



Leicester
City Council

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

Held: WEDNESDAY, 12 MARCH 2025 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Waddington – Chair
Councillor Dr Barton – Vice Chair

Councillor Bajaj
Councillor Orton
Councillor Whittle

Councillor Batool
Councillor Porter

In Attendance

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Cutkelvin
Assistant City Mayor Councillor Malik
Assistant City Mayor Councillor Whittle

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123. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Singh Sangha.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Osman.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Rae Bhatia. Councillor Orton would substitute.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Batool – she would join online.

124. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Councillors Batool and Malik declared an interest in the item on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), they worked for an organisation that received funding from the UKSPF to support projects. They would leave the meeting at the beginning of this item.

125. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission held on 8 January 2025 be confirmed as a correct record.

126. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair reminded public present that they were there to observe, other than the member of the public who had submitted a question and statement.

The Chair announced that there would be a short break to allow for those observing Ramadan to break fast.

127. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The following statement and question was presented to the Commission by Mr Nick Wynd:

Approximately a year ago I read a story that Green Party was trying to get funds

for a kid's park in Clarendon Park as residents were having to fund it themselves. I'm not sure of the outcome of this whether the council have addressed this open space for the public.

In addition to this I highlight the design of the Rally open space, a path has been

put straight through the middle of this instead of widening the old path route.

I was invited to help save Tudor Rally adventure playground along with eight other kids play schemes via a protest. I'm glad to see with the pressure placed on the council they backed down and have now funded these schemes.

The development plans for Beaumont Park, so another loss of open space.

I invite the other councillors to highlight any other loss of open spaces they have

encountered. I say this as the council's argument for the market to be left as an open space lacks its validity.

The council announced their original proposition for the new market and convinced the traders to move to Green Dragon Square, they demolished the old market then realised this was a great open space for the public. I'm unsure how they didn't realise this before as I have seen three developments in this meeting where they used footage from the air. Why wasn't this utilised for the market, who knows.

I attended a meeting last year where I highlighted to the attendees that I had

seen the Leicester public asking for a larger market/ undercover space. I also voiced this in the last meeting.

In a previous scrutiny meeting it was highlighted that four propositions would be unveiled, this never came to light but in the last meeting I was advised that three

other propositions existed and could be considered. It is unclear but seems that none of these propositions were any bigger for the public to vote on.

The council has agreed with themselves that the 1 proposition they put forward was a success and is now pushing forward to the planning stage. The story was

run by both the BBC and Leicester Live, and in their Facebook groups the council took a right slating over the proposals, very little agreement with the council's proposals.

I posted in a Leicester based Facebook group about the above and proposition that was going to be implemented and got nearly 500 like reacts indicating they agreed the council had not got this right.

I asked two times this year what was happening over the market and got no response, Then the council announced they were pushing on with their plans. It looks like the decision had already been made.

I have spoken to Leicester Media Online who say they have received a lot of objections about the market. They are awaiting a statement from the council before running a new story.

I have been led to believe that the original petition of 10,000 plus signatures cannot be used as an objection to the plans and feel by dragging of heels on this people have started to give up the fight against the council pushing through this proposal.

I feel a bigger option needs to be considered and proposed by the council. Then

the four propositions given to the public to have the final say. I suggest these are also made transparent as to size of stalls, venue etc.

So my question, and so this is documented in black and white.

Because of the above, the lack of support for the proposal I've seen, do you feel

you should continue as planned or that a 4th larger proposition be added and it put to the people of Leicester to vote?

And by a vote, I mean a fully transparent, involving all local media, to make the vote easily accessible to all.

The Chair thanked Mr Wynd for the question and invited an officer to respond.

The Head of Economic Regeneration replied:

- The City Mayor paused the scheme in May 2024 to allow options for the best use of the space to be considered.
- A public consultation ending in December 2024 resulted in 60% of respondents (more than 1000 people) supporting the option to create a major new event space in the heart of the city.
- A decision had not yet been made on the development. Several options had been brought to EDTCE Scrutiny in December 2024, which were still under consideration:
 - Returning to the original proposal, which has the market occupying the bulk of the area in front of the Corn Exchange
 - Keeping the market permanently on Green Dragon Square.
 - Locating the market in the link between Green Dragon Square and Cank Street.
 - Locating the market in front of the Food Hall along with a flexible event space in front of the Corn Exchange
 - Not having a market at all
- Given the support in the public and trader consultation for a market building with a flexible event space in front of the Corn Exchange, the project team were developing this design further.
- New designs, planning applications and detailed costs would now be drawn up, before a decision can be taken.
- The City Mayor has continued to meet with market trader representatives several times throughout this process and would continue to do so.
- It was agreed that the final option should be undercover, including a roof to protect traders from the weather.
- The petition referenced by My Wynd had not been submitted. Any petitions presented would be dealt with in line with the Council's published petitions scheme, including any exclusions.
- Subject to planning permission, work could start on site from the summer of 2025.

