

PUBLIC

MINUTES of a meeting of the **IMPROVEMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – PLACES** held on 18 September 2020.

P R E S E N T

Councillor S Bull (in the Chair)

Councillors K S Athwal, D Charles, L Grooby, J Innes and T Kemp.

Also in attendance were Councillor C Hart, T Gregory (Director – Economy, Transport and Environment) and R Lowe (Policy and Research Division).

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor P Makin.

6/20 **MINUTES** **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 29 July 2020 be confirmed as a correct record, subject to Minute 4/20 being amended to include the following:-

“Members reported concerns that fast fibre services supplied on contract to residents in some areas were significantly reduced during the lockdown period and have not returned to previous standards. The Committee felt it was important to ensure that delivery of the service should be maintained and monitored at the target level.”

7/20 **MATTERS ARISING** - (a) **Digital Derbyshire Programmed Update (Minute 4/20)** The Chair informed the Committee of his efforts to progress this matter and it was agreed that Derbyshire MP's be approached to support the County Council aim to increase coverage, especially in the rural area.

Mr Gregory also informed the Committee that following a Digital Derbyshire where the action was to re-engage with BDUK and BT Openreach, he would be meeting with BT on 28 September 2020 to discuss increased coverage and gain share money usage.

(b) **Festival of Derbyshire** Members would be updated on the situation regarding this event.

8/20 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS** There were no public questions.

9/20 **CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND COMMUNITIES PORTFOLIO UPDATE - COUNCILLOR CAROL HART**

Councillor Carol Hart, Cabinet Member for Health and Communities attended the meeting to provide an overview of key achievements and challenges in the portfolio areas pertinent to this Committee. Councillor Hart commended and thanked staff in all departments for their work during the

Covid 19 pandemic.

The areas covered by this committee that fell under the Public Health were as follows:-

- Action on Drugs - The Derbyshire Substance Misuse Strategic Plan 2015-2020 contained and drove Derbyshire's multi-agency approach to alcohol and drugs and will be updated next year. A number of service areas and divisions across DCC work with external partners in criminal justice (Police and Probation), the NHS (the CCG and hospitals) and community safety partners to deliver the actions that sit beneath the four principles. Detailed information was provided on prevention and education, early intervention and harm reduction, treatment and recovery and control supply and enforcement;
- Sports Development – The final round of Physical activity and Sports Action Grants has now completed. There have been 271 small grants of £500 or less, 33 medium grants of up to £5,000 and 16 large grants of up to £10,000. In total over £413,000 has been awarded. The current "Towards an Active Derbyshire" strategy was to be refreshed and relaunched in Spring 2021;
- Moving on from Covid - In 2019 Derbyshire County Public Health allocated £146k to support the innovative development of physical activity through locality partnership working. This work was stalled by Covid 19 and alternate use of the fund was detailed including work with Walk Derbyshire, locality physical activity and social inclusion, work with communities and the Voluntary Sector;
- Voluntary Sector - Throughout the pandemic the CVS organisations and other community partners have been an essential part of the community response working in collaboration with Public Health, district and borough councils and the NHS at local level and continue to be central to the Community Recovery.
- Covid-19 Local Outbreak Plan, Test and Trace, Local Public Health Response - Public Health was on the frontline of the Covid-19 response, working with partners including; General Practice, CCG, NHS Providers, District and Borough Councils, Public Health England, Joint Biosecurity Centre, Police. The work and responsibilities were presented to the Committee.

Councillor Hart provided an update on Community Safety which covered:-

- Domestic Abuse - A new contract for Domestic Abuse specialist services was successfully mobilised in April 2020, despite the additional challenges the Covid-19 pandemic presented. Calls to the countywide helpline reduced at the beginning of lockdown but this has now returned to expected levels. The Domestic Abuse Bill, would

make provision of domestic abuse support a statutory duty along with the requirement to have a strategic group and to develop a strategy, and much of this was in place, but would need to be reviewed;

- Safer Communities Board - The Derbyshire Community Safety Agreement outlined the priorities of the Safer Communities Board and in addition two development priorities, organised crime, including county lines and serious violence, have been identified;
- Anti-Social Behaviour - The Community Trigger was in the process of being signed off by the Safer Communities Board and District/Borough Councils;
- Cyber Crime – At 11 August 2020 3159 people have completed the digital MOT;
- Modern Slavery - The Modern Slavery Partnership has been working proactively and would be publishing an annual report to mark Modern Slavery Awareness Day in October;
- Prevent (Counter Terrorism) - Prevent Referrals were following the downward national trend and currently running at 33% of expected levels. The Council has agreed to make Prevent training mandatory for all officers and Elected Members;
- Training - e-learning offer has been enhancing and sessions were being delivered virtually.

A further area of Councillor Hart's portfolio was Trading standards which had three teams dealing with Safety & Business Support; Food, Feed, Animal Health & Metrology and Fair Trading. During the Covid period the department had received and responded to 893 reports of Covid related issues, provided advice to 301 Derbyshire business, advised County Council colleagues on the legislation covering safety and certification of Personal Protective Equipment and Sanitiser, contacted 587 people to provide preventative advice, reassurance and further information on support services and gained approval to implement the waiver of annual fees for the Council's Trusted Trader scheme. Routine work included completion of risk based inspections of 287 businesses, achieved seven successful prosecutions across animal health, fair trading, trademarks and underage sales offences, seized illegal tobacco and counterfeit goods, supported 491 potential and actual doorstep crime/scam victims, fitted scam call blocker devices in the homes of 26 vulnerable residents, worked with Environmental health officers on improved guidance on control of allergens and developed Primary Authority partnerships with 20 Derbyshire-based businesses.

