

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

Meeting held 28 January 2021

(NOTE: This meeting was held as a remote meeting in accordance with the provisions of The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.)

PRESENT: Councillors Mick Rooney (Chair), Ian Auckland, Steve Ayriss, Ben Curran, Denise Fox, Tim Huggan, Douglas Johnson, Mike Levery, Cate McDonald, Sioned-Mair Richards and Jim Steinke

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 There were no apologies for absence.

2. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

2.1 No items were identified where resolutions may be moved to exclude the public and press.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

4.1 26th November 2020

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 26th November 2020, were approved as a correct record, with the exception of item 6 - Addressing the Climate Emergency – An Update on Progress, which was amended by the substitution of the following words for those in paragraph 6.6(d)(ii) ‘that this Committee takes on the role of the cross-party Climate Change and Sustainability Committee.

4.2 17th December 2020

The minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 17th December 2020, were approved as a correct record.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

5.1 There were no questions raised or petitions submitted by members of the public.

6. CENSUS 2021 - UPDATE ON ARRANGEMENTS IN SHEFFIELD

- 6.1 The Committee received a report of the Sheffield Census Engagement Team providing an update on the arrangements for the 2021 census in Sheffield.
- 6.2 Present for this item were Richard Crowther (Census Engagement Manager for North East Sheffield), Mandy Holden (Census Engagement Manager for West Sheffield), Councillor Terry Fox (Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Governance), James Henderson (Director of Policy, Performance and Communications) and Dan Chedgzoy (Assistant Census Liaison Manager).
- 6.3 The report was supported by a presentation from Richard Crowther, who referred to general information on the census, which was being organised by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the nature of information collected and how it was used to inform decisions, how personal information was kept secure, how the public would be supported throughout the census process and details of the census timeline. Mr Crowther further reported on how the census would be split up across the City, partnership activity in terms of how the City Council was helping in the process, details of how elected Members could help in the process, safety arrangements in the light of Covid-19 and contact details for the three Census Engagement Managers.
- 6.4 James Henderson reported that the Council had been supporting the three Engagement Managers over the last few months, and that a Local Authority Partnership Plan had been established, which set out the work required across the city in connection with how the ONS planned to engage with local community groups, specifically those communities where there may be barriers in terms of the completion of the census, such as language difficulties. The Council was very mindful of the fact that although residents could request a paper copy of the questionnaire, the census would be operated predominantly online, and therefore was working with the ONS to identify any particular communities where this was likely to create issues. This process had been very productive, and the Council would continue assisting the ONS in this regard, throughout the census process.
- 6.5 Dan Chedgzoy reported that he had been working with the Engagement Managers in connection with the planning for the census, as well as working with the English Core Cities Group in looking at how the data recovered was likely to differ given the current circumstances regarding the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 6.6 Mandy Holden stressed that the Engagement Managers would be free to assist with any enquiries through to May 2021, in connection with the census process.
- 6.7 Members of the Committee raised questions, and the following responses were provided:-
- The Council would be involved in the discussions regarding the likely distortion of data being recovered as part of the census, given the pandemic. This issue had also been raised at a meeting of the Core Cities. Any updates on this issue would be reported to this Committee.

