



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRANSPORT AND CLIMATE EMERGENCY
SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: WEDNESDAY, 28 AUGUST 2024 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Waddington - Chair

Councillor Bajaj
Councillor Chauhan
Councillor Porter

Councillor Batool
Councillor Osman
Councillor Singh Sangha

Also present:

Sir Peter Soulsby – City Mayor
Councillor Geoff Whittle – Assistant City Mayor for Environment and Transport
Councillor Molly O'Neill – Chair of the Task Group on Examining EV Charging Points

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87. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Councillor Rae Bhatia. Councillor Chauhan substituted.

Apologies were received from Councillor Dr Barton. She would join online.

88. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any interests they may have had in the business to be discussed.

There were no declarations of interest.

89. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

It was raised that there had been inaccuracies in minutes from 2023. In the meeting of 27 July 2023, Cllr Batool gave apologies, but this was not noted in

the minutes. This was noted by the Commission.

AGREED:

- 1) That the minutes of the meeting of the Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission held on 18 July 2024 be confirmed as a correct record.
- 2) That the minutes of the meetings on 27 July 2023 approved by the Chair be amended in the above respect to correct an inaccuracy subsequently discovered.

90. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair reminded the Commission that the first meeting of the informal scrutiny to consider bus lane operating hours would be on 4th September.

Executive members were reminded that the response to the recommendations of the informal scrutiny task group on 20mph zones was still being awaited by the Commission.

91. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer reported that none had been received.

92. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that none had been received.

93. MARKET PLACE - QUESTIONS TO CITY MAYOR

The City Mayor attended the meeting to answer questions from members of the Commission regarding potential proposals for the market place.

The Chair noted that a preferred option was still to be decided upon, and once it was, it would be considered by the Commission.

The City Mayor gave some background on the issue and noted that:

- Whilst the area had been used as a market place for around 800 years, for much of this time its use had been flexible to include uses other than markets.
- It had become clear that the stalls and roof had become worn down.
- Previously, out of trading hours, the space had become an intimidating area for the public and people had not wanted to walk through or around it.

- The roof cover had meant that the space was unsuitable to be used for other purposes.
- It had been decided to replace the roof and reinvest in the market place. When the roof was taken down, it had been thought as to whether a similarly inflexible structure was desirable given what had been revealed, and whether it would be more desirable to have a space that could be used more flexibly and also allow the facades of adjacent buildings to be seen.
- The City Mayor was intensely aware that traders were understandably troubled at the prospect of not returning to the original site.
- The City Mayor had met with traders and had constructive discussions. They had put their case strongly and the City Mayor understood their concerns.
- Broadly speaking, the options for the future location of the market were:
 - Return to the original proposal with the market in the original location in front of the Corn Exchange.
 - Keep the market on Green Dragon Square.
 - Use space being cleared between Green Dragon Square and Cank Street.
 - Locate the market in front of the Food Hall, keeping a portion of the remainder of the space in front of the Corn Exchange open and flexible in terms of use.
- The City Mayor would meet with traders again once the preferred option was confirmed. There would then be a process of consultation which would invite comments on the proposed option. During this consultation period there would be a further opportunity for scrutiny to ask questions and comment.

The Commission was invited to ask questions and make comments and the City Mayor to respond. Key points included:

- The City Mayor had looked at markets around the country and had reported back on how good several were. However, this did not necessarily mean that they could be copied.
- Once the old market had been demolished the potential of the space was revealed. Many had questioned whether returning to the traditional layout of the market in that location was the best use of the space. Planning permission had already been granted to develop across the whole space, and it could still be decided to return to this option. However, other options had seemed attractive and were worth considering.
- In terms of contractors, they had been brought in to take down existing stalls and clear the space. Contractors were keen to proceed once a decision was made.
- In terms of timescale, it was aimed to talk with traders in the next three-to-four weeks, after which there would be a consultation over approximately six weeks. Whichever option was chosen, it would not be

delivered instantly. The more elaborate the solution, the longer it would take to deliver.

- In terms of planning, any solution would need a further planning application and consent. This was an argument for sticking with the original plan. However, there was a once in a lifetime opportunity to think about how the space was used so it was important to get this right, even if it took slightly more time.
- Costs would depend on which option was taken. The original scheme would be one that was costly. It was thought that other solutions ought to be containable within the original costs and could possibly even be cheaper. This would need to be worked out before a decision was made as cost was important.
- The Director for Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment noted that almost all traders had relocated to the Temporary Market site on Green Dragon Square, and most of those were still trading. Rents were still charged but at a discounted rate to support traders during the period of the disruption.
- The timeframe for when the redeveloped market would be open, and trading would depend on the option chosen. It was thought that the longest option would be to rebuild on the Cank Street link and the quickest would be to keep the market on Green Dragon Square. It was further thought that the next quickest option would be to put a structure on part of the market square and it was thought that the original proposal would take some time.
- It was planned to invite comments on the proposed solution. Time and cost needed to be taken into account.
- In response to concerns raised over what had happened with the market in Nottingham, the City Mayor suggested that the Council could learn from what had happened in Nottingham.
- In response to concerns raised about the attractiveness of the surrounding buildings, it was stated that amongst those in support of leaving the space open were the Civic Society due to the facades being revealed.
- The project should consider how Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) could be managed, particularly when the market was closed at night.
- It was reiterated that there was a lot of construction work associated with the original scheme and that the Cank Street link option would also take a long time as it would involve demolition and design. Construction on only part of the square could be less problematic, however, experts would need to be consulted to inform the way forward.
- It needed to be ascertained what would be deliverable, and what time and cost it would take.
- The City Mayor stated that it had been a pleasure to work with the market traders who were passionate about their businesses and their stake in the market, and who had put forward constructive suggestions.

