



Leicester
City Council

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

Held: THURSDAY, 26 JANUARY 2023 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Joel (Chair)
Councillor Fonseca (Vice Chair)

Councillor Sandhu

Councillor Waddington

Councillor Whittle

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126. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Joel as Chair led on introductions.

The Monitoring Officer noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Porter, Councillor Rae Bhatia and Councillor Valand.

127. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

128. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Economic Development, Transportation and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission on 7 December 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.

129. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer noted that none had been received.

130. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer noted that none had been received.

131. DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET AND DRAFT CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2023/24

The Head of Finance presented a report and provided an overview of the Draft Revenue Budget. It was noted that:

- The main issues affecting the budget were the decade of austerity, two year stop gap to get through the Covid-19 Pandemic and the recent rise in inflation.
- The potential of a new period of austerity.
- above inflationary cost pressures in Adult Social Care as a consequence of growth of those in need although additional recycled funding for Adult Social Care after delaying promised reforms was suggested in the Autumn Statement
- Due to the rise in inflation, £10 million of budget was being set aside for energy costs.
- A significant factor was staff pay, in 2022/23 saw 6.4% added to the pay bill. This was £7.2 million above what had been budgeted.

It was further noted that the final report to go to Budget Council would have the latest figures. Using the manged reserves strategy had shielded the authority from whilst other authorities were contemplating bankruptcy.

As part of the discussions with Members, it was noted that:

- There were a number of ways to bridge the gap and managing savings to continue to help build the reserves were some of the proposals in place. Additionally, sourcing government grants and departments setting savings targets to reduce the extent of which the service cost
- The estimates provided were broadly anticipated to be the final figures and there were no significant differences
- Departmental savings would be made through cashless payment systems and deleting vacant post in Planning and Transportation.
- Most work in Economic Development was delivered through grant funding
- The Adult Education service was budgeted to contribute £870k to the council's overall budget.

The Director for Planning, Development and Transportation noted that the transition to cashless systems would be a journey cognisant of all groups in society and migrate away from cash in an orderly fashion as society becomes more familiar with the technology available.

Following the concerns raised by Chair with various projections of health inequalities, the Head of Finance noted that, public health is also expected to continue within its budget as all other departments.

Capital Programme

The Head of Finance provided an overview of the Capital Programme. It was noted that:

- The Capital Budget was a limited programme on a one-year budget.
- £2.5 million was proposed for investment into multiuse games areas

(MUGA) program across the city.

As part of the discussion Members were impressed with the delivery of projects. The Deputy City Mayor for Transport and Climate Emergency noted that co-ordinated work, helped have a real impact across the city.

It was also noted that individual capital scheme information could be provided to Members outside of the meeting on request and Members had the opportunity to suggest schemes for the local environment works list for consideration.

In further discussions, Members queried the infrastructure to support the Electric Vehicles (EV's). It was noted that:

- The report outlined the budget for the council's fleet change
- All Park and Ride busses were EV's, including the Hospital Hopper and the city centre loop bus which was to be introduced
- Zebra funding would support 96 EV busses to be introduced to the commercial bus fleet which would make 1/3 of all commercial busses electric, and make the city leaders nationally outside of London
- The introduction of charging points would follow in the near future
- Some residential areas had charging points tested and the process for selecting suitable sites was underway
- The development of the EV Strategy was in progress, this would come before the Commission for consideration.

AGREED:

- 1) That the comments raised by the Commission be considered
- 2) That the Commission note the context of the report, and
- 3) That the Commission await the decision at Budget Council in February 2023.

132. WATERSIDE PROJECT UPDATE

The Director of Planning, Development and Transportation introduced the item.

The Programme Manager delivered a presentation providing the Commission with an overview on the riverside regeneration project.

