



Leicester  
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRANSPORT AND TOURISM SCRUTINY  
COMMISSION

Held: THURSDAY, 14 MARCH 2019 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Khote (Chair)  
Councillor Rae Bhatia (Vice Chair)

Councillor Kitterick  
Councillor Patel

Councillor Porter  
Councillor Sandhu

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**56. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bhavsar and Dr Chowdhury, and from the City Mayor.

**57. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

**58. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

AGREED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 17 January 2019 be confirmed as a correct record.

**59. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE**

In accordance with Council procedures, the Monitoring Officer reported that there were no Questions, Representations or Statements of Case.

**60. PETITIONS**

In accordance with Council procedures, the Monitoring Officer reported that there were no Petitions.

## **61. EXECUTIVE RESPONSE TO THE BUS SERVICES ACT TASK GROUP REPORT**

The Chair reminded the Commission that on 6 September 2018, the Scrutiny Commission received the Task Group Report: "Review of the Bus services Act 2017 – the impacts and opportunities".

The Director of Planning, Development and Transportation submitted a report, which provided an update on relevant activity relating to public transport in the city and commented on recommendations and action points from the Task Group Report

It was noted that there had been considerable activity and progress on issues affecting public transport in the city since the September 2019 meeting of the Commission. Updates and information on the following key areas were reported and noted:

- Clean Air Zone (CAZ)
- ERDF Low Carbon Fund
- Transforming Cities: Tranche 1
  - Connecting Leicester Schemes
  - Electrification of Birstall Park and Ride Bus Service
  - Delivering Contactless Smart Payment Across Central Leicestershire's Bus Network
- Transforming Cities: Tranche 2
- National Productivity Investment Fund – Bus Pinch Points
  - St Margarets Bus Station
  - Bus Lanes / Enforcement measures
- Data Sharing / Smart Cities
- Bus Services Act Agreement

It was recognised by Commission members that a considerable amount of effort had been put into bidding processes to ensure that services were continually improved, and thanks were extended to the relevant Teams.

In response to a question from a Commission member, it was confirmed that data concerning the catalytic conversion and low emission systems of buses to meet current standards could be made available.

It was confirmed that in terms of cross-city bus routes and orbital routes, the situation was being considered as part of the second tranche of the Transforming Cities fund to ensure adequate connectivity where necessary.

In respect of the park and Ride scheme, it was noted that the electrification of services had been suggested and it was considered that this would increase patronage. In response to a question from a Commission member, it was noted that evidence existed to demonstrate that electrification led to greater patronage and the level of current subsidy was clarified. It was accepted that the Park and Ride service would become more commercial following service improvements, however it was not unusual for schemes to be subsidised to meet the challenges of congestion and of air quality.

The traffic control methods at light controlled junctions were discussed and the effect on the likelihood of commuters using the Park and Ride service was recognised and noted. The opportunity for members to visit the traffic control centre was explained.

In conclusion, and in response to further questions, it was reported that congestion and bus use data were compared between similar local authorities, where practicable, it being noted that the commercial operation of bus companies differed greatly in neighbouring cities. The future use of smart ticketing had also been considered with regard to the experiences of passengers and operators.

AGREED:

That the report be noted.

## **62. TOWNSCAPE HERITAGE INITIATIVE UPDATE**

The Director of Planning, Development and Transportation gave a presentation to outline improvements achieved under the Townscape Heritage Initiative.

The presentation outlined works undertaken in consultation with the Civic Society and other bodies.

In terms of outputs, the following key points were noted:

- 19 buildings restored
- 5000sq metres of public realm improved
- Vacant space back in use
- 2000+ people engaged in events, training or tours
- Evidence of change in perceptions (90% agreed most historically important area in 2017, compared to 64% in 2014)
- 20 additional buildings improved independently of the THI
- Total programme cost will be £3.1m, with contribution of £1.1m from HLF, £0.5m from LCC, and £1.5m in private match funding.

Photographs of examples of some of the works undertaken were submitted.