AGREED:

That Scrutiny is given an opportunity to comment on the proposed option.

94. EXAMINING ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING POINTS IN LEICESTER - INFORMAL SCRUTINY

The Chair proposed an agenda variance for Examining Electric Vehicle Charging Points in Leicester – Informal Scrutiny was taken next.

The Chair of the task group submitted a report examining electric vehicle charging points in Leicester. The Commission were asked to note the report and support the recommendations set out in paragraph 1.2 of the report.

Key points included:

- There was still a long way to go to meet the government deadline of 2035 (production of petrol vehicles to cease).
- Analysis was ongoing for use of LEVI funding and examining how to match local needs and requirements.
- In terms of the potential effect on the National Grid, capacity was lacking for a mass move to electric vehicles.
- Possible options to explore in the future related to converting existing petrol stations to electric charging stations.
- In terms of private sector provision, charging points could be provided based on supply and demand. This could be better for some consumers, but would mean that charging points would only be installed where profitable.
- There needs to be further examination of driving habits in the city. For those working in the city, many take public transport due to limited parking options.

The Committee were invited to ask questions and make comments. Key points included:

- In terms of the timescale implementation for recommendations it was emphasised that there was reliance on central government, and it was currently unclear as to what their approach for local authorities would be. The Council had submitted ahead of deadline for LEVI funding, but no further details had been received.
- Officers were in the process of developing strategies (encompassing the recommendations) and hopefully would look to adopt something within 6-9 months of receiving guidance from central government. It was acknowledged that the new government had other priorities and that there had been a parliamentary recess.

The Chair asked Councillors to agree the recommendations put forward.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That comments made by members of this commission to be taken into account by the lead officers.
- 3) That the report be presented to the Executive and the response from the Executive be brought back to the Commission.

95. WORKSPACE DEVELOPMENT

The Director of Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment submits a report providing members of the commission with an update on the delivery of new workspaces at Dock 3/4/5, the Ian Marlow Centre and at Pilot House, which have all been part funded by the Levelling Up Fund.

The Director of Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment introduced the report and noted that the strategy responded to a shortage of suitable land and premises and the report was an update on levelling up schemes and investment through this. The programme being delivered was very substantial.

The Head of Economic Regeneration then presented the report. Key points highlighted included:

- For many years workspaces had been progressed as a tool of development.
- The Levelling-Up scheme had been competitive and the Council had needed to bid for the funding for these projects.
- In the conclusion of the programme, the Council would be directly managing ten workspaces with a further two that had been developed over recent years that were managed by East Midlands Chamber on behalf of the Council.
- Currently the Economic Regeneration service managed six workspaces, these included the LCB Depot, Makers Yard and Phoenix Square Workspace, Dock 1 and Dock 2 at Space City and Gresham Works.
- Gresham Works had been opened in the Spring of 2022 in the building that used to be Fenwick's Department Store. This included co-working spaces for people in the city centre.
- The workspaces were aimed at priority economic sectors such as creative industries or the wider knowledge economy.
- There were currently over 91,000 square feet of space for business tenants and accommodating over 650 employees directly. These also had a wider supply chain impacting the wider city and beyond.
- The capital projects mentioned in the report would deliver a 120% increase in workspace in a short amount of time. Once fully occupied, the portfolio would house more than 1100 jobs.
- Dock 3/4/5 followed on from the existing workspace of Dock 1 and 2,

which had been very popular and had high occupancy. Dock 3/4/5 comprised three further buildings including nine industrial units. In Docks 1 and 2, industrial units had been popular.

- Sustainability credentials were important, and the Council had led the way in bringing forward sustainable development. Dock 3/4/5 were net-zero builds which included a range of sustainability measures including EV charging and air source heat pumps.
- Dock 3/4/5 had been developed by the Council's development team and were completed by development partner Brackley Construction in May 2024, and the buildings were in the process of being fitted out before new tenants moved in. Several companies were moving in from early September and a public launch was planned for 2nd October.
- The Ian Marlow Centre had been part of the same levelling up fund proposal which would provide further workspaces across 21 new units. These were also sustainable with a high energy performance rating. It made use of solar panels and was well insulated. It was aimed for completion in October 2024.
- Pilot House built on the strength of creative industries in the city, with Leicester having a significant cluster of creative design businesses. The building was a collection of six buildings that were council owned but were underutilised. The project was bringing these buildings into a single complex and provided 29 different workspaces with a cafe, meeting, conference and exhibition facilities.
- Pilot House would also be a sustainable development, albeit that the project involved the refurbishment of a series of heritage buildings rather than new build which restricted what was possible from a sustainability perspective. Despite these limitations, roof insulation and solar panels had been installed and a good sustainability rating was targeted.
- The Pilot House project was on track to open in Summer 2025 and there had been good work done in terms of the refurbishment. There had been strong early interest in the scheme and 24% of the space had already been pre-let.
- Marketing for the Pilot House project would feature in the LCB20 celebration of the twenty-year anniversary of the opening of LCB Depot.