- The ONS fully appreciated the difficulties that some communities may face, particularly given the additional problems presented by the pandemic. There would be a number of Census Support Centres across the city, with one being based in the Manor/Castle Ward, which would be run in partnership with the Good Things Foundation, and would provide support for local residents during the census process. It was not yet clear, given the current circumstances, whether or not residents would be able to visit such centres, so alternative arrangements, such as telephone contact, were currently being explored. Whilst the census was digital first, it was not digital only, and whilst the ONS would encourage people to complete the census online, anyone could request a paper copy.
- The ONS would be running an extensive Field Team, the staff of which would be knocking on residents' doors, asking if they required any help or support in terms of completing the census. In addition to this, the Engagement Team, working with the Council, was also linking with local community groups to make sure all residents would be fully supported.
- A Communal Establishments Team was working with the owners/landlords of communal flats, as well as registered social landlords, to ensure that appropriate access could be made to properties of all those residents requiring a paper version of the census. The Engagement Team was engaging with the Council Housing Service and Registered Social Landlords with regard to access to flats with a shared entrance. Visits to the properties were undertaken by the Household Team. The Communal Establishments Team would be carrying out enumeration of student flats, care homes, hotels, hostels and other shared accommodation which was managed.
- The ONS was confident that sufficient data would be obtained as part of the census process by the deadline of 4th May 2021. There were numerous options and plans in place to enable this to happen.
- In terms of security, the ONS was very mindful of the public's concerns regarding people knocking on their doors, particularly when being asked to provide personal information. A national campaign would be held prior to the commencement of the process, advertising the census, and providing assurances with regard to the reasons why staff working for the ONS would be calling at their property, and explaining exactly what information they would be asking for. The reason for staff calling at properties would not be asking for personal information, but asking if they required any help or support in terms of completing the census. There was obviously a limit as to what the ONS could do in terms of reassuring the public, but all staff would be required to carry relevant ID and only ask certain questions. In addition, the Council was also giving consideration to how the Local Community Response Teams could assist in this regard.
- Whilst there were powers to fine people for non-completion of the census, such powers were generally only used in those cases where people refused to complete the form. The ONS would much rather focus on the benefits of more people completing the census, therefore would concentrate more on

ensuring that there were no barriers stopping people from doing so. It was acknowledged that there were a number of reasons as to why some people might not be able to complete the census, such as if they had recently suffered a bereavement or were facing other serious difficulties. This would be noted by the field team, and such households would not be revisited.

- The ONS was engaging with all communities to provide help and assistance to those communities which were geographically concentrated, and where there were likely to be more reasons as to why residents were going to have problems completing the census, such as language barriers. Arrangements had therefore been made to ensure that the field teams visiting such households had additional resources, such as translation cards, containing standard phrases in multiple languages. As part of the process for the recruitment of staff in the field teams, the ONS had tried to recruit staff who were local to the areas where they would be working.
- The ONS would be running an extensive publicity campaign in the forthcoming weeks, which would include information bulletins and advertisements on TV, radio, external advertisement hoardings, newspapers and social media.
- Details of the contingencies in place if the census was not met, would be forwarded to Members of the Committee.
- The ONS was looking to achieve a 94% response rate across the country, with 80% returns in every local authority area. These targets had been based on previous response rates, and what was believed would be achievable this year. The Council was aware that, historically, response rates in Sheffield had been lower than the national average, and that this was the reason as to why the ONS was directing additional resources in the city, particularly with regard to community engagement. The ONS had drafted a Partnership Plan, with support from the Council, and the Census Engagement Team had been working very closely with those local communities across the city where response rates had been historically low. The Council would expect that a 95% response rate could be achieved, but this would still leave a significant number of households who had not completed the census. The ONS had a method of imputing the information in terms of the outstanding 5%, which would help to ensure that the final output from the census was as comprehensive as possible. It was important that there was detailed community engagement planning in place, which would involve the input of elected Members, through their knowledge of their respective Wards. For six weeks after the deadline date of 4th May 2021, the ONS would be carrying out a census coverage survey, where a certain number of postcodes would be selected, and census staff would call to such households, asking them to complete a shortened version of the census, with the information received being compared with the results achieved from the full census. This would enable the ONS to identify where there had been lower response rates and consequently, make any necessary adjustments.

- Council Members and officers would be having a debrief following this meeting, at which any issues of concern raised would be discussed. Members were encouraged to refer any such issues to Councillor Terry Fox.
- There were over 200 staff in the Field Team, who would be calling on households to check if they had received the census and offering any help or assistance in terms of completing it. The Census Area Managers would receive live management information throughout the census process, which would indicate where there had been issues in terms of response rates, and the Field Team staff would then be required to call at such households.
- All staff calling at households and any staff working at the Census Support Centres, if deemed safe to open, would be provided with full personal protective equipment.
- Whilst the ONS would already have an idea of those areas of the city where additional support would be required in terms of the completion of the census, the Field Team staff would respond by calling at households, where required, based on the live management information received throughout the process.
- Residents would have the option of completing the census on their doorstep if they so wished, but the ONS was mindful that some people may be wary of providing personal information in this manner. Such people would therefore be provided with a card, containing contact numbers in terms of where they could access help and support.
- It was important that students responded to the census, and those living away from home were required to complete the census at both the address they were currently living, as well as their main home address. The ONS had been in contact with the managers of halls of residence in the City, to make arrangements in terms of making contact with the students. Universities were also assisting in this process.
- Enquiries would be made to see if the presentation made at this meeting could be made at the meeting of Full Council, in either February or March.
- It was not believed that the ONS would be cross-checking residents addresses against those on the Electoral Register, as part of the census process, as there were restrictions in law as to what the Register could be used for.

