



Leicester
City Council

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

Held: WEDNESDAY, 12 OCTOBER 2022 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Joel (Chair)

Councillor Porter
Councillor Rae Bhatia

Councillor Sandhu
Councillor Valand

Councillor Waddington
Councillor Whittle

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105. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Joel as Chair of the Commission led on introductions and welcomed Members to the Commission.

The Monitoring Officer noted that apologies of absence had been received from Councillor Fonseca.

106. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Sandhu declared that in relation to the Item on Leicester Labour Market Annual Report and Textiles Community Renewal Fund Projects, his wife owned a textile business in the city and would be participating in the discussions of the item with an open mind.

There were no other declarations of interest.

107. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Councillor Waddington raised points around minute item 100 on the Leicester Enhanced Bus Partnership and the points raised around the route of the Hopper which was discussed at the last meeting which was to be introduced and it was suggested to include the train station on its route as it would be beneficial.

The Director of Planning, Development and Transportation noted that the renovation works would commence with demolitions scheduled following March 2023. It was further noted that the pilot scheme of the Hopper would not include the train station as it would not help people using the service to familiarise themselves with the route. However, it was noted that the initial introduction was a trial and if the opportunity to connect to the train station in the future arose, this would be supported.

Councillor Waddington also noted that during the discussion at minute 99 of the minutes on the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) at the 5 ways Junction that the Director of Planning, Development and Transportation agreed to take into considerations comments raised by Members of the Commission on the knock-on implications for residents in the area.

The Director of Planning, Development and Transportation noted that the team were in the process of drawing the information that was collected together and that the Information would be shared with the Member once available.

The Chair requested that she be included in any response that is provided to the Member.

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Economic Development, Transportation and Climate Emergency 31 August 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.

108. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Chair invited Nicola Royale to address the Commission with the two questions that had been submitted.

Nicola Royale took the opportunity to note that, she submits the questions as a representation of Climate Action Leicester and Leicestershire.

Does the Council have plans to ensure the electricity grid is upgraded so there is more capacity for increased electricity demand, for example to heat homes and power cars?

The Deputy City Mayor for Transport, Clean Air and Climate Emergency provided a response to the question. It was noted that The Deputy City Mayor was pleased that Climate Action Leicester and Leicestershire were engaging with the Carbon Neutral Road Map.

Leicester City Council were working with others who share the responsibility particularly the government to try and ensure that the efforts were made to support the City Council to meet the ambitions set out. The responsibility of the forecasting and the development of the infrastructure was with Western Power and National grid and engagement with both companies were ongoing over the local plan process.

The Deputy City mayor further noted that although the local authority did not

have full control of the organisations, whenever the authority came into contact with the organisations, the Carbon Neutral Road Map was part of the conversation and that the organisations worked with the authority to meet its ambitions.

In the response to the follow up question on capacity, it was noted that the capacity was available to support the on-going projects and data was available to indicate this.

Is the Council developing an action plan, with the County, to reduce and/or consolidate use of HGVs and shift freight onto trains? If so what is the plan?
It was noted that there was a joint rail strategy with the County Council which includes a number of actions to reduce and consolidate the use of HGVs. The strategy can be found on the City Council website and that most of the developments outlined in the strategy require both authorities to facilitate and lobby rather than any direct relationship in terms of the authority funding or promoting particular schemes.

Freight movements moved through many council areas. The Local Authority worked with the regional body Midlands Connect to have an over-arching strategy for the region, and they were developing a freight study working with all the other authorities within the Midlands Connect area and that this study should be published next year.

Additionally, a further study was being commissioned as part of the Air Quality Action Plan to reduce nitrogen dioxide through various initiatives as part of the local plan and the adoption of the Eco-Stars Scheme.

In response to the follow up question with moving freight onto trains, the Deputy City Mayor for Transport, Clean Air and Climate Emergency noted that the governments approach was building more roads which he did not agree with.

109. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer noted that none had been received.

110. WORKPLACE PARKING LEVY - VERBAL UPDATE

The Chair invited the Deputy City Mayor to give a verbal update on the Workplace Parking Levy as requested by Members of the public.

The Deputy City Mayor for Transport, Clean Air and Climate Emergency noted that as a result of the team working on a government initiative the consultation report had been delayed. however, the report was set to be published in the first week in November 2022.

In response to Commission Members query on the decision following the

consultation, it was noted that any decision would require to go through Full Council.

The Chair thanked the Deputy City Mayor for the update and requested that the report, once published come to the Commission.

111. LEICESTER LABOUR MARKET ANNUAL REPORT AND TEXTILES COMMUNITY RENEWAL FUND PROJECTS

The Deputy City Mayor for Transport, Clean Air and Climate Emergency introduced the item.

The Head of Economic Regeneration provided an overview of the report.