In response to a supplementary question about the size and use of space in the proposed plans, the Head of Economic Regeneration noted:

- The consultation had resulted in a range of constructive suggestions for how the market could be improved.
- It was recognised that this was an uncertain time for traders and the aim was to build a stronger, more vibrant market that attracts higher footfall and enhances the market's long-term sustainability.
- Some market traders had stated their intention to retire or close their business, and several unit traders were keen to find a different trading location within the city centre, and work continued to assist with this.
- Regarding stall design, it was vital to ensure that they were fit for purpose. Traders would be consulted on the design of the stalls during the process.
- Flexibility was a key consideration to allow for speciality markets and

other events.

128. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that none had been received.

129. MARKET PLACE UPDATE

The Head of Economic Regeneration gave a verbal update on the market place development plans. Key points to notes were as follows:

- As detailed above, development options had come to EDTCE scrutiny in December 2024, but a formal decision had not yet been made.
- The public consultation was completed with 1667 responses.
- 60% of respondents were in support of the proposal for the market being located in front of the food hall along with a flexible space for events and activities.
- There had been a broad range of comments which would be taken into consideration, and these had been grouped into themes. The most frequent comment – made by 347 people – was that the proposed option would be a “Great redevelopment of the market; It’s a great idea to redevelop the market, utilising the space for a mix of market activities, events, and festivals. Leicester needs an attractive and thriving market to boost footfall to the city centre.”
- A range of other comments were predominantly positive and mentioned the history/heritage of the market, increasing greenery in the space, and several constructive suggestions were made about the need to tackle anti-social behaviour, parking, transport and other operational matters.
- An ongoing dialogue would continue with market traders throughout the process. It was recognised that there was a range of different trader preferences and requirements, some for example were receptive to operating from alternative premises in the city centre. There were currently 23 vacant city centre properties and details of these were being shared with traders.
- The City Mayor had met with trader representatives prior to the press release on the 13th February, and had offered a further meeting if traders would like, and they had been encouraged to bring ideas and suggestions.
- The traders were keen to return to their original location but had advised that they may not require the same amount of space as previously held. They had highlighted the potential for the remaining space being used flexibly.
- Designs, planning applications and costing were being developed further before a decision could be made.

The Chair reminded the committee that a special EDTCE Scrutiny meeting had

taken place to discuss the future of the market, and 3 key issues had been raised:

- Provision for dry goods traders.
- The design of the building.
- The location of the market.

The Chair requested that these matters would be taken into consideration.

The Chair noted that if a petition were to be submitted this could be considered by the Committee.

In response to questions, it was noted that:

- Previous scrutiny comments had been brought to the attention of the City Mayor and many valid points would be considered going forward to inform the development.
- Aesthetics had been of consideration when developing plans, whilst balancing the trader requirements.
- Regarding timescale, a planning application would be made for the open square, and this was expected in the next few months. The market building would take more time to design so a planning application was anticipated for July 2025. If the scheme proceeded at that point, work could commence later in the summer, with completion anticipated by late 2026. The final programme would be confirmed in due course.
- The market would continue to operate from Green Dragon Square throughout this time with continued rental discounts for market traders.
- More than 1000 people had commented during the public consultation.
- Money for the scheme had already been ringfenced, but detailed costings were being developed further.
- Revenue cost to operate the redeveloped market would be calculated, and an update would come once the best way to operate the market had been established.
- A copy of the consultation could be provided.
- Four unit traders had expressed a desire to retire. 6 unit traders had expressed an interest in operating from other premises in the city centre, and there was an ongoing dialogue to support traders.
- Management of anti-social behaviour could be incorporated into the scheme design by including shutters allowing the market to be closed off out of hours. This issue was currently being addressed with success at Green Dragon Square.
- Current revenue income targets for the market are around £200K but this was increasingly difficult to achieve.

AGREED:

- 1) That the commission note the update.
- 2) A copy of the consultation would be provided
- 3) The next update would include details on the revenue costs to operate the market.

A break was taken during this item so that those observing Ramadan could break fast.

