

Time commenced – 18:00

Time finished – 20:21

Corporate Services Scrutiny Review Board

14 January 2021

Present: Councillor Naitta (Chair)
Councillors Stanton (Vice Chair), A Pegg, McCristal and Nawaz

In Attendance: Verna Bayliss – Director of Planning, Transport and Engineering
Alison Parkin – Acting Director of Financial Services
Bernard Fenton – Head of Customer Service
Nigel Brien – Head of Traffic and Transport
Steve Caplan – Director of Property Services
Heather Greenan – Service Director for Policy, Insight, and
Communications

17/20 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Simon Riley.

18/20 Late items introduced by the Chair

There were no late items.

19/20 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

20/20 Minutes of the meeting held on 01 October 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 01 October 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

21/20 Strategic Partnership and Vision Commission Update

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director of Communities and Place on the Strategic Partnership and Vision Commission. This report was presented by the Service Director of Policy, Insight & Communications.

The Board noted that since the Board's last update in March 2020, work on the Vision Commission had been paused as the Council focused on recovering from the pandemic. It was noted that since the Board's last update the City Partnership Board had been re-launched.

It was reported that the Council had six principles for working in partnership:

- Collaborative
- Creativity

- Outcome focused
- Pace
- Community First
- With the City

It was noted that the City Partnership Board had previously been known as the 'Leadership Board'. It was reported that this board met monthly via Teams and had a thematic and dynamic agenda. The Board noted that the City Partnership Board was chaired by Councillor Poulter. It was reported that the City Partnership Board was composed of:

- Group leaders
- Outcome board chairs
- Public sector bodies
- Businesses
- Community

The Board noted that the City partnership Board focused on economic recovery, including city centre reinvention and youth unemployment. It was also noted that this board focused on community recovery, including the Better Together Initiative and the Poverty Commission.

It was reported that the draft recovery plan had three strands:

- Our place (confidence, diversity and de-carbonise)
- Our people (healthy citizens, resilient neighbourhoods and thriving children and young people)
- Our Council (enabled residents, intelligence led and empowered colleagues)

The Board noted that the Recovery Plan was short to medium term and that the Vision Commission was long term. The Board noted that the Vision Commission was chaired by Bishop Libby Lane and aimed to develop a framework to fulfil a future positive vision for Derby.

The Board noted that in response to the pandemic the Council was working with Dr Andy Cope to run well-being sessions. It was noted that these sessions were web based and aimed to support individuals and communities to build personal and collective resilience.

It was reported that the next steps were:

- Continue to develop and implement Recovery priorities
- Review of partnership boards and working groups to support delivery
- Engagement on how people are feeling about the City and its future
- Finalise Vision Commissioners and agree timescales in light of COVID
- Commission research based on agreed priority themes

A councillor questioned whether Partnership Working included engagement with smaller partners and whether the Medium-Term Financial Plan supported these projects. The Service Director for Policy, Insight, and Communications informed

the Board that smaller partners were engaged with through the Active Stronger Board and the Community Recovery Board. It was noted that the MTFP and the Recovery Plan were aligned. A councillor questioned whether the Recovery Plan contained measures of success and was informed that outcome plans would be developed over the coming months.

The Chair questioned whether the Recovery Plan would help those in the city suffering from poverty. The Service Director for Policy, Insight, and Communications informed the Board that through the Poverty Commission a commitment had been made in Autumn 2020 to investigate the underlying causes of poverty in Derby and to look into what interventions the Council could make.

Resolved to note the information provided within the presentation.

22/20 Covid-19 Impact on Car Parking

The Director of Planning, Transport and Engineering and the Head of Traffic and Transport presented the Board with an update on the impact of Covid-19 on Car Parking in Derby.

It was noted that management of parking was essential to support the social and economic systems that made cities like Derby function. It was reported that management of parking was critical to smooth traffic flows, as it provided places to park as well as managing appropriate restrictions.

The Board noted that the restrictions of the pandemic had changed the choices people made about parking. It was reported that there had been a significant impact on the demand for on and off-street parking, season tickets and contracts. The Board noted that parking demand had been impacted by:

- More people staying at home
- Reduced commuting
- Fewer visitors, particularly in the city centre
- Restrictions/closures of retail, culture and hospitality
- Reduction in use of public transport
- Redundancies of local employers and their supply chains

The Board noted the financial impact of the pandemic on car parking was:

- On street and off-street parking – 35% reduction
- Season tickets – 47% reduction
- Penalty Charge Notices – 43% reduction

It was reported that the restrictions imposed to manage the pandemic and the consequent impact on parking behaviour in Derby was typical of other UK cities and had been recognised nationally. The Board noted that the parking service continued to innovate and increase its use of technology through the MiPermit system. It was reported that ultimately, parking was driven by vibrancy and the attractiveness of areas like the city centre and would be considered in wider strategic plans for the city centre and decarbonization.