As part of the discussions, it was noted that:

- The former Chair of the Commission thanked and congratulated those involved in the partnership
- Hope for Justice be commended for their contributions
- A pipeline of courses for people to move onto following the completion of a course were available through ESOL with work underway to make this sustainable through potential funding from the Shared Prosperity Fund to help support the introduction of higher level courses for the medium and long term sustainability of the projects
- Businesses had also been enthusiastic to provide training to existing staff to deliver higher value work to develop their businesses further
- Fashion Enter Academy an experienced training provider, was a community resource to help develop local skills and provide employment for young people and have been delivering programmes with schools with the aim to build on this to encourage young people

In further discussions, concerns were raised with the unsustainable business model and pulling away from the industry. In response to the concerns raised, it was noted that:

- Companies in the industry were working on making changes towards sustainability with new innovative developments to move away from disposable fashion
- The overriding issue was the lack of regulation in this sector and the manufacturing sector and the authority could not let the sector within the city decline which provides employment for many in the city, but rather develop partnerships to improve the sector

Members of the Commission were pleased to see that the local authority were playing an active role in supporting the textiles industry, but suggested that this was not the only industry in the city that needed the support and what learning from this process could be taken to improve other sectors. It was noted that although the current focus was on the textiles industry, questions have been raised from partner agencies on other industries and that the Home Office were currently running a pilot in the city and that this methodology could be used and broadened further into other industries.

Members of the Commission suggested whether the introduction of certification or the good manufacturing certificate for good processes would help monitor

the industry. The Head of Economic Regeneration noted that the fashion industry was already highly audited, and that each retailer had an auditing process as they were responsible for policing their supply chain and they invested in this area heavily. Following the independent compliance reviews, it was noted that 90% were performing very well and that areas such as environmental sustainability and management were areas that companies were aware that needed improving and that in the second round of support this could be implemented.

In response to the Chairs queries it was noted that:

- The Shared Prosperity fund had been submitted and response notification from this would be sent in October 2022 from the government.
- The environmental management of companies had been carried out through independent compliance reviews where companies had scored highly and following this, the information would be reviewed to see where there was opportunity to support on this further.
- National data was available for employment levels with access for local levels with the DWP. The issue for the local economy was that there were lots of vacancies in the economy so that the key intervention was developing skills where Fashion Enterprise had been focussed on developing skills within the sector
- Work was underway with wider community organisations providing engagement with locals through work with Justice in Fashion who had provided local surgery sessions
- A family fund pilot project was being developed to scope how there could be further support provided for the communities
- Fab L who were partially funded by TUC and other unions, based at the Highfields Centre had been building strong links with those who worked in the textiles industry and provided an element of representation to the workers and support workers on understanding their rights
- Both organisations had a wide audience and provided in depth details
- Primary Partnerships in the local schools provided local information and intel to co-produce solutions.

The Director for Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment took the opportunity to note that the labour market was currently in an unusual state. Although, low unemployment rates suggest this was good, but actually suggested that a number of people had taken themselves out of employment altogether and the number of people who were economically inactive had risen.

Areas of employment that had low pay were losing staff to industries where the jobs provided better pay and were more appealing, the labour force had reduced, the number of people economically inactive had increased and the number of vacancies not being filled had also increased in all sectors. The report indicated that work was underway to engage with those who were economically inactive to potentially bring them back to being active, so there was capacity and opportunity there.

In response to the Members query on the 17 reports to UnseenUK it was noted that during Operation Tassit there had been 0 prosecutions under the Modern Slavery Act and further inquiries into subsequent reports could be requested.

AGREED:

- 1) The Chair thanked those involved in the extensive work carried out
- 2) That the report be noted; and
- 3) That a request for a follow up report come to the Commission for a future update.

112. INWARD INVESTMENT AND PLACE MARKETING

The Assistant City Mayor for Policy Delivery, Communications and Levelling Up introduced the item and took the opportunity to introduce Mike Denby the Director for Inward Investment.

The Director for Inward Investment and Place Marketing delivered a presentation on progress with the Inward Investment and place marketing elements of the economic recovery plan.

As part of the presentation an overview of the key points of the report and the role of the Place Marketing Team in attracting visitors, tourist and businesses to the city.

As part of the discussions, it was noted that

- Data and intelligence inform business decisions to relocate and that the data used to make decisions was already available the team were working on determining businesses that this is where they want to relocate to and rather than being a sales pitch, this was an effort to meet conditions for the growth of businesses by providing a service and retaining the businesses in Leicester
- Group Leisure and Travel was a publication that promotes visits to the city where exhibited venues are compiled, and groups visit

The Director for Culture, Tourism and Inward Investment took the opportunity to highlight that the King Richard III Visitor Centre had recently won the best museum award at the Group Leisure Travel Awards.

The Chair took the opportunity to thank Officers for the production of the report and queried on the Local Visitor Economy Partnership's criteria announced in September. It was noted that the team had put forward an expression of interest and a response is expected at the end of the month on whether we had been successful as a pilot. It was further noted that the key criteria for the LVEP was to ensure the business model was sustainable and to ensure close working partnerships with the private sector. It was suggested that Leicester were in a good starting position to meet the criteria and deliver along with partners.

The Chair suggested that any subsequent comments or questions that may arise from Commission Members, be passed on to the Officers involved.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted
- 2) That the Director for Culture, Tourism and Inward Investment and team be thanked for the comprehensive report: and
- 3) That the team be congratulated on the recognition and major award.

113. WORK PROGRAMME

The Work Programme was noted and the Chair suggested that any additional items for consideration be forwarded on to the Scrutiny Policy Officers.

114. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There being no other items of business the meeting closed at 7:21pm.

