



Leicester
City Council

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

Held: THURSDAY, 21 SEPTEMBER 2023 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Waddington (Chair)

Councillor O'Neill (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Batool Councillor Porter
Councillor Rae Bhatia Councillor Whittle

Also Present:

Councillor Clarke – Deputy City Mayor
Councillor Malik – Assistant City Mayor

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11. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Dawood and Councillor Osman.

12. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

13. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission held 27 July 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

Commission Members noted that a request had been made at the previous meeting for data to be provided to Members on air quality monitoring. The Deputy City Mayor stated that he would ensure that data was circulated.

In response to a question from the Chair regarding the future of the Government national £2 bus fare it was noted that at the end of October the £2 offer would be withdrawn and become a £2.50 offer.

It was noted that as LLEPs were being wound down, a transition board had been established.

14. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair noted that this was the final meeting of the Commission that Anita Patel would be supporting in the Scrutiny role, the Chair thanked Anita for her service to the Commission and for her 40 years of service to the Council.

The Chair announced that the order of agenda items would be changed to bring Sector Skills Bootcamps first.

15. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer reported that none had been received.

16. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that none had been received.

17. SECTOR SKILLS BOOTCAMPS

The Director for Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment submit a report which provided an overview of Skills Bootcamps and the potential of these for Leicester and Leicestershire.

The Assistant City Mayor for Communities, Adults Learning, and Jobs and Skills introduced the item. It was noted that this Government initiative was focused on developing sector specific skills for adults. Leicester City Council would lead the programme in Leicester and Leicestershire. The programme was initially focused purely on digital skills but was now looking at other areas.

The Regeneration Programmes and Projects Manager and the Head of Adult Education presented the item. It was noted that:

- The bootcamp programme was 60 hours long, with how that time was distributed varying. The programmes were required to be in specific locational skills areas and had to have real employers signed up to enable real outcomes at the end of the programme, with the aim of tailoring course content to employer need.
- A bid was currently being put together for a 6-month pilot in 2 areas. Following this a wider bid would be made for a range of different vocational areas.
- Courses were categorised into levels of difficulty; most courses were required to be at least level 3.
- The Council had put out a call for organisations in the digital skills and construction sectors. From this 3 responses were being put forward into the bid.

In response to questions from Members it was noted that:

- An outcome to the initial bid was expected within 2-3 weeks, based on that courses were planned to be from October-March.
- These bootcamps had been around for 2 years, Ofsted carried out a review which brought out a lot of learning points, meaning that there was now best practice available in this area.
- Approaches to needs assessment were around what employers were looking for and looking at where those experienced with running the programmes wanted to go.
- The amount of level 3 courses was an attempt to fill the gap in opportunities after funding for level 3 and 4 qualifications was withdrawn. Those not ready for that level would be signposted to other opportunities.
- Training providers had been asked to identify businesses with vacancies.
- The project was very outcome-based, with 20% of funding for helping people get into and sustain employment and progress in their careers.
- Bootcamps weren't required to carry an accreditation, but the Council had asked providers to provide a qualification wherever possible.
- The Council's role as Accountable Body required it to commission other partners to deliver the programme on the Council's behalf. A management fee would give the resource to manage the programme properly. The Council did have powers if a provider did not provide their service.
- The management fee was capped as a percentage of the total allocation so there would be no profit for the Council.
- Employers connected to the courses generally guaranteed interviews for those completing the courses.
- Those with similar level qualifications from other countries were also eligible for the level 3 courses.

Members of the Commission stated that it was positive that the Council was providing opportunities in high-skill fields and wished the best of luck in the bid.

AGREED:

That the Commission notes the update.

18. 20 MPH STREETS - INFORMAL SCRUTINY PROPOSAL

The Director for Planning Development and Transportation submitted a report providing Members of the Commission with some background information and a suggested approach for informal scrutiny in relation to the Council's approach to delivering 20mph streets in Leicester and a proposed future programme for new schemes.

The Chair introduced the item, proposing to set up a task group looking at the

issue of 20mph schemes in the city. It was proposed that this group would have 3 meetings which would all be held before the end of the year.