The Board noted that any surplus revenue received by the parking service went into the highways budget and was used on projects such as: resurfacing roads, equipment and parking innovation changes. It was noted that during the pandemic the Council had received some support from government for irrevocable and unavoidable losses.

A councillor asked whether the pandemic would continue to place pressure of the parking service. The Board noted that the pandemic would continue to impact the revenues of the parking service but that it was too early to know what the long-term impact would be.

The Board noted that MiPermit had adapted their technology to meet the Council's request and that MiPermit had won an international award for which Derby City Council was part of their package. A councillor questioned whether other options were available for residents who didn't use technology. The Head of Traffic and Transport informed the Board that officers would do their best to support residents who would need a paper permit and to minimise the need for them to come into the Council House.

A councillor commented that some individuals were renewing parking permits despite no longer living in Derby. The Head of Traffic and Transport informed the board that the parking service were looking at data to investigate instances of fraud.

The Chair questioned what the running costs were for multi-storey car parks in Derby. The Network Management Group Manager informed the Board that the annual costs of parking services were approximately £2.2m, about £1.2m of which was for the multi-storey car parks.

Resolved to note the information provided within the presentation.

23/20 Impact of COVID-19 on the Registration Service for Derby

The Head of Customer Service presented the Board with an update on the impact of Covid-19 on the Registration Service for Derby.

The Board noted that when the national lockdown was introduced in March 2020, the Government issued instructions to each Registration Service in England and Wales via the General Register Office, a department of the Home Office.

It was reported that the following restrictions were introduced in March 2020:

- Birth registrations were stopped
- Legislation was introduced to allow death registrations to be completed remotely, primarily over the telephone
- Marriage and civil partnership ceremonies were stopped

It was noted that in July 2020, restrictions for weddings and civil partnerships were eased, with attendance limited to much smaller numbers and subsequently 147 wedding and civil partnerships ceremonies were conducted. It was reported that ceremonies were halted again for a short time in November 2020.

The Board noted that as result of these restrictions and the general uncertainty that COVID-19 had brought, many couples decided to either cancel ceremonies, or postpone them to a future date; which in turn has had a significant impact on the income generated by the Registration Service in 2020-21.

It was noted that up to 30 November 2020 this had resulted in a loss of wedding and civil ceremony income of £111.8k, a 72.5% reduction on 2019-20 levels of income.

It was reported that notice of marriage fees had seen an income loss of £22,330. It was also reported that advanced marriage fees had seen an income loss of £89,525.

It was noted that the restrictions on ceremonies caused a number of couples to cancel or postpone their weddings or civil ceremonies beyond the 12 months the Notice of Marriage (NOM) remained valid, at which point a second NOM was required at a cost of £35. It was noted that the Council had taken the decision to waive the NOM fees in these circumstances, at a cost to date of £3.0k

The Board noted that COVID-19 restrictions had also had a smaller impact on the income generated from the production and issuing of certificates and copy certificates. It was reported that up to 30 November 2020 this has resulted in a loss of income of £6.5k, a 15.4% reduction on 2019-20 levels of income.

It was reported that up to 30 November 2020, the total loss in income for the Registration Service was £121.3k, a 61.8% reduction on 2019-20 levels of income. It was noted that in 2019-20 the income generated through certificate production and conducting wedding and civil ceremonies was £299k. It was also noted that applying a 61.8% reduction in income would result in a potential full year loss in income of £185k.

It was noted that since the first lockdown the registration service had been centralised at Oak House. A councillor questioned whether since the first lockdown the registration service had caught up with birth registrations. It was reported that the backlog in birth registrations would be caught up with by the end of February 2021 and that other local authorities were in similar positions.

A councillor asked whether emergency birth certificates could be issued. The Head of Customer Service informed the Board that exceptions could be made in some circumstances and asked for details to be sent to them.

