

OVERVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY FORUM

Thursday, 17th September, 2020

Present:-

Councillor P Innes (Chair)

Councillors	Blakemore	Councillors	Hollingworth
	Borrell		Kellman
	Caulfield		Snowdon
	L Collins		Kelly
	Dyke		Coy
	Flood		Brittain
	Fordham		

Rachel Appleyard, Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer +++
 Councillor Terry Gilby, Cabinet Member for Economic Growth ++
 Councillor Tricia Gilby, Leader ++
 Neil Johnson, Assistant Director – Economic Growth ++
 Charlotte Kearsey, Democratic and Scrutiny Officer
 Councillor Jill Mannion-Brunt, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing
 +
 Councillor Amanda Serjeant, Deputy Leader +
 Lynda Sharp, Economic Development Manager ++
 Ian Waller, Assistant Director – Health and Wellbeing +

+ Attended for Minute No. 56

++ Attended for Minute No. 58

+++ Attended for Minute No. 62

54 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' AND OFFICERS INTERESTS RELATING TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Councillor Fordham noted that he was a Worship Leader at the Elder Yard Unitarian Chapel which was within the area of the Northern Gateway scheme but he did not have pecuniary interest in agenda item 58.

55 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Catt.

56 DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING - CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN

The Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing and Assistant Director – Health and Wellbeing attended to present a report updating the Committee about the progress of the Chesterfield Borough Council (CBC) Climate Change Action Plan.

CBC declared a Climate Emergency on 17 July, 2019 and resolved to establish a Chesterfield Climate Change Working Group to produce an Action Plan.

The action plan was approved by Full Council on 26 February, 2020. The plan was developed with eight themes, each theme had a series of actions which in total amounted to thirty-nine specific actions to support CBC carbon reduction activities.

The Assistant Director advised that since the plan had been approved there had been several actions within the plan which had been progressed, including:

- In April 2020 the Council switched its electricity supply to renewable sources.
- The Council's housing capital programme had commenced and CBC was committed to ensuring that the existing housing stock was as energy efficient as possible. Properties on the Grangewood estate had benefited from upgrades to windows and insulation to communal areas which would improve the thermal efficiency of the homes.
- The Private Sector Housing service had submitted a funding application into phase one of the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery scheme. The application sought access to £500,000 to enable targeted support for owner occupied or privately rented properties with an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of E or without an EPC. In addition to the carbon reduction advantages of this scheme those most at risk of fuel poverty would benefit.
- The Council was working with neighbouring authorities through the Local Authority Energy Partnership to develop an application for

phase two Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery scheme funding when this is released.

- The funding applications complemented the wider Green Homes Grant scheme applications that households would be able to apply for directly from late September 2020. The council would support the awareness raising of this scheme to ensure that as many residents as possible would be able to take advantage of the funding given the carbon impact of the built environment in Chesterfield.
- The Council was currently working with Low Carbon Homes, Derbyshire County Council (DCC), University of Derby - Sustainable Business and Clean Growth and other local district and borough councils to support a network of six national events designed to target retrofitting for housing to improve thermal efficiencies.
- In July 2020 the Council adopted the Chesterfield Economic Recovery Plan to support and rebuild Chesterfield's economy in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The economic plan makes specific reference to sustainability in relation to economic recovery.
- The Council was also working with DCC and partners to develop an Integrated Transport Plan, the provision of cycle infrastructure and signposting businesses to low carbon support activities being delivered by partners. In addition, DCC's Active Travel funding would be accessed to help fund a range of schemes.

These activities within the plan demonstrated how the climate change action plan was being embedded across the council.

The ambitions of the council in relation to active and sustainable travel had been supported by the adoption of the new Local Plan in July 2020. The new Local Plan prioritised walking and cycling; requiring new developments to show that residents could walk and cycle to key facilities and provide for alternative forms of transport with new cycleways and better footpaths.

One thousand trees had been purchased and `heeled in` at Eastwood Park ready for planting this season. It was anticipated that during the 2020/21 financial year three to four thousand trees would be planted. Staff in the Parks and Open Spaces team would be meeting with The

Tree Council with the ambition of setting up a Tree Warden scheme. This would be a voluntary role but it would be vital in developing tree planting resources as well as keeping the Council up to date with current thinking.

