

Time Commenced – 6.00pm

Time finished – 7.48pm

Communities Scrutiny Review Board 22 November 2021

Present: Councillor Dhindsa (Chair)
Councillors Prosser, Sandhu, Atwal, Pandey, Jennings and Roulstone

In Attendance: Steve Caplan – Director of Property Services
Samantha Dennis – Director of Public Protection and Streetpride
Rachel North – Strategic Director of Communities and Place
Claire Davenport – Director of Leisure Culture and Tourism
Steven Danby – Highway Asset Team Leader
Mark Elliott – Library Services Manager
Collette Levers – Manager of Learning, Systems and Operations

16/21 Apologies for Absence

There were none.

17/21 Late items introduced by the Chair

There were none.

18/21 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

19/21 Minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

20/21 Future Libraries vision

The Board received a presentation on Future Libraries vision. This was presented by the Library Services Manager.

The Board noted that the statutory services delivered by Derby Libraries included:

- 5 public library sites: Mickleover, Alvaston, Normanton, Riverside, Local Studies
- Digital presence: eBooks, eAudiobooks, eNewspapers, eMagazines
- Catalogue
- The Home Library Service
- An Acquisitions Service

It was reported that Derby Libraries' future ambitions included:

- Expand knowledge
- Stimulate creativity
- Connect people
- Foster sense of community

The Board noted that for expanding knowledge, the key focus was literacy. It was reported that Derby Libraries were involving reading and speech to help children develop good literacy skills and were also supporting adults with low literacy skills. It was also noted that Derby Libraries were supporting adults and children to develop their digital skills and confidence.

It was reported that Derby libraries were continuing to stimulate creativity in different ways including:

- Expanding their coding offer into graphic art for young and old
- Promoting reading with events to engage children and adults
- Bid in partnership to create engagement activities / content
- Having events such as '150 years of Derby Libraries' with quizzes and writing competitions
- Local studies enabling others such as the Fifth World Theatre

It was noted that Derby Libraries were striving to connect people by offering the following services in safe, accessible, trusted spaces:

- Recruiting volunteers
- Encouraging Friends of the Library groups
- Reviewing and expand Home Library Service
- Staging activities e.g. Rhymetimes, Reading Groups
- Access to the Internet / social media

It was reported that Derby Libraries were fostering a sense of community through Derby Local Studies by developing digital content with partners and volunteers. It was noted that Derby Libraries were establishing knit and natter groups and were hosting events for women in Normanton. It was also noted Derby Libraries were supporting and hosting local poets.

It was reported that upcoming significant events for Derby Libraries included:

- Review of Community Managed Libraries
- Tender for the Library computer system
- Project Assemble
- Arts Council accreditation
- City of Culture bid

A councillor asked how Derby Libraries were working with DHA to expand the city's libraries offer. It was reported that Derby Libraries would be making an offer to DHA should their bid to the Arts Council be successful. It was reported that the

library system was set up to share and that there were no barriers to stop stock being shared between Council libraries and CML libraries.

A councillor asked whether figures for attendance and book usage across Derby could be provided. It was noted that the Board would be provided with these figures.

A councillor questioned whether local poets had been hosted in libraries outside the city centre. It was noted that this had been attempted, but that members of this group had indicated that they only wanted to attend poetry events in the Riverside Library.

The Board noted that Derby Libraries' home service was a small but invaluable service which provided books to individuals who were unable to visit libraries in person. It was noted that this service required volunteers and also delivered books to adult care homes.

The Chair questioned how long it would take for the Library Service to return to its pre-covid position. It was noted that some activities, such as adult literacy classes, had already returned with covid measures in place. It was also noted that for other activities with more attendees, people were still cautious about attending these. It was reported that libraries in some areas of the city were recovering quicker than others. The Chair asked for an update to be provided at a future meeting on how the Libraries Service was recovering.

A councillor asked whether library volunteers could be recruited from the Good Neighbour Programme and Community Action. The Director of Leisure Culture and Tourism informed the Board that they would look into this.