Resolved:

- 1. To note the lost income for the Registration Services as a result of implementing COVID-19 legislation and measures.**
- 2. To fund the lost income from the COVID Emergency fund.**

24/20 Work Programme for 2020/21 Municipal Year

The Board considered a report setting out the Work Programme for 2020/21 Municipal Year.

Resolved to note the information provided within the report.

25/20 Updates on the Operation of “Core Buildings” Throughout the Pandemic and the Asset Disposal Program

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director of Corporate Resources on the operation of core buildings throughout the pandemic and the Asset Disposal Programme. This report was presented by the Director of Property Services.

It was noted that the Council’s buildings could be grouped as follows:

- City wide operational buildings, including
 - Council House
 - Kedleston Road
 - Rycote Centre
 - Stores road
- Public Service properties
 - Connexions building
 - Royal Oak House
 - Libraries
 - Leisure facilities inc. WC’s and parks
 - Connect buildings
 - Market Hall
- Schools and education
- People services
 - Arboretum and Perth House
 - Rosewood and Willows children’s homes

The Board noted that the unlocking of the first national lockdown which included the closing of schools, all non-essential facilities/series, shops and operations was managed in a phased way. It was reported that the government issued guidance as to what was required to re-open facilities in a “covid secure” way.

It was reported that the Council had established a Covid Board and an unlocking the lockdown group, chaired by the Director of property services. The Board noted that the unlocking group was advised by all directors of essential services.

It was reported that the facilities management team had put various covid secure arrangements in place prior to any reopening. It was noted that these had included, but were not limited to: a covid risk assessment, one way systems created, distance and general signage, sanitisation stations, screens, restricted use areas to increase distance, meeting rooms limited occupation , extra cleaning regimes, EIA’s, PPE where needed provided and any extra measures unique to each asset. It was reported that these measures could also include restricting occupation numbers and extra security.

The Board noted that the cost of all the covid implications had been collated by finance and Derby City Council had submitted costs claims to the government for direct covid related cost for reimbursement which to date equated to approximately £110k.

It was reported that the Council House and Stores road had maintained a limited state of openness throughout all the lockdown periods. The Board noted that the availability of these buildings had increased as they had become covid secure. It was reported that the key message to all staff had remained 'if you can work from home you should'. It was noted that in order to enter usual places of work staff needed to have the approval of managers and Facilities Management to attend locations, so that the Council could record movements and restrict numbers/building capacity.

The following updates on specific buildings were noted:

Kedleston Road – closed during initial lockdown. Currently being used to support children's services, training and DALs.

Ryecote centre – closed during initial lockdown. Reopened for DALs, but with reduced occupancy. As such some of the DALs activities that would normally operate from here, were currently operating from Kedleston Road.

Market Hall had been required to adapt to the restrictions specially related to retail operations which meant all of the hall was currently closed and that at other times essential retailers had been allowed to trade.

Connect buildings – The Council had contracts with the tenants it needed to comply with. Adaptations had been made to ensure all the facilities were covid secure for staff, tenants and visitors.

The Libraries had all reopened in a phased way and operated a click and collect service. Some of the libraries had been run by community services and the Council had supported them in reopening in a safe way.

Leisure, parks and public WC's had also opened in a phased way and with alterations to be covid secure. All locations had QR readers linked to the NHS app.

Schools and education properties had all reopened in accordance with their own individual safety assessments, meeting the government rules and overseen by education colleagues, school governors and the council's Health and Safety team.

Arboretum house & Perth House – There had been no changes throughout. There had been covid outbreaks and special and extra measures had been implemented with team bubbles implemented in order to have a phased operation.

Rosewood & Willows children's homes – closed for a period due to refurbishment – back with the service for operations. All other children's homes had remained operational throughout 2020

A councillor questioned whether Arboretum House was covid secure. The Director of Property Services confirmed that this building was covid secure and informed the Board that they had met with the Head of Health and Safety to ensure that measures were in place.

A councillor questioned whether the Kent variant of the virus had required further measures to be implemented. The Director of Property Services informed the Board that the Council was following national guidance which had not changed due to the Kent variant of the virus.

Resolved:

- 1. To note and acknowledge the operational use of the Council's core assets throughout the pandemic, to date.**
- 2. To note the Council's property asset disposal program.**

26/20 Exclusion of Press and Public

Resolved that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

27/20 Asset Disposal Program

The Committee received exempt information in relation to Item 09 - Updates on the Operation of "Core Buildings" Throughout the Pandemic and the Asset Disposal Program.

MINUTES END