In July and August 2020, the Council embarked on the recruitment process for the Climate Change Officer. This process had been completed and it was anticipated that the successful candidate would be in post from early October 2020. The successful appointment of the Climate Change Officer would significantly increase the capacity of the Council to drive forward carbon reduction and sustainability ambitions. An operational budget for the Climate Change Officer in support of the action plan was in place.

A working draft of a new format for Cabinet Reports was currently in the final stages of development which would ensure that climate change implications would be considered as part of the Council's formal decision-making process.

Despite the restrictions and challenges from the Covid-19 pandemic there had been developments across key actions within the climate change action plan.

On the 19 August, 2020, the government set out how it would use legally binding targets under the Environment Bill to combat environmental and climate challenges. The government announced it would introduce at least one long term target in four priority areas: cleaner air, cleaner water, less waste and more biodiversity, to drive significant and lasting environmental improvements. The Council would monitor the progress and implications of this Bill.

Members asked how measures relating to utility poverty would be enforced and the Assistant Director advised that it would be through regulatory work and the Green Homes Grant, which was focused on engagement with landlords.

The Assistant Director was asked whether the working group had been set aside and the committee was advised that there was an ambition to utilise the working group moving forward to build momentum and this would be a priority for the newly appointed Climate Change Officer.

Concerns were raised that the milestones which were not being achieved had been missed from the report and it was agreed that the detail of these would be included in the next update to the Committee.

Members asked whether the tree planting information contained in the officer's report reflected the trees which had been removed and the Assistant Director agreed that the net position was important and they would have discussions with the Planning Department.

The Assistant Director was asked for more detail in relation to each action and it was agreed that this would be provided.

Members asked how the active travel fund would be used and were advised that CBC was working with the Chesterfield Cycle Campaign and DCC to better understand the long term sustainable travel needs across the borough. There was a grant available for on street charging points to increase the capacity for electric vehicle charging points.

The Assistant Director was asked about the new Local Plan and whether the reference to a levy on housing to pay for cycle routes was referring to the Community Infrastructure Levy or something else. The Assistant Director advised that he was not best placed to provide an answer to this question but would seek a suitable response from colleagues in planning and forward this accordingly.

A question was asked about the overall timing of the action plan and the Assistant Director advised that he would provide additional information at the next update regarding the timings of each action within the three year action plan.

Members asked for more detail about the Climate Change Officer and how the success of the role would be measured and the Assistant Director offered to share the job description for the role with the committee.

RESOLVED –

1. That the Climate Change Action Plan progress report be noted.
2. That a further update, which would include more information in relation to each action, be brought to the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum meeting on 21 January, 2021.

57 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC**RESOLVED –**

That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

58 LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH - ELDER WAY AND NORTHERN GATEWAY DEVELOPMENTS

The Leader, Cabinet Member for Economic Growth, Assistant Director – Economic Growth and Economic Development Manager attended to present a report about the Elder Way and Northern Gateway Developments.

The Northern Gateway scheme was approved by Cabinet in July 2016. The scheme aimed to improve the northern gateway to the Town Centre through the provision of three main elements:

- The first element was the provision of a new Multi Storey Car Park (MSCP) to replace the former Saltergate car park that had fallen into disrepair;
- The second element was the construction of the Northern Gateway Enterprise Centre on Holywell Cross;
- The third element was the delivery of a new public realm scheme, centred on Elder Way and part of Knifesmithsgate.

There was another related element that was being delivered by the private sector. Jomast Developments Ltd had purchased the former Cooperative Department Store on Elder Way and a full refurbishment of the building had been completed. Premier Inn had taken over the upper floors of the building and had been operating since April 2019. CBC had supported Premier Inn with recruitment of staff and worked with Chesterfield College to deliver a sector-based work academy. Of the people who attended the course, 19 secured employment. Progress on letting the commercial space on the ground floor had been slower than anticipated and was now being impacted by Covid-19.

