

Economic Development and Skills Policy Committee

Meeting held 20 December 2023

PRESENT: Councillors Martin Smith (Chair), Minesh Parekh (Deputy Chair), Henry Nottage (Group Spokesperson), Kurtis Crossland, Brian Holmshaw, Abdul Khayum, Barbara Masters and Laura Moynahan

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 An apology for absence was received from Councillor Terry Fox.

2. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 Councillor Nottage declared an interest in item 11 due to him being a business owner that had received a carbon audit under a Shared Prosperity Fund scheme.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 The minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 8th November, 2023 were approved as a correct record.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

5.1 No petitions or public questions were received.

6. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

6.1 A schedule of questions to the Chair, submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16, and which contained written answers, was circulated. Supplementary questions, under the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 16.4, were asked and were answered by the Chair.

7. WORK PROGRAMME

7.1 The Principal Democratic Services Officer presented the Work Programme.

7.2 A member asked for an update on the LGBTQI+ item that had no timescale on the work programme. The Director of Economy, Skills and Culture assured the committee that work was underway on this project and a consultation was planned for the new year. An informal briefing for members would be arranged for the new year.

- 7.3 Members suggested that it may be a good idea to consult the Local Area Committees (LACs) on the Culture Strategy and officers advised that some engagement work had already started with stakeholders within the sectors and the LACs could also be incorporated.
- 7.4 There was a suggestion that early engagement be carried out with businesses on workplace parking schemes and their potential impact and this be added to the work programme.
- 7.5 A member asked about the Employment and Skills Strategy and whether the planned task and finish group was underway. The Director of Economy, Skills and Culture explained that a procurement exercise had not been successful, this would be reconsidered in the new year and therefore there was a delay in bringing this to fruition.
- 7.6 It was noted that the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee had recently had excellent presentations from care leavers about their experiences and it was suggested that the Economic Development and Skills Policy Committee would benefit from a similar presentation from someone that had been impacted by the employment and skills service.
- 7.7 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY** that, having considered if they required any further additions or adjustments:-
1. the Committee's work programme, as set out in Appendix 1 be agreed, including any additions and amendments identified in Part 1
 2. consideration be given to the further additions or adjustments to the work programme presented at Part 2 of Appendix 1;
 3. Members give consideration to any further issues to be explored by officers for inclusion in Part 2 of Appendix 1 of the next work programme report, for potential addition to the work programme.

8. 2023/24 Q2 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

- 8.1 This report brings the Committee up to date with the Council's outturn position for Quarter 2 2023/24 General Fund revenue position

- 8.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Economic Development and Skills Policy Committee:-

Notes the updated information and management actions on the 2023/24 Revenue Budget Outturn as described in this report

8.3 Reasons for Decision

- 8.3.1 To record formally changes to the Revenue Budget

8.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

8.4.1 The Council is required to both set a balance budget and to ensure that in-year income and expenditure are balanced. No other alternatives were considered.

9. **GRANT AGREEMENT BETWEEN SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL AND DOCFEST 2024-2026**

9.1.1 The committee considered a report seeking approval to grant International Documentary Festival Sheffield (DocFest) with a total of £100,000 per year to be expended over a 3 year term to support the delivery of the 2024, 2025 and 2026 DocFest events in Sheffield, the detail of which will be agreed and signed by way of a grant agreement.

9.1.2 Members asked questions about sustainable travel options for delegates attending the festival and Annabel Grundy, Managing Director of DocFest explained that once in Sheffield, the venues were located such that delegates were able to walk between them.

9.1.3 Members noted that this was a three year funding agreement and asked how they would be updated on the progress of the event achieving sustainability. It was noted that the three year agreement tied in with other funding streams and the ability to leverage against these. Three years would help the event to be ambitious and diversify its sources of funding and they were very grateful for the commitment. An extensive annual report was available and there were regular touchpoints to note progress. It was agreed that a report would be brought to the committee after the next DocFest had taken place.

9.1.4 It was highlighted that a key focus for the future was the community impact of the event, to make sure that local people felt involved and to link up with other Yorkshire based events that had community outreach functions. Monthly screenings were available at the Showcase Cinema and local growth was another important objective.

9.1.5 It was acknowledged that sustainable funding for SCC's events programme was needed and officers were working on this.