As part of the discussions, it was noted that:

- Commission Members commended the Officers for the level of work carried out to regenerate the area, since it was introduced in 2011
- It was noted that receipts from the Right to Buy scheme which allowed for 74 supported Living accommodation, this was negotiated and planned according to the necessity of the site with the aim of developments to be mix communities
- It was noted that there were additional sites that were being considered with further development opportunities and it was an opportunity for the authority and partners to continue with the momentum
- The context of the site was key to the types of developments ensuring

- they work with the existing properties
- Make efficient use of the land and achieve the challenging targets for the city

The Assistant City Mayor for Policy, Delivery, Communications and Levelling Up took the opportunity to note that with the footfall data that was being made available suggested that the developments were sustaining the City Centre.

In further discussions it was noted there were derelict sites on Woodgate that could be potential good sites for employment use and that the Officers consider how they can be bought back into use or part of future developments in the area. The Director of Planning, Development and Transportation noted that, although there was no timescale, dialogues continued with partners to consider further options for the Woodgate area.

AGREED:

- 1) That the Director of Planning, Development and Transportation be requested to consider the potential development of derelict sites and take a steps to deliver more affordable housing to meet the pressing needs of the city
- 2) That the Officers be congratulated for the impressive development of once a derelict area. and
- 3) That the report be noted.

133. COMMUNITY RENEWAL FUND - UPDATE

The Assistant City Mayor for Policy, Delivery, Communications and Levelling Up introduced the item.

The Director for Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment took the opportunity to note that a lot of work had been delivered through collaborative work with multiple organisations.

The Regeneration Programmes and Projects Manager provided the Commission with an overview of the report.

Representatives who delivered projects supported by the Community Renewal Fund provided presentations on their projects.

It was noted that:

- The ESOL provided over 240 hours of learning to participants who were at the pre-esol stage. The project also provided support to participants accessing benefits, job applications and accessing services
- The ESOL project supported 225 women, 125 of whom were from South-Asian backgrounds, this also gave the opportunity to discuss integration and enhance British values during uneasy tensions in the city
- The Leicester Accelerator project supported existing projects to add value, evolve the programmes and adapt to change
- The project was very successful with small businesses and aimed to support businesses that had not been supported previously.

It was further noted that there was a celebration event planned and that Members would receive an invite to attend.

The Chair requested a breakdown of the types of businesses that were supported. It was noted that there was data available along with intelligence and evaluations going forward and that these could be circulated to Members.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report and presentations be noted
- 2) That the request for the data on what businesses were supported be circulated to Members. And
- 3) That the Members of the Commission look forward to the invite to the celebration event.

134. IMPLICATIONS OF THE 'LEARNING AND SKILLS FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY, SOCIAL COHESION AND A MORE EQUAL BRITAIN'

The Assistant City Mayor for Policy, Delivery, Communications and Levelling Up introduced the item and thanked Councillor Waddington for requesting the item come to scrutiny.

The Head of Adult Education provided introduced and provided an overview of the report and party-political policy paper.

As part of the discussions it was noted that:

- The recommendations within the report were based on indepth research
- Members of the Commission suggested that a request be made to the City Mayor and his Executive to write to the Leader of the Opposition and Lord Blunkett that the Commission support the recommendations in the paper and that work should begin to implement the recommendations

The Director for Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment noted that the document had areas of learning and findings that could be utilised. It would be beneficial to look at how devolution had worked elsewhere and see what could be learnt to prepare the authority going forward.

The Chair noted that the benefit of the document that had been produced sponsored and promoted social mobility and plans should be put in place to start to incorporate and enhance social mobility across the board. There were areas of the report that could be implemented to enhance the life of people and provide opportunities.

AGREED:

- 1) That the City Mayor be requested to write to the Leader of the Opposition and the author of the paper (Lord Blunkett) to pledge support to all of the recommendations and to suggest that work in

- response to them starts sooner than anticipated.
- 2) That the Assistant City Mayor for Policy, Delivery, Communications and Levelling Up look at how the council can respond to the recommendation relating to procurement practice.
 - 3) That the Director for Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment be requested to provide detail of devolution pilot programmes from elsewhere with a view to bringing something to the commission at a later point in time.

135. WORK PROGRAMME

AGREED:

The Work Programme was noted.

136. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There being no other items of urgent business the meeting closed at 7:53pm.