

**At a meeting of the SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE held in the COUNCIL CHAMBER, CITY HALL, SUNDERLAND on MONDAY 26<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2022 at 5.30 p.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor D.E. Snowdon in the Chair

Councillors Bond, Butler, Curtis, Doyle, Edgeworth, Hartnack, Mason-Gage, P. Smith, D. Snowdon and Watson.

Also in attendance:-

Mr Nigel Cummings, Scrutiny Officer, Law and Governance, Corporate Services Directorate

Mr David Noon, Principal Governance Services Officer, Law and Governance, Corporate Services Directorate

Ms Beverley Poulter, Corporate Strategy Manager

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hartnack, Mason-Gage and Mullen.

**Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 14<sup>th</sup> July, 2022**

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 14<sup>th</sup> July, 2022 (copy circulated), be confirmed and signed as a correct record subject to "City"(Page 6, Paragraph 6, line 2) being amended to read "City Hall".

**Declarations of Interest (including Whipping Declarations)**

Item 7 – Notice of Key Decisions

Councillor Doyle made an open declaration in respect of item number 220621/720 due to the involvement of his employer in relation to the matter on the notice regarding development at Nile and Villiers Streets Sunnyside.

**Performance Management Update – Quarter 1 of 2022/23**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated), to provide the Committee with the Corporate Performance Report for Quarter 1 of 2022/23.

(For copy report – see original minutes.)

Ms Beverley Poulter, Corporate Strategy Manager presented the report and advised that the Council's Corporate Performance Management Framework was aligned to the Sunderland City Plan 2019 – 2030 and to the three key themes of the City Plan, Dynamic Smart City, Healthy Smart City and Vibrant Smart City, as well as including the organisational health indicators, productive & innovative working, financial management and a council ready for the future. The report set out the progress made to the end of Quarter 4 of 2021/22, against a City Plan that commenced in 2019 and spanned an eleven-year period through to 2030.

The Committee was informed that following the City Plan's publication in 2019, the first review was undertaken following the conclusion of performance for 2019/20. The refreshed plan was adopted from 1st April 2021. The report before members was aligned to the refreshed plan. A review and assurance process would be undertaken each year, to ensure that delivery remains focused on achieving the plan commitments.

Analysis of the evidence from the latest assurance process concluded that the plan remained relevant, but given the significant, focus on tackling global climate change, a related challenge to support the council's and city's commitments in respect of carbon neutrality was included.

Ms Poulter took the Committee through the summary for the three key themes of Dynamic City, Healthy City and Vibrant City of the Sunderland City Plan, highlighting commitments, achievements and progress made for each key theme, as well as performance against each of the five aspirations for each theme and against the additional Council indicators for good organisational health, productive and innovative working, strong financial management and a Council ready for the future.

Ms Poulter referred to Councillor Doyle's request at the previous meeting that given the cross cutting nature of the low carbon issue, could it feature as a discreet report in its own right. She advised that this was still being investigated along with a mechanism to include the low carbon performance of partner organisations within the city. The likelihood was that as Low Carbon fell under the purview of the Economic Prosperity Scrutiny Committee, an all-encompassing report of this nature would be submitted to that Committee.

Councillor Doyle thanked Ms Poulter for the update. He referred to the issue of transparency in respect of the procurement of tenants for the cultural opportunities in the Sheepfolds development, and expressed concern that the opportunities were not being advertised to their fullest extent. He asked if it was possible that the Committee could receive a current position statement in this regard. Ms Poulter replied that she would contact the relevant Officers and feed back to the Committee via Mr Cummings.

Councillor David Snowdon referred to figures for job creation detailed on page 12 of the agenda and the creation of opportunities in the Riverside developments. He asked if Sunderland residents currently facing the cost of living crisis had the skills to undertake these roles? Were there mechanisms available to enable them to upskill or was it likely that the recruitment would be sourced from outside the city?. Ms Poulter replied that Sunderland wanted to be seen as a welcoming city and would not seek to discourage applicants from outside the area. The Council had data on

the jobs being created and the skills sets required and would seek to enable its residents to fill such roles. For example, the Council and the College together with the Ministry of Building, Innovation and Education were establishing the Housing Innovation and Construction Skills Academy (HICSA) which would educate, train and upskill local people. This would ensure local people played a role in creating more economic opportunities for Sunderland residents and businesses by enabling the area to 'build its own'. In addition, Sunderland was developing opportunities in E gaming and the National Esports Performance Campus had chosen to locate in Sunderland.

Councillor H. Trueman referred back to earlier discussion on the green agenda and expressed fears that not everyone was 'singing from the same hymn sheet'. He cited the development of green space for housing and solar farms and expressed concern that brownfield sites were being ignored. Councillor Butler concurred and advised that whilst the National Planning Policy Framework prioritised development on brownfield sites where 'viable', this left it open for developers to interpret viability in a way that suited their own ends.

Councillor Butler referred to the issue of fly tipping which he described as the bane of Councillor's lives. He questioned whether enforcement was working given the policies and legislation by which enforcement officers were bound. He believed that the ability for people to report issues anonymously would help and asked if there was any way current policies could be amended to allow this? Ms Poulter replied that it was always possible to review policies and procedures however if the processes concerned were tightly constrained by legislation, the scope of any change was likely to be limited.