The Emergency planning functions under the portfolio would be discussed in more detail at a future meeting of the Committee.

Members asked questions on the portfolios and Councillor Hart responded accordingly. Further specific information could be presented to future meetings of the committee. It was agreed that all the detailed information presented be forwarded to members of the Committee, together

with specific information requested.

The Committee thanked Councillor Hart for her detailed and informative presentation.

10/20 DISCUSSION WITH THE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMY, TRANSPORT & ENVIRONMENT – TIM GREGORY

Mr Gregory informed the Committee that he had been in post since 3 August 2020 and would continue in the post until a permanent appointment had been made in January/February 2021. He provided details of his career in the Royal Marines and in local government, to date, and his role as a non-executive Director on a Hospital Trust. During his local government career he had come in to contact with many Derbyshire County Council colleagues.

The County Council's Economy, Transport and Environment Department was large and diverse, which touched every resident of Derbyshire, and received copious amounts of political and public attention. There was a focus on shaping the future for its services including the Countryside Service, Economic Development; mineral plans and looking to make appropriate changes.

£40m was budgeted for roads and asset infrastructure, and in the long term there was £100m plus for potential internal and partnership programmes. Mr Gregory stated that he was happy to attend future meetings to present on specific areas and functions of the department.

Mr Gregory was asked what he saw as the top three priorities for the department and he responded as follows:-

- to address the scale of investment for highways, this large programme had been impacted by Covid as activities had been diverted and the task was to review the capital programme and ascertain what could be delivered;
- Economic Development this was a challenging and complex programme including the Chesterfield/Staveley Re-generation scheme, Chesterfield town centre, Drakelow, Woodville/Swadlincote, Hollis Lane, Chesterfield,
- To deliver the day-to-day services – there were some 450-650 reactive intervention per week, ie pothole repairs. Some work has not been undertaken due Covid and consequently this would impact on the roads this winter.

Mr Gregory also referred to the review of gaps in staffing as some posts were proving difficult to recruit to.

The Committee thanked Mr Gregory for the information he presented.

11/20 REVIEW OF VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR FUNDING

Rob Lowe from Policy and Research attended the meeting to update Members on the Council's review of voluntary and community sector (VCS) grants and progress made on the review of voluntary and community sector infrastructure provision over the last 12 months.

On 16 January 2020, draft proposals on the future funding model of voluntary and community sector infrastructure support, setting out principles for the new approach alongside a revised funding methodology, were considered by Cabinet and approved for consultation for a period of 12 weeks.

The Council received over 800 responses to the consultation and although a number of VCS organisations were unable to respond fully to the consultation process due to coronavirus pandemic responsibilities, there was overall broad support for identified principles, key elements of the approach set out in proposals and agreement that these should form an essential platform for the new approach. The responses also highlighted concerns about the proposed reductions in funding to organisations in areas such as Erewash, High Peak and South Derbyshire. Following detailed analysis of consultation responses and further discussions revised proposals were approved by Cabinet at its meeting on 30 July 2020.

The revised proposals were attached at Appendix A to the report to Committee. The report also detailed the essential components which formed part of proposals from 1 October 2020 onwards including the agreed principles, shared outcomes framework, funding methodology and fair distribution. Cabinet had agreed interim arrangement whilst further work took place including no reduction in funding to those infrastructure organisations who were currently funded by the Council from 1 October 2020 – 30 September 2021, the uplift in funding would be honoured, funding to be committed for one year not 4 years and the Council would continue its work with infrastructure providers to make the necessary changes and to understand and apply the learning from Covid-19.

Maintaining current funding allocations and honouring the proposed uplift in funding totalled £453,228, which was an additional £99,226 funding for providers. An additional payment of £11,244 to Bassetlaw CVS has been approved for the work undertaken to support Covid-19 response in Bolsover over the six-month period between April and September 2020.

Work has been ongoing with current infrastructure providers on a district-by-district basis to draw-up new Service Level Agreements which align to the new approach, including those for countywide specialist provision. This work was expected to be completed by 30 September 2020. Cabinet also approved the extension of funding to all VCS organisations in receipt of a grant until 30 September 2021, whilst the review of existing arrangements took place.

As part of the review process work has been undertaken on the development of a cross-departmental Grants Framework which proposed a shift in the way that grants were currently developed, distributed, monitored and reviewed. Although a significant amount of progress has been made, particularly with the review of active grants, it was important that the impact of Covid-19 across the sector in Derbyshire was reflected in the review process. Any future proposals would be reported to Cabinet.

The rationale of the review was supported and the charities and voluntary organisations that provided much needed services not provided by statute were also commended.

It was noted that 14 specific infrastructure charity organisations were supported who provided more universal support and advice to the voluntary sector.

RESOLVED to note the progress made on the review of the Council's voluntary and community sector grants.