130. UPDATE ON LEICESTER AND LEICESTERSHIRE BUSINESS AND SKILLS PARTNERSHIP

The Chair proposed an agenda variance, bringing forward the item on the Update on Leicester and Leicestershire Business Skills Partnership. The Commission agreed.

The Director of Leicester & Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) gave an overview of the report. Key points to note were as follows:

- Funding had been withdrawn for Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) in the spring budget of 2023, with a termination of funds in April 2024. LEP functions transferred to upper tier local authorities, leading to the creation of LLEP.
- A business board was formed with two key purposes: to represent local businesses in regional decision making, and to work with the local leaders to create a comprehensive strategy. The board included local business representatives and local educational establishments.
- The City Mayor and interim leader held regular meetings with the Chair of the business board.
- The 2 enterprise zones were over 4 sites. The Post LEP arrangements were currently under discussion with City, County and District Councils.
- Enterprise zone implementation groups had been created.
- Skills and Apprenticeships were a key priority in enhancing economic growth.
- Partnership work was vital in securing a robust pipeline, the Employment Hub and FE colleges were working on a number of collaborative endeavours.
- The Career Hub engaged with education providers and employers, to provide help to young people, focussing particularly on the disadvantaged.
- There was a range of projects to support disadvantaged young people, including *Unbox Your Future* and *We discover*, the latter was a SEND research project.
- The Leicester and Leicestershire Careers hub had received additional funding to support pilots and the Hub had become England's first Pilot Logistics Beacon Hub.
- The Business Gateway Growth Hub supported local businesses through various initiatives, including raising awareness of fraud. Future plans included workshops and one-to-one support.
- The East Midlands Create Growth Programme supported creative

businesses and was expected to run until March 2025, but this could be extended to March 2026.

- A green paper had been released by the government in October 2024 on the new Industrial strategy. This was a 10-year plan to provide certainty and stability to businesses looking to invest in high growth sectors. In November, the Leicester Leicestershire Business Skills Partnership (LLBSP) hosted an interactive consultation on the Green Paper with local business leaders, education providers, and key stakeholders to share their insights and priorities.
- A government response had been received on timelines and next steps, this could come back to scrutiny.

In response to questions from the committee, it was noted that:

- The budget of the LLBSP varied. There was previous core funding to LEPS and a sum of money had been provided to manage the transition. A plan was in place to manage this fund until the end of 2026. It was hoped that positive government announcements would come imminently.
- In terms of staffing, some roles had changed. The strategy was to move decision making back to local government.
- VAL represented the voluntary sector.
- There was an urban / rural challenge and representation across the patches was needed.
- Metrics of success were becoming clearer. A business delivery plan would come. By the end of April, a cohesive plan would be published.
- Regarding business engagement, it was hard to engage with all of the necessary groups, but the board should help to improve on this.
- Intelligence could be gained by going out to the businesses and working collaboratively.
- To ensure the skills relevance of the Apprenticeships and T levels, consultations had taken place with local businesses to look at what skills would be needed over the next 5 years. Educational establishments had also been consulted.
- Changes to the apprenticeship LEVI were coming through which were hoped to bring positive changes.
- It was felt that the Government passion to engage with businesses would allow for a model to be created going through to 2028.
- A process was beginning to understand adult skills devolution and more details could come to scrutiny on this.
- A strategy would be formed to better support small business via the Business Hub.
- The Chair of the Business Board was a volunteer so was not in receipt of a wage for this role.
- Money in reserves could be clarified and was currently at around £1.8m.
- Net Zero was a key priority for the LEP. The government industrial strategy would feed in and existing measures would be maintained and developed.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) A response would be given with clarity on timelines from the government.
- 3) Consideration would be given to the rural and urban makeup of the board and an update provided.

131. SKILLS BOOTCAMPS

The Chair proposed an agenda variance, bringing forward the item on the Update on Leicester and Leicestershire Business Skills Partnership. The Commission agreed.

The Director of Tourism, Culture and Inwards Investment submitted a report following on the impact of the pilot year (2023-24) and an update on the 2024-25 programme.