The Board resolved:

- 1. to note the update**
- 2. to request that an update on how the Libraries Service is recovering is brought to a future meeting.**

21/21 Pear Tree Library update

The Board received a verbal update on Pear Tree Library. This was presented by the Director of Property Services.

The Chair informed the Board that local councillors had been concerned that Normanton was losing a community asset when the Pear Tree library was sold. It was noted that the reason that the Pear Tree library was sold was because the predicted repair costs were too high. The Chair expressed concerns that the predicted repair costs may not have been accurate. The Chair commented that the building was now being used and that it appeared that the amount of money spent repairing the building was lower than the Council's prediction.

The Director of Property Services informed the Board that the Council's estimate for repair costs of £1-1.5m was based on completing necessary repairs to a standard that would provide a minimum 30-50 year lifespan. It was noted that the Council predicted that the new owner of the building had spent approximately £0.5m so far on repairs to the building. It was noted that the lifespan for the building provided by these works was unknown.

A councillor asked whether the Board could be provided with information on whether the new use for this building had resulted in a positive impact on the local area. The councillor also asked whether information could be provided on whether the new Normanton library had been successful. The Strategic Director of Communities and Place confirmed that the Board would be provided with this information, at a future meeting.

A councillor commented that it was important for future repair cost estimates to be accurate, so that the Council didn't lose further assets.

The Board resolved:

- 1. to note the update**
- 2. to request that, at a future meeting, Board members are provided with information on whether the new use for the Pear Tree library building had resulted in a positive impact on the local area; and on whether the new Normanton library had been successful.**

22/21 Locality working – Better Together vision

The Board received a presentation on Locality working – Better Together vision. This was presented by the Strategic Director of Communities and Place.

It was noted that Better Together was an organisation wide transformation of our working culture that would see the biggest organisational change in the history of Derby City Council. It was reported that Better Together would change the way the Council worked with communities, members and partners to enable cultural change within the organisation which in turn would enable social change and improved outcomes for Derby's communities.

It was noted that this was not a standalone Communities project led by one person, it impacted on the whole organisation and the way the Council does things in Derby, regardless of specialisms.

The Board noted that key aspects of Better Together included:

- System Change – We will champion change – working WITH not TO

- Collaboration – work across organisation and community boundaries – informed by individuals, aspirations and needs – NOT service delivery models
- Asset Based Approach – seeing communities and individuals as a strength – not a deficit to be fixed – offering the opportunity for meaningful relationships, choice and informed decisions
- Developing Resilience – using the strength of combined partnerships to support communities
- Resourceful – working together to identify resources and recognise our collective skills and reach.

It was reported that reasons why a shift in the Council's focus was needed included:

- To move away from short term initiatives and interventions
- Stop being the “parent” sorting out immediate issues triggered by complaints and Member queries
- Stop policing our partners, and being a conduit for handing out funding and paperwork for completion as evidence of activity
- We operate internally as separate functions that intervene with communities – the Council needs to be one body and one voice
- Obvious solutions are often missed due to a lack of ownership and collaboration

The Committee noted that the new focus would improve the life experience of Derby's communities by working with them to focus on addressing the root causes of wicked issues such as:

- Loneliness & Isolation
- Unemployment
- Low pay
- Financial exclusion
- Drugs and alcohol
- Domestic violence
- Digital exclusion
- Family breakdown
- Welfare dependency
- Poor urban environments
- Anti-social behaviour & crime
- Hunger and food insecurity

It was reported that Better Together would bring together the Council's services that support Derby's communities, collaborating with clear plans of activity that deliver a consistent and effective approach. It was noted that this included changing the way Derby's councillors interact with officers and the community to find solutions to problems that drive longer term social change.

It was noted that Better Together would allow the Council to facilitate the work of its partners, not leading but working with them to effect social change. It was also noted that the Council would be engaging differently with Derby's communities, identifying key influencers and gaining buy in to the change in approach. It was reported that this would help communities to help themselves and change their outcomes.