In response to a comment from a Commission member, it was noted that the heritage of the area was considered to be of utmost importance, it being the

Georgian Heart of the city. It was confirmed that prior to grant aid being offered to the owners of land and buildings in the area, a full assessment was undertaken and the level of support at 75% of full costs was explained. The covenants to ensure that monies were returned to the Council should any future profit arise were also explained and noted. It was accepted that the funding had also led to significant private investment in properties and it was also noted that where Conservation Area works in other areas of the city were required to meet agreed standards, grant funding was available.

In response to further questions it was noted that traffic speeds in the area were being monitored.

AGREED:

That the update and presentation be noted.

### **63. ASHTON GREEN: PROGRESS ON DEVELOPMENT**

The Director of Planning, Development and Transportation gave a presentation, which provided an update on progress at Ashton Green.

As an overview, the following points were noted:

- Long standing housing development opportunity
- 130 ha greenfield development site
- City Council – principal land owner
- Planning consent for up to 3,000 new homes
- 10 ha large scale employment land – 50% built out
- Masterplan includes a mixed use village centre
- 45 ha green infrastructure, open space & protected wildlife corridors
- 15 – 20 year delivery timescale
- Development commenced in 2013

The Council's role as a land promoter was clarified as follows:

- Master planning - guiding the quality of development
- Sale of development land to house builders through development agreements
- Securing external funding
- Delivering enabling infrastructure to kick start development.

The Council led enabling works included:

- Bennion Road extension (Samworths )
  - Bennion Road cycleway improvements
  - Beaumont Shopping Centre bus interchange
  - Ashton Green Road cycleway & footway improvements
  - Morris Homes highway frontage
  - Landscaping & drainage scheme
  - Speed restrictions & traffic calming works
- Steering the overall delivery strategy
    - Enabling infrastructure works on going since 2013

- Samworths Ashton Green Bakery opened in 2014
  - Morris Homes on site since early 2017
  - Secured £5m funding from Highways England in mid-2017
  - £10m from Homes England in early 2018
  - Kier secured planning permission in Dec 2018
  - Shortlisted 3 developers for the village centre
- Proposals for the A46 / Anstey road scheme were noted as:
    - Major highway improvement scheme
    - Planning requirement prior to 351 units
    - £5m external funding from Highways England
    - Signalising A46/Anstey Lane roundabout
    - Extending the Anstey Lane dual carriageway
    - Improving the Anstey Lane/Bennion Road junction
    - Site clearance started
    - Construction start planned for mid-2019
- The Highway infrastructure programme included:
    - Major highway infrastructure programme to open up future development parcels
    - £10m funding from Homes England
    - Unlocking 60 acres of residential land
    - 1,080 homes with future development
    - Design and planning work in progress
    - Construction target start mid-2019
    - Works to be completed by March 2021
- Village centre, master developer procurement process involved:
    - Homes England – Delivery Partner Panel 3 (DPP3).
    - Soft market testing completed during May/June 2018
    - Call of Expressions of Interest completed in Aug 2018
    - Sifting Brief (first tender stage) in Oct 2018
    - 3 developers short listed in Dec 2018
    - Developer workshops planned for March/April 2019
    - Final Invitation to Tender – May 2019
    - Developer selection – late 2019
    - Start on site – mid 2020

In debating the content of the presentation, it was confirmed that the highway infrastructure would be adopted in due course. In the interim, the developer would be responsible for its maintenance and upkeep. It was reported that the Council undertook regular monitoring to ensure that unadopted highways were clear and clean. There was a degree of control over the timings of adopted highways through a procurement and engagement process to alleviate confusion and issues experienced at other developments in the past.

In terms of the progress generally, it was clarified that the development was being progressed at a suitable speed for its type and size, given the current levels of occupation. The agreed policies to release and unlock parcels of development land were also explained and noted. It was reported that a series

of private developers were involved and that the opportunity for development had been appropriately and correctly marketed.

Concern was expressed in regard to the future effect on traffic flows at local junctions and the detailed layout, parking and design issues were recognised.

In conclusion, it was noted that the Council's policies concerning Social Value had been considered and developers were delivering apprenticeships throughout the design and building process.

AGREED:

That the presentation and update be noted.

#### **64. FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS**

Items relevant to the Commission