The Head of Adult Education presented the report. Key points to note were:

- The report covered the pilot year of 2023-24 and assessed the situation at the current point in 2024-25.
- In 2023-24 there was a target of 200 participants, of which 198 had enrolled and 155 had completed their course.
- There had been a significant increase in the number of courses in 2024-25, with eleven currently running.
- 30% of the funding was dependent on employment outcomes. Therefore, strong employment links were needed before a bootcamp could be started.
- Bootcamps were offered on Digital Marketing, Construction and Cybersecurity.
- Most County residents enrolled on the Anicca Digital Marketing Bootcamp, whereas most of the other learners were city residents.
- There was good representation based on geography.
- Those participants with pre-existing qualifications ranged from Level 1 qualifications up to degree level. Many graduates wanted to take part to become more employable. This was legitimate through the funding, but not what was expected.
- There would be twelve bootcamps this year, and a broader range of providers and subject areas had been sought. Examples included garment production, sewing and repair, pharmacy, agriculture, solar installation, tutor training (aimed at helping people to teach emerging subjects), environment management and software development.
- This was a more challenging year as there were a range of providers who had not been involved with bootcamps before, and as such, they had struggled in getting up and running.
- A challenge was that funding was allocated on a financial year basis, which meant that there was not much time to set up once funding was

confirmed.

- Funding had now been confirmed for the next financial year and it was hoped to speed up the commissioning process to speed up the start of delivery.
- The most successful programme had been Cyber Security, through which there were strong links with employers such as East Midlands Airport, meaning that good jobs had been secured by participants.

Members were invited to comment and ask questions, Responses were as follows:

- With regards to a query on the utilisation of monies, it was explained that in this year's programme, providers had six months following the end of the course to provide job outcomes. This would typically come later in the programme, so it would not be expected that the money be halfway spent at this point.
- In response to a point made about bootcamps not meeting targets, it was explained that funding was reallocated to those in demand. It was aimed to make this easier to do earlier in the programme in 2025-26.
- The outcomes in the first wave were above the national level of performance. The Department for Education (DfE) were met with to review performance.
- In response to points made about those with pre-existing qualifications, it was clarified that the focus was not on those far away from the labour market, but aimed to upskill those close to the labour market or those in jobs. Additionally, if employers suggested that they had staff that required certain skills, the bootcamps could help with this.
- In terms of identifying skills, work had been done in terms of understanding the economy and had been informed by the Learning Skills Improvement Plan. There was also a bidding process whereby providers needed to give evidence that employers were lined up.
- In terms of the programme being sustainable and scalable, funding was agreed on an annual basis and more funding would be available next year. It was aimed to conduct the programme securely, rather than being too ambitious and too quick, it was aimed to grow the programme incrementally.
- It was aimed to move away from what traditional training partners had done. It was looked to work with real job opportunities and to accelerate this. It was clear that there were opportunities and people could be in a better position, although this might be different across different sectors. It was necessary to start with employers who had jobs to fill.
- In response to a suggestion that courses could be conducted for electricians and gas engineers, it was noted that the bootcamps were

only sixteen weeks long, and such courses would be difficult to complete in this time.

- In response to a query about how people found out about the bootcamps, it was noted that it was down to the providers to do the marketing, this was done through channels such as the Job Centre and through employers. The employment hub website contained offers with signposting from the adult education website. Additionally, people found out through word-of-mouth and through social media.
- In terms of self-employed participants, it was noted that bootcamps could help to turn an idea into a business. Many of those on the Digital marketing bootcamp were sole traders. Bootcamps could help in setting up businesses as well as providing skills.
- The Digital Marketing qualification was Level 5 and internationally recognised. The provider, local organisation Annica Training, could be approached for case studies as examples of what it provided.

The Chair noted that the programme demonstrated that people struggled to get into the labour market despite having qualifications.

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 Annica Training be approached for case studies as examples of what it provided.

132. UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND

Councillors Batool and Malik left the meeting prior to this item as they had an interest in the item.

The Director of Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment submitted a report providing an update on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) programme, including plans for the transition year for 2025-26.

The head of Economic Development presented the report. Key points to note were:

- The UKSPF was brought in by the previous government to replace the EU funding that areas had received prior to Brexit. The funding was significantly less (around 50% less) than that previously received from the EU.
- The UKSPF was a three-year programme and the government had allocated funding for the transition.
- There was £8.8m to spend on the programme and this was backloaded,

reflecting the phasing out of EU funding.

