

SCR - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON:

WEDNESDAY, 3 JUNE 2020 AT 9.00 AM

VIRTUAL MEETING



Present:

Councillor Colin Ross (Chair)	Sheffield City Council
Councillor Allan Jones	Doncaster MBC
Councillor Penny Baker	Sheffield City Council
Councillor Jeff Ennis	Barnsley MBC
Councillor Ken Richardson	Barnsley MBC
Councillor Peter Rippon	Sheffield City Council
Councillor Brian Steele	Rotherham MBC

Officers in Attendance:

Dr Dave Smith	Chief Executive	SCR Executive Team
Felix Kumi-Ampofo	Assistant Director Policy and Assurance	SCR Executive Team
Dr Ruth Adams	Deputy Chief Executive	SCR Executive Team
Steve Davenport	Principal Solicitor & Monitoring Officer	SCR Executive Team
Christine Marriott	Scrutiny Officer	SCR Executive Team
Gillian Richards	Minutes	
Stephen Batey	Head of Mayor's Office	SCR Mayor's Office

Apologies:

Councillor Dawn Dale	Sheffield City Council
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Absent:

Councillor Austen White	Doncaster MBC
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17 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were noted as above.

18 Voting Rights for Non-Constituent Members

It was noted that as from 1st April 2020 there were no Non-Constituent members on the Committee.

This item would be removed from future agendas.

19 Urgent Items/Announcements

None.

20 **Items to be Considered in the Absence of Public and Press**

None.

21 **Declarations of Interest by any Members**

None.

22 **Reports from and Questions by Members**

None.

23 **Questions from Members of the Public**

None.

24 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting Held on 30 January 2020**

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 30th January 2020 be agreed as a true record.

25 **Matters Arising**

With regard to item 13, the Committee was informed that the Bus Review was ready to be published, but due to the Covid-19 lockdown, publication had been delayed until such a time that the review could receive proper public attention.

It was noted that the meeting scheduled for the 15th October 2020 would now be held on 29th October 2020. The next meeting of the Committee would be on 23rd July 2020.

26 **SCR Economic Recovery Plan**

F Kumi-Ampofo gave the Committee an update on the SCR's Economic Renewal Plan.

Officers had consulted with the four local authorities and the private and third sectors to ensure that all views were considered when building the Renewal Plan.

The presentation detailed the engagement undertaken and a summary of the challenges presented by the Covid-19 crisis.

The draft objectives of the Plan were:

- To mitigate the worst effects of the crisis and deliver immediate socio-economic relief to the region's people, places and businesses.
- To accelerate the recovery from the economic recession currently underway.
- To drive a renewal of the socio-economic fortunes of South Yorkshire.

- To ensure full alignment with the SEP which was designed to address the longstanding fundamental, structural and systemic economic challenges holding back South Yorkshire.
- To help realise the LEP and MCA's three policy objectives of economic growth, inclusion and sustainability.

Significant engagement had taken place over the last few weeks, contacting over 100 people and approximately 40 organisations.

The presentation detailed feedback from the local authorities and businesses.

Businesses had been forthright in their responses, making clear the huge impact the crisis had on the way they did business; there was a risk of significant insolvencies and the worst-case scenarios suggested that 30% of SMEs could close.

To understand the potential impacts or challenges presented by Covid-19, officers had developed two scenarios for what the future could look like to set the backdrop for the Renewal Plan. These were detailed within the presentation.

Analysis showed that people and places that were worse off before Covid-19 hit were likely to be a lot worse off after.

Lessons learned from the 2008 recession showed that people entering the labour market at the time of a recession were significantly disadvantaged and for some it took up to a decade to close the gap and catch up with peers who had entered the labour market earlier.

Members noted that through the collation of extensive research and analysis, and stakeholder engagement, the challenges could be summarised based on the impact Covid-19 would have on the region's skills and jobs, businesses and organisations and places and people.

Places – with the long-term closure or failure of high street retailers the region's urban centres faced an uncertain future.

People – the significant loss of employment and training opportunities in the immediate term, which continued into the medium to long-term.

Employers – the widespread closure of businesses, including both SMEs and large corporations due to a lack of demand and/or inability to operate in the wake of Covid-19 impacts.

These were the three proposed priorities for the Renewal Plan and the presentation detailed measures for immediate relief for economic recovery and future adaptation for renewal and resilience.

The immediate focus would be on relief and sparking an early and substantial recovery. Medium to longer term interventions would evolve further as more

evidence came to light.

D Smith informed the Committee that the next stage was to use the priorities to generate detailed proposals for interventions to maximise support in these areas.

These would be broken down into a description of the initiatives that it was thought would have the most impact and some clarity about the impact the initiative would have, for example how much reduction in unemployment would be expected.

There would also be a division between the things that the Region could do for itself through the collective resources already available and the 'asks' of government for those things the Region couldn't do on its own.

Members discussed the potential devastation caused by unemployment rates although noted that there were some positives in the health and care sectors and also digital and technology.

Cllr Baker thanked F Kumi-Ampofo and D Smith for an excellent presentation. It was pleasing that green issues were included and it was also recognised that good education hubs were needed to support the creation of jobs.

Concerns were expressed about transport systems, especially the bus network.

D Smith agreed that public transport would be important going forward and it was vital that resources were used to best effect. Particular attention needed to be centred on the quality, reliability and frequency of services. Active travel would play an important role in enabling access to public transport and would be a viable alternative to using cars.

Cllr Rippon questioned how much confidence there was that a package could be put together to encourage employers, government etc. to invest in the region. South Yorkshire had lost out to other areas in the past.

D Smith replied that up to the current crisis there had been a concerted effort by the local authorities and other organisations and institutions to pull the region out of the 2008 recession.

A sustainable and modernised economy was being built that was taking advantage of new technology in manufacturing and education.

By 2018 South Yorkshire had achieved net growth in private sector jobs of 15,000; this had not been seen in a generation. The collective efforts were achieving the changes required; the crisis was a massive setback but having done it once there was confidence that it could be done again.

It was important not to lose sight of the goals and have confidence to continue with what the region had been shaping over the last few years and to share these efforts constantly with government. The more the region was being seen

to be working together the more powerful the message would be to government.

Cllr Ennis commented that it would take longer for some areas of South Yorkshire to recover, for example it would be easier for Sheffield due to their education and technology hubs, and he hoped that the Recovery Plan would take that into consideration.

The Chair summed up the following points:

- Assistance for SME's – figures estimated that 30% could close.
- The Committee had concerns around geographic and socio-economic unevenness.
- Barnsley and Doncaster were more disadvantaged than other areas
- The four local authorities need to ensure a unified approach.
- The opportunities that were there e.g. growth in the health care sector and educational hubs.
- Investment in the local supply chain.
- Universities would face challenges such as a drop in income from international students.
- The Renewal Plan would need to be adapted as circumstances changed.

F Kumi-Ampofo commented that the local supply chain was a key part of current thinking but there was also a need to consider the region's businesses that were part of the international supply chain.

Work was ongoing with universities to address any problems they may have.

Cllr Rippon requested that F Kumi-Ampofo and D Smith attend the next meeting of the Committee to give an update on the situation.

It was agreed that the following items should be included on the agenda for the Committee's next meeting on the 23rd July 2020.

- The Economic Renewal Plan
- The Energy Strategy
- Active Travel

Members were requested to email C Marriott with any further suggestions for agenda items.

The Chair thanked F Kumi-Ampofo and D Smith for a very comprehensive presentation.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 23 July 2020 at 1pm.

I, the undersigned, confirm that this is a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Signed

Name

Position

Date