A councillor questioned whether Neighbourhood Teams would see change as part of Better Together. It was noted that Neighbourhood resources and Housing Officer resources would be combined to create a greater capacity for Neighbourhood Teams.

A member thanked the Strategic Director of Communities and Place for their presentation and for the work carried out on the Better Together Vision.

A councillor commented that the Spondon Neighbourhood Board worked very well and stated that it was important for Neighbourhood Boards in all wards of the city to work effectively.

The Chair stated that it was important to break down silos and that funding was needed to ensure that this vision was successful.

The Board resolved to note the update.

23/21 Highway Maintenance – Progress on £9million Investment

The Board considered a report on Highway Maintenance – Progress on £9million Investment. This report was presented by the Director of Public Protection and Streetpride and the Highway Asset Team Leader.

The Board noted that there was a current maintenance need of £64.1m for Derby's roads and footways. It was noted that there was an annual depreciation of £5.5m for roads and £1.5m for footways. It was noted that the proposed allocation for 2022/23 was £3.197m along with any available pothole grant funding.

It was reported that based on data driven decision making, Council Cabinet had awarded an additional £9million to provide improvements to the city's road and footway assets and to help reduce the maintenance need. It was noted that the Highways Team were delivering best value by

implementing change, including a greater focus on 'in-house' delivery based on better informed forward planning and co-ordination.

It was noted that the Council followed an Asset Management Approach which was a systematic and logical process in accordance with National Guidance. It was reported that the full funding allocation from DfT was dependent on the Council demonstrating this approach and that lifecycle planning was a key principle, which was expected as a minimum.

The Board noted that programme delivery had resulted in a total investment of £13.1million since the start of 2020/21. It was reported that further improvements would be delivered by further embedding the risk-based approach to other service areas such as gully emptying.

It was noted that completion of two full gully asset inventory surveys before and after winter in 2020/21 had identified:

- Approx. 42,000 gullies in total
- 14,000 gullies need to be cleansed on an annual cycle
- 18,000 gullies on a 2 year cycle (9k per year)
- 10,000 gullies on a 4 year cycle (2.5k per year)
- Annually 25,500 gullies per year to be cleansed (approx. 106 gullies per day)

It was reported that going forward a full inventory of carriageway and footways condition would be conducted to allow effective programming and planning of future works. It was noted that this would help the Council to deliver optimum treatment at the optimum time.

The Board noted that 392 carriageway resurfacing schemes had been delivered or were programmed in 2020/21 and 2021/22 and that 43 footway resurfacing schemes had been delivered or were programmed in 2020/21 and 2021/22. It was also noted that 125 preventative treatment schemes had been delivered or were programmed in 2020/21 and 2021/22.

It was reported that the Highways, Winter Maintenance and Street Lighting Service had recently won the APSE Best Service Team award for the delivery of 'in-house' highway maintenance works programmes. The Board congratulated the Highways, Winter Maintenance and Street Lighting Service on winning this award.

The Chair raised concerns that the annual funding of £3.197m would not be sufficient to cover the annual depreciation of £7m for roads and footways. The Board agreed that Cabinet should lobby government asking for funding to be raised to at least £7m to solve this issue.

A councillor questioned how long roads and footways would remain in a good condition if £64.1m was spent on maintenance. The Board noted

that there would not be the capacity to complete all of these works at once and that the roads and footways would begin depreciating immediately.

Resolved:

1. to note the delivery to date.
2. to note the ongoing work and the continued asset management approach to programmed and reactive highway maintenance.
3. to recommend that Cabinet write to the government requesting that funding for highway maintenance is increased to at least £7m per-annum rather than the proposed £3.197m.

24/21 Work Programme 2021/22

The Board considered a report setting out the Terms of Reference and Remit of the Board.

The report provided Members of the Board with the opportunity to consider its terms of reference and remit for the forthcoming municipal year, its work programme for 2021/22 and any topic reviews.

Resolved to note the information provided within the report.

Minutes End.