9.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Economic Development and Skills Policy Committee:-

- a) Awards a 3-year grant to DocFest for the sum of £100K a year for 3 years to support the delivery of DocFest in Sheffield in 2024, 2025 and 2026; and,
- b) Notes that the funding will be drawn from the Strategic Major Events Fund
- c) Requests an annual report be submitted to the committee following DocFest 2024

9.3 **Reasons for Decision**

9.3.1 Providing a three-year grant agreement ensures stability and certainty for Sheffield DocFest and the Council whilst DocFest continue to grow. It ensures that the new senior team at DocFest are in a position to plan ahead and develop the Festival. The grant supports DocFest in being able to lever more external funding from national bodies to ensure its long-term viability. It also ensures Sheffield continues to benefit from the economic impact the Festival delivers to our various organisations and businesses (including vulnerable sectors such as hospitality). The timing of DocFest 2024 in June provides a fantastic platform to showcase the regeneration and developments in the city centre to this diverse and 'out of town' audience. The Council will be able to review its position in 2026.

9.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

9.4.1 Providing no grant for Sheffield DocFest would likely result in the permanent withdrawal of DocFest from Sheffield or a significant reduction in the quality and breadth of the Festival, risking its international reputation, community outreach and/or future relocation to an alternative city. This would result in the approximate £2,000,000 delegate spend per year being lost, and would also have the effect of reducing the city's profile and reputation within the creative community inside and outside of Sheffield.

10. **SYMCA EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS STRATEGY BRIEFING**

10.1.1 Members received a presentation from the Director of Skills, South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) on their Employment and Skills Strategy, due to be agreed in March 2024, detailing the three key mission areas. The importance of the interface between the MCA strategy and the local strategy was emphasised and members highlighted that the issue of inequality needed to feature more strongly in the strategy.

10.1.2 A discussion took place around the key challenges that the strategy faced and the Director identified the need for all stakeholders to work together to ensure that residents could access the support they needed. Members also asked questions on the following areas;

- The involvement of trade unions to ensure the needs of employees as well as employers were met and it was noted that a webinar would take place in January to reach out to as many people as possible.
- The impact of the closure of the Peaks Campus of Sheffield College on 16 to 24 year olds and it was acknowledged that there were some cold spots and it was important to get the careers provision right for all young people.
- The skills gap in green technologies and ensuring that we have the skills we need to achieve net zero targets

10.1.3 It was agreed that inequality was not addressed strongly enough within the strategy and although engagement had been carried out with the third sector this needed to be evidenced further. It was also acknowledged that not everyone can access conventional training programmes and therefore a range of different models was required.

- 10.1.4 It was highlighted that the interface between the MCA's strategy and the local strategies were important to deliver some of the local work and it was confirmed that the MCA would be commissioning local learning, so grant funding would be available to local authorities.
- 10.2 The committee agreed to note the update, thanked the Director of Skills for their time and requested a further update be brought back to the committee next year.

11. UKSPF UPDATE

- 11.1.1 The committee considered a report providing a progress update in respect to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) programme in Sheffield. In doing so the report also highlights concerns about the lack of certainty in relation to what might replace SPF from April 2025.
- 11.1.2 Members asked why a climate impact assessment had not been completed for this report and it was explained that all the projects covered by the report had been to the committee already with their assessments completed and therefore it was not necessary on this occasion.
- 11.1.3 Members asked for reassurance that there were sufficient resources available to complete the projects given that a number of them stated that there had been 'zero spend to date'. It was confirmed that there would be no shortfalls.
- 11.1.4 A question was asked about how individual organisations could access SPF funding and it was advised that they contact the culture team who would be able to assist in the writing of bids.
- 11.1.5 Members requested an update on High Street Business Information Officers and it was agreed this was a good suggestion as they work closely with both local businesses and LACs.
- 11.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Economic Development and Skills Policy Committee:-
1. Notes the progress of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund programme in Sheffield and
 2. Shares the concerns raised in respect to future funding for economic development activity.

11.3 Reasons for Decision

- 11.3.1 This report provides Committee with a full update of the UKSPF programme to date and confirms that funding is available to complete all project activity through to March 2025.
- 11.3.2 The report provides an opportunity to highlight concerns about the ability to deliver similar activity in the future given no current indication of what will replace UKSPF in 25/26.

11.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

11.4.1 The provision of an update report does not require an options assessment.

12. SOCIAL VALUE

12.1.1 The Sheffield Employability Programme Manager presented an overview of the Social Value Annual Report to the committee. A list of achievements was included in addition to specific case studies and new sectors that had been involved this year such as Care and Fleet Services.

12.1.2 Members noted that many of the organisations involved were larger organisations and it was explained that lots of work took place with the voluntary sector and charity partners and that significant improvements had been made in this area. The Diverse Business Board had decided to look into this and to help SMEs bid for contracts.

12.1.3 Members asked whether contractors acknowledged the benefits of Social Value or whether it was viewed as a cost and it was noted that there were a list of benefits that could be demonstrated, such as a more diverse workforce and it was suggested that these could potentially be developed into recommendations to the other policy committees.

12.2 The Director of Economy, Skills and Culture agreed to further articulate the economic impacts and benefits to employers using case studies. The committee resolved to note the report .