With regard to whether enforcement was working, only time would tell. The figures for littering of the highway had increased on the previous quarter however the figures would need to be analysed over a longer time period to ascertain whether it was a growing trend or a temporary blip. Councillor David Snowdon advised that up until recently, Sunderland had not taken enforcement action in this regard preferring to focus on education. The downside to this was that it had encouraged fly tippers from areas of the region outside of the city, where enforcement was undertaken, to target Sunderland instead. Councillor Snowdon believed that this showed that enforcement did work, however to what extent could only be judged over a longer period of time.

Councillor Bond expressed concern regarding the data on enforcement and its relevance to fly tipping stating that it would only act as a deterrent if people believed there was a good chance that they would get caught. He referred to the littering at the sea front and asked if thought had been given to alternatives to enforcement which would make it less advantageous for people who littered and fly tipped. Ms Poulter replied that she would come back following the meeting on the points raised by Councillor Bond. Councillor David Snowdon advised that the Environmental Services update was scheduled to be considered by the Economic Prosperity Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 6th December and it was likely to cover the issues raised by Councillor Bond. Councillor Bond asked to receive an email with details of the meeting.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Curtis, Ms Poulter advised that the decline in the figure for the percentage of properties with ultrafast broadband from 65.1 to 64.9 reflected a data error. A recent data check had revealed that the initial figure

had been inaccurate. There had been no physical change in the number of properties with ultrafast broadband. Ms Poulter added that there had been a slight delay to the 5G roll out caused by some unplanned maintenance work. The Chair and Councillor Curtis expressed concern at a growing trend among developers to refuse to connect new properties to broadband despite the cabling etc being present.

In response to a further enquiry from Councillor Curtis in respect of the amount of affordable housing developers were required to provide, Ms Poulter advised that a housing needs analysis was currently being undertaken which would establish the levels of housing need within the city in relation to the various types of housing tenure. Targets would then be reset accordingly. We lived in an ever-changing world and there was a need to pause to establish the current and likely future housing need.

Councillor P. Smith referred to Sunderland's poor performance in relation to emergency hospital admissions due to falls, in comparison to both the regional and national averages. She noted that the falls clinics at the Royal Hospital had yet to reopen following the Covid pandemic and asked for a date as to when they would. She expressed concern that elderly people were not getting the attention they needed and given it was virtually impossible to get a doctors' appointment, the recruitment of 1 Falls Coordinator was just a drop in the ocean. Ms Poulter advised that she would seek answers to the points raised by Councillor Smith and would report back.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor David Snowdon, Ms Poulter advised that she would report back regarding details of the Social Prescribing Community Support Model.

Councillor Edgeworth referred to the introduction of the no side waste policy and asked if this could be monitored and reported back in relation to its impact on the figures for fly tipping and the large bin statistics. Ms Poulter confirmed that this could be provided.

Councillor Doyle referred to the reference in the report that 'there were no new or improved cycleways' and stated that there needed to be a focus on maintaining the existing cycleways properly. He asked to receive details as to how the Council defined the term 'improved' and how it cared for and maintained its cycleways given they did not appear to receive mainstream funding.

Councillor Doyle referred to page 21 of the report and advised there had not been a recent update from the Deputy Leader on the development of the Low Carbon Action Plan with regard to planting schemes in relation to the North East Community Forest and also how such issues would be embedded within planning policies. Ms Poulter replied that she would feedback on the issues raised by Councillor Doyle in respect of both Cycleways and the Low Carbon Action Plan.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Edgeworth, Ms Poulter confirmed that she would be able to provide a break down regarding the figures for residents feeling safe in their local area as reported on page 24 of the agenda.

Councillor Doyle referred to the section on city events and asked where the air show would sit within this going forward. Ms Poulter replied that she was unable to provide an answer but would ask the question and report back.

In response to Member enquiries as to what was the meaning of the reference to 'SN' on page 24 of the report, Ms Poulter replied that she believed it referred to Sunderland but that she would check and confirm.

In response to enquiries from Councillor Doyle regarding issues in respect of Councillors' emails and the impact of the exceptions list on network security, Ms Poulter advised that she was aware of the issues to which he referred and that she would put his questions to ICT and report back.

There being no further questions or comments for Ms Poulter, the Chair thanked her for her report and it was:-

2. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

### **Annual Scrutiny Work Programme 2022/23**

The Scrutiny, Mayoral and Member Support Co-ordinator submitted a report (copy circulated) attaching, for Members' information, the thematic Scrutiny Committee work programmes for 2022/23 and providing an opportunity to review the Committee's own work programme for 2022/23.

(For copy report – see original minutes.)

By way of an update, Mr Cummings advised that the Budget Planning items scheduled for the Committee's meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> November had been brought forward and would now be considered at the Committee's next meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> October.

Full consideration having been given to the report it was:-

3. RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Committees' work programmes for 2022/23 and the variations to these work programmes be noted, together with the current scrutiny budget position.

### **Notice of Key Decisions**

The Scrutiny, Mayoral and Member Support Co-ordinator submitted a report (copy circulated), providing Members with an opportunity to consider those items on the Executive's Notice of Key Decisions for the 28-day period from 10<sup>th</sup> August 2022.

(For copy report – see original minutes.)

Consideration having been given to the report, it was :-

4. RESOLVED that the Notice of Key Decisions be received and noted.

The Chair closed the meeting, thanking everyone for their attendance.

(Signed) D. E. SNOWDON,  
Chairman.