robinson (Original Referrer)
- Gary Bartlett (Chief Officer, Transportation and Highways)
- Adrian Hodgson (Traffic Manager)
- Oliver Priestley (Head of Engineering and Infrastructure)

Adrian Hodgson introduced the item, noting the concerns raised by Cllr Robinson in September following the temporary closure of Leeds Road in Scholes.

Adrian outlined the current processes associated with temporary closures including legal requirements, engagement and notification processes that go beyond the legal minimum and the enhanced procedures adopted for major projects.

Matter discusses included:

- The scale of road closures that take place in the city each year.
- The responsibilities of utility firms carrying out emergency works and scheduled maintenance.
- Engagement with emergency services and the offer to provide training for partners on One.Network.
- Training on One.Network for elected members – training has been offered to all 99 councillors and will be offered again in future. Training can also be offered to members of Town and Parish Councils.
- The specific engagement procedures followed in the case of major projects.
- The actions that have been taken to publicise planned road closures that are taking place to allow work to be carried out safely on the Armley Gyratory.
- Arrangements to enable 'blue light access' to Armley Gyratory while road closures are in place.
- The launch and development of the Leeds: Plan Ahead campaign.

It was confirmed that the Highways team would be happy to engage with any future relaunch of the annual Town and Parish Charter review, subject to the outcome of the ongoing discussions between the Communities Team and their Executive Board member.

Cllr Robinson thanked officers for the detailed report and for considering the issues raised in September in detail. He extended his thanks to the Parish Council, constituent George Hall and former Parish Councillor Howard Bedford for their work in this area.

Officers reiterated that current processes are regarded as robust and go 'above and beyond' the legal requirements. However, there remains a commitment to learn lessons from individual closures to inform future work. Officers confirmed they will also assess any specific recommendations for ways the service can further improve its processes in conjunction with the Executive member.

RESOLVED - Members agreed to note the report and endorse the following actions that have been taken:

- The offer to provide training to the emergency services on the use of One.network;
- Specific action to liaise with West Yorkshire Ambulance Service on the use of One.network for journey route planning;
- An additional offer of One.network supplier training for all Members of the Council

- The commitment to a dedicated resource to assist in communication and engagement on major schemes
- The Integration of the Connecting Leeds communications project into major transportation schemes being promoted by the service
- Creation of a highway disruption web site content at www.leeds.gov.uk/Planahead;
- A commitment to continue to review practices and implement change in line with best practice; and
- A commitment to work with colleagues in Communities to engage with local councils and communities to enhance locality communication and engagement.

73 Work Schedule

The Principal Scrutiny Advisor presented the Work Programme.

RESOLVED – That the provisional dates for 2022/23 be noted.

Chair's Closing Remarks

The Chair formally noted his thanks to all Board Members for their contributions during 2021/22.

He asked that particular thanks be noted for the work of Cllr Bentley, who will be retiring from the Council in May 2022, and Councillors Goddard and Taylor who both stood down prior to the end of the municipal year.

Congratulations were noted in respect of Cllr Gettings who will be nominated to take on the role of Lord Mayor in 2022/23.

74 Date and Time of Next Meeting

RESOLVED – That the next meeting of the Scrutiny Board will take place on 15 June at 10.30am. there will be a pre-meeting for Board members at 10.15am.