The construction of the new Saltergate MSCP commenced in September 2018 and was completed in July 2019. The new MSCP provided 526 parking bays, including 32 disabled spaces and 15 larger spaces allocated to parent and child users. There were also six electric vehicle charging spaces available with a further 10 spaces enabled for future connection.

The Northern Gateway Enterprise Centre was being developed on part of Holywell Cross car park. When complete, it would provide a high quality base for up to 32 start-up and small and medium sized businesses. The new Centre sought to build on the success of the Council's existing portfolio of Innovation Centres at Tapton and Dunston. The building had been designed to have sustainability principles at its heart, minimising its impact on the environment and achieving considerable efficiencies in energy use. The Council's website had been updated to include a fly through video to give potential occupiers a flavour of what the new enterprise centre will have to offer. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Robert Woodhead's Ltd, the appointed contractors, were working to strict health and safety criteria in line with national Covid-19 guidance on the operation of construction sites. The impact of Covid-19 on matters such as the supply chain, had required an adjustment to the completion date from early to late spring 2021. Any additional changes to health and safety requirements or a second spike, could result in further delays. The key risk for the Enterprise Centre would be to ensure that the construction progresses as planned.

The public realm scheme would create a more attractive street scene for shoppers, visitors and businesses. The improvements would connect developments at the top of Elder Way with the Town Centre. CBC appointed Whittam Cox and Plan It, specialist landscape architects to develop a public realm scheme for the area. Consultation on the proposals had been ongoing with key stakeholders including local businesses, public transport providers, taxi companies and DCC Highways Teams. Progress had been delayed principally because of the need to obtain Highways approvals for the work. Covid-19 had a significant impact as the DCC Highways Traffic Regulation Order approval team was taken from their day duties to work on the Covid-19 Recovery Plan for Derbyshire. The delay in TRO approval then affected the ability of the street lighting design to be finalised and resulted in further delay to the final issue of construction drawings to DCC. A full project risk register had been developed and would be maintained

throughout the build period. The Project Manager would also monitor project spend closely. Communicating effectively with all key stakeholders in the town centre, to ensure that disruption was minimised, would be key to successfully completing this element.

Members raised concerns about empty units in the Cooperative Department Store and it was agreed that the empty units were a loss to the town centre. CBC were working to promote the units along with local and regional agents. There had been viewings and some interested parties, however, these had been lost due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Economic Development Manager noted that creative thinking would be needed.

The Assistant Director was asked at what point the capacity for electric charging points in the Saltergate MSCP would be increased from six. The committee was advised that when all six charging points were in use an additional three would be added.

It was noted that the pandemic had changed the office work culture towards employees working from home and members asked whether this had been included in the Northern Gateway Enterprise Centre risk register. The Assistant Director explained that caution had been used in the model expectations for the first year which would build in some cover and the Enterprise Centre provided business support which would be attractive.

Members asked whether the Covid 19 pandemic had been the reason for the closure of the Co-Op shop on Elder Way. CBC had been trying to contact the agent for the unit as they were aware of an organisation who required a new space.

RESOLVED –

1. That the progress report be noted.

59 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - RE-ADMISSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED –

That the public be readmitted to the meeting following consideration of an item containing exempt information.

60 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the Forward Plan.

RESOLVED –

That the Forward Plan be noted.

61 SCRUTINY MONITORING

The Committee considered the Scrutiny recommendations implementation monitoring schedule.

RESOLVED –

That the Scrutiny monitoring schedule be noted.

62 WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE OVERVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY FORUM

The Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer submitted a report which included the details of the proposed Overview and Scrutiny Committees' Work Programme for 2019/20.

Councillor Coy enquired about the timing of the 'Homelessness, accommodation prisoners and winter provision' item which was scheduled to be considered by the Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee in December, 2020. The Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer advised that this concern could be raised at a meeting of the Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee and suggested that an additional meeting could be scheduled or a task and finish group could be created.

Councillor Fordham requested that his vote against the recommendation in the officer's report be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

RESOLVED –

1. That the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2020/21 be approved and recommended to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees (OSCs).

63 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY DEVELOPMENTS

The Joint Scrutiny Chairs would be participating in the virtual East Midlands Scrutiny Network on 25 September, 2020.

64 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum held on 25 June, 2020 were presented.

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.