The Deputy City Mayor welcomed this review as timely given the recent national scrutiny of 20mph streets and schemes.

The City Transport Director presented the report which provided the context for the 20mph issue in the city, it was noted that 50% of suitable streets in the city had been converted to 20mph. The suggested scope of the review was also laid out in the report.

Concerns were expressed that this report and the review were going ahead at the suggestion of the Executive rather than of the Commission and that the Commission could be looking at more important issues such as 24-hour bus lanes. The Chair noted that this review had been suggested by several Members of the Commission following concerns raised by ward residents. It was stated that this was Scrutiny-led work.

Members stated that the task group should involve various stakeholders including different kinds of road users and be prepared to listen to all sides.

A number of questions received from Climate Action Leicester were read out with a view that they would be answered in the review.

The Commission indicated its support for setting up the review and Members volunteered to sit on the review.

It was requested that accident statistics for 20mph schemes be brought to the review.

AGREED:

That the Commission will set up an informal review to consider 20mph schemes in the city,

19. FLOODING UPDATE

The Director for Planning, Development and Transportation submitted a presentation providing the Commission with an update following the flood event in June 2023.

The City Highways Director presented the item, it was noted that:

- This presentation was to feedback after a significant flooding event on 22 June.
- Different agencies had responsibilities for flooding in different aspects. The Council was responsible for managing the risk from surface water flooding.

- Modelling showed that 4000 properties across the city were at some level of risk from flooding.
- The storm event on 22 June was measured to be a 1 in 143-year event, with the worst affected areas receiving 50mm+ of rainfall in one hour. Traditional sewer systems were designed to handle a maximum of 25mm in an hour so the systems could not handle of volume of rain, this is what lead to the flooding.
- Impacts of the flooding were significant damage to highway surfaces and structures, and at least 67 properties flooded. The areas most impacted were in the south and east of the city.
- A multi-agency response was carried out, with various agencies including the Fire Service responding to call-outs. Some residents were provided with temporary accommodation.
- The Council had liaised with Severn Trent to ensure that both had the same flood logs and that all consequential damage was known. Visits to all flooded properties had been carried out.
- It had become apparent that many homes in the areas affected were not properly insured for the flooding risk.
- As required by legislation, a Section-19 investigation was now under way.
- It was hoped that this event would raise awareness of flood risks and encourage home owners to be able to take more mitigating actions and have the correct insurance.

In response to questions from Commission Members it was noted that:

- Any reports on the flooding not yet received were still welcomed.
- In terms of the Council's options to mitigate future risk, there were some capital schemes in place to improve drainage systems, including replacing many of the old Victorian infrastructure.
- Work was ongoing with Severn Trent on sustainable drainage in risk areas. The sewer system as a whole could only be upgraded by Severn Trent.
- A major approach had been to develop flood mitigations on Council-land, such as the Ellis Meadows development.
- There was a small stockpile of sandbags however these had a short life-span and therefore were prioritised for vulnerable people and critical infrastructure. It was possible for members of the public to obtain self-inflation sand bags.
- If drains were on private land, then the onus for fixing that drain would be on the land owner if it was not public.
- Upcoming works on Spinney Hills and Queens Road highway drainage would be focused on a cleaning exercise.
- Work had been done in Spinney Hills Park to allow it to handle more water.
- A few locations such as the LRI were in mind for major sustainable drainage retrofitting works, however it would be a significant undertaking to carry out on a major scale. Sustainable drainage was much simpler in new developments.

- The Planning Department sought to influence the design of new schemes, however national rules limited what restrictions the Council were able to put in and enforce. It was stated that this Planning Department had some of the nationally leading technical exponents of sustainable urban drainage systems. Largely developers were willing to follow this advice.

Members stated that the Council should not simply hand-off the drainage issue over to developers on new developments but ensure that these systems were being well kept.

AGREED:

That the Commission notes the update and asks Officers and the Executive to note comments made by Members.

20. WORK PROGRAMME

The Work Programme was noted. It was requested that an item be added to the Work Programme regarding Park and Ride.

21. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 7.22pm.