6.8 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the information contained in the report now submitted and as reported as part of the presentation now made, together with the comments now made and the responses to the questions raised;
- (b) thanks Richard Crowther, Mandy Holden, Dan Chedgzoy, James Henderson and Councillor Terry Fox for attending the meeting and

responding to the questions raised; and

(c) requests that:-

- (i) enquiries be made as to whether the presentation now made could be made at the meeting of the Full Council, in either February or March 2021; and
- (ii) a booklet be produced containing frequently asked questions, and to include a number of those questions asked, and responses provided, at this meeting, for circulation to all Members of the Council.

7. DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21

7.1 The Committee received a report of the Policy and Improvement Officer (Alice Nicholson) containing the draft Work Programme for 2020/21.

7.2 Ms Nicholson referred to the update on the climate emergency, and stated that there may be a need to arrange a special meeting to enable this to be considered. She also made reference to Contextual Safeguarding as a further item the Committee may wish to consider, and reported on the progress of the proposed cross-party working groups regarding Food Poverty and Digital Poverty.

7.3 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the contents of the report now submitted, together with the comments now made; and
- (b) approves the draft Work Programme for 2020/21.

8. FOLLOW UP TO THE COMMITTEE'S CONSIDERATION ON 17TH DECEMBER 2020 OF THE SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL UPDATE ON THE END OF THE EU TRANSITION PERIOD

8.1 The Committee received a report of the Director of Policy, Performance and Communications containing details of the action/progress with regard to a number of issues raised by Members, as part of the consideration of this issue, at its meeting held on 17th December 2020.

8.2 Members of the Committee raised questions, and the following responses were provided:-

- The Economic and Environmental Wellbeing Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee had an item on its Work Programme on 'Update on Business Recovery' for consideration at its meeting on 23rd February 2021, so the suggested issue now raised regarding the economic impact following the end of the EU transition period, specifically regarding small businesses, could be considered as part of this item.

- The Local Resilience Forum EU Transition Cell had met yesterday, and which had been attended by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, and the issue of settled status was raised with them, which they promised to take away from the meeting and give consideration.
- The Rural Strategy, which would pick up on how the Council managed its farms, would be referred to the Economic and Environmental Wellbeing Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee for consideration.

8.3 RESOLVED: That the Committee notes the contents of the report now submitted, together with the comments now made and the responses to the questions raised.

9. SCRUTINY OVERVIEW - ISSUES TO RAISE FROM THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

9.1 Councillor Cate McDonald reported that the Healthier Communities and Adult Social Care Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee had considered health inequalities, which had included looking at the Health Impact Assessment, commissioned by the Health and Wellbeing Board.

9.2 Councillor Ben Curran stated that the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee (a) had considered the South Yorkshire Fire Service Integrated Risk Plan and housing repairs at its last two meetings, respectively and (b) would be looking at homelessness, specifically in the light of the Covid-19 pandemic and the Community Safety Partnership, at its meetings in February and March 2021, respectively.

9.3 Councillor Mick Rooney reported that (a) the Children, Young People and Family Support Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee had (i) considered the Annual Reports of the Sheffield Children Safeguarding Partnership and the Sheffield Sexual Exploitation Service 2019/20 at its last meeting, and (ii) met with the Sheffield Youth Cabinet, and arranged an invite for them to attend the Digital Inclusion Seminar, and (b) two members of the Sheffield Youth Cabinet would write a joint report with Council officers regarding the current situation in terms of schooling.

9.4 Councillor Denise Fox reported that the Economic and Environmental Wellbeing Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee had received an update on the progress of the Local Plan at its last meeting.

9.5 The Committee noted the information now reported.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

10.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Thursday, 11th February 2021, at 10.00 am.

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