The Commission was invited to ask questions and make comments and the officers to respond. Key points included:

- The projects were praised, particularly in terms of the use of the sites and jobs created.
- Section 3.3 of the report outlined the number of units and companies anticipated. The Council had some experience of managing similar space. Dock 3/4/5 anticipated 54 businesses moving in.
- In terms of collaboration with the universities, De Montfort University was a key partner helping to attract inward investment in the creative sector and to attract graduates to take up jobs in the area.

- In response to a question about whether the land could have been better used for housing, the Deputy City Mayor for Housing, Economy and Neighbourhoods explained that whilst housing was important, it was also necessary to provide for employment uses based on strategic need.
- With regards to an observation that a lot of the land at the Ian Marlow centre appeared to be a car park, it was explained that the scheme was intended for industrial/commercial uses, and as such vehicular access for heavy goods vehicles needed to be provided, along with space for their large turning circles.
- In response to further queries about parking, it was noted that LCB Depot did not have parking as it was a city centre site and therefore it was desirable to encourage use of sustainable transport. Pilot House would include people working in arts and design and as such there was less need for delivery access when compared to the Ian Marlow Centre. There was a lower ground floor basement for some delivery access and cycle storage, but there were limited number of car spaces as it was necessary to encourage sustainable travel such as cycling or public transport.
- With regard to a point made about the glass roofs at Pilot House, it was noted that experts had been employed to maximise sustainability and see where improvements in that area could be made. It was further noted that glazing provided a nice environment to attract businesses to move in.
- With regard to the plan to have a café at Pilot House, it was clarified that this was based on the success of the café at the LCB Depot, which added a sense of community as well as attracting wider audiences and encouraging the general public to use the building. It was not intended to run the café in-house and there would be a procurement process to bring in a commercial operator to run it. This would also create an opportunity for rental income, this would need to be ascertained at the procurement stage.
- It was clarified that the two workspaces at Leicester Food Park and Friars Mill were being managed by East Midlands Chamber rather than by the Council. This outsourced management arrangement was required as a condition of European funding at that time.
- In relation to the distinction between these workspaces and those managed by the Estates and Building Services Division, the purpose of the Economic Regeneration workspace portfolio is to support businesses in priority economic sectors (for example the creative industries). This was achieved through building a community of business and providing a range of support services at each site. Other workspaces in the corporate estate portfolio are held for a different investment purpose, e.g. for capital appreciation and the generation of ongoing revenue income, rather than providing sector support.

AGREED:

That the update be noted.

96. RALLY PARK UPDATE

The City Transport Director submitted a report providing members of the Commission with an update on progress of the Rally Park Project.

Slides were presented as attached with the agenda pack. Additional points included:

- Work is currently taking place on phase 1.2 which fitted well with school holidays. Phase 1.1 would follow.
- Key improvements were to be made with park entrances with a view to creating better access to nearby schools.
- Upcoming changes along walking routes would increase visibility and tackle issues with anti-social behaviour.

The Commission was invited to ask questions and make comments and the officers to respond. Key points included:

- A request for a breakdown of costs was agreed.
- The need for CCTV with the park being a through route to schools was emphasised.

AGREED:

That the update be noted.

97. AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN CONSULTATION

The City Transport Director submitted a report providing details on the proposed new Air Quality Action Plan for Leicester and associated consultation and advising members of the commission of the process by which they may provide comments for the plan.

Slides were presented as attached with the agenda pack. Additional points included:

- NO₂ Compliance was achieved across all 5 sites in monitoring year 2023.
- Diesel cars were the major contributing vehicle to NOx emissions (55%)
- Work to deploy electric buses has significantly reduced bus emissions.

The Commission was invited to ask questions and make comments and the officers to respond. Key points included:

- Management of traffic flows using signalling and smart controllers would be looked into when opportunities arose.
- Officers were engaging with schools and families providing educational

materials and are also connecting with businesses regarding sustainability. Councillors were also encouraged to engage.

- City air quality is monitored via Zephyrs positioned throughout the city & through virtual measuring.
- There is a current planning review and colleagues are taking advice at this early stage.

AGREED:

That the update be noted.

98. WORK PROGRAMME

It was requested that the report on post-LLEP arrangements include support provided to businesses.

A report on City Centre Improvements could potentially to come to the next meeting. It was requested that this include reasons for the apparent relative success of Fosse Park in comparison to the city centre and lessons that could be learned.

It was requested that an item come to the Commission on the Local Plan once a report had been completed by the inspector.

The work programme was noted.

99. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There being no other items of urgent business, the meeting closed at 19:38.