- There was a need to spend money and deliver outcomes for local businesses and people.
- At December 2024, there was £2.8m to spend. Spending needed to be evidenced and then claimed.
- There were 25 projects across the programmes, focused around three areas: Communities & Place, Business Support and People & Skills.
- Seventeen of the projects were delivered by external organisations. Many of these were consortia of different delivery partners, meaning that it involved around 30 organisations overall. These funded both internal projects and externally commissioned projects.
- The UKSPF provided vital support for businesses through advice in relation to sustainability; support around low carbon including decarbonisation plans, dedicated support for black owned businesses and social enterprises and support for manufacturing businesses.
- ESOL support was provided for residents, particularly those who were economically inactive.
- Digital inclusion was supported.
- The impacts would be evidenced by the close of the programme.
- 1638 households had been supported with energy efficiency advice.
- Economically inactive individuals had been supported through organisations which provided basic skills training which complimented the bootcamps, providing Level 1 and 2 qualifications to create a pathway.
- Work had been undertaken to close the programme.
- Less money had been allocated for next year, although Leicester had received 75% of the year three funding, which was higher than the national allocation of 60%. However, this still meant that there was less money to allocate and spend.
- There was a range of internal and external teams waiting to see if they could continue work. A decision had been made to continue projects and delivery, and 80% of the funding to external partners had been allocated, this had been very well received. This would continue across the span of the programme.
- It had been possible to determine priorities and maintain and commission new services to address economic issues faced by the city.

The Chair noted that it was sad to see funding reduced, but it was good that money was going to the grassroots.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted.

133. UKSPF ESOL

The Director of Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment submitted a report for the Commission to consider and comment upon the development of the UKSPF funded ESOL projects in 2024-25.

The Regeneration Programmes & Projects Manager attended the meeting remotely to assist with the discussion.

The Head of Adult Education presented the report. Key points to note were:

- Everyday English focussed on economically inactive individuals who were not currently accessing other ESOL provision due to a lack of eligibility or reluctance or due to asylum seeker status.
- Twin Training focussed on those who were seeking work and/or upskilling.
- Learning had been provided to 487 individuals. This had exceeded the targets set.
- Everyday English offered short coursed both through Council venues and venues of partners.
- Enrichment activities were offered to facilitate practicing English in real-life.
- Wraparound support was provided to help people access all support and opportunities available.
- The partnership was strong, built on a network developed through the Multiply maths project.
- Sessions were offered in which people were encouraged to practice English through doing another practical activity, e.g. cooking.
- The UKSPF had allowed flexibility to deliver less traditional education.
- IT skills were offered alongside ESOL.

Members were invited to comment and ask questions, Responses were as follows:

- In response to a query about the context of the offers it was noted that the intention was to fill the gaps that existing ESOL provision left with a range of models of delivery and locations. This opened up opportunities and added wraparound support to progress into other provision.
- In response to a question about indications of success with regard to boosting employability via Twin Training, it was explained that there was no overall employability outcome target as English was just one element. It was further clarified that there was an employment target for women, and this was on track to be achieved.
- It was clarified that the £275k grant for Everyday English was shared between the organisations involved.
- In response for a request for feedback on the trips to Leicester Museum and Art Gallery and Belgrave Hall, it was noted that following the initial trip, many participants had returned during half term with their children. It was noted that people were going to places in the city that they had

never been to before despite living here.

- In response to a query about whether the programmes could continue with the UKSPF funding reduced to 75%, it was affirmed that a smaller programme could be delivered. Further sources of funding were being looked at.
- In response to a question about the ethnicity of participants, it was noted that those in the category 'other' were from a number of backgrounds.
- In response to a query about the potential for other groups to provide services, it was confirmed that organisations could contact the Council on projects, and that the Council were happy to bring in new partners and make links.

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 members remain aware of the ESOL programmes.

134. ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING POINTS TASK GROUP - EXECUTIVE RESPONSE

The Chair of the Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Committee gave a verbal update on the Executive response to the Electric Vehicle Charging Scrutiny review report.

The Chair provided a verbal update on the response from the Executive as follows:

- There was much to consider in the Commission's extremely thorough report on electric vehicle charging. The task group had identified the challenges that face us as well as the issues we need to explore.
- In particular, it was right that the Council push back on the Government's targeting of LEVI funding towards street charging. As the report correctly pointed out, street charging was not appropriate or workable in Leicester, with so much of the housing stock being terraced properties.
- A better way forward would be to invest in high power destination charging points, and an interesting discussion had taken place about the possibility of siting these at public facing council buildings such as libraries, leisure centres and museums.
- Soon officers would bring forward an EV charging strategy which would recommend that the Council focus on delivering charging points that

maximised turnover of users to create as much benefit from the fewest installations. First and foremost these should be located to drive traffic to city council assets.

The Chair invited members to consider the response, and to raise any queries either outside the meeting or at the next meeting of the Commission.

AGREED:

- 1) That the update be noted.

135. WORK PROGRAMME

The work programme was noted.

136. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There being no further items of urgent business, the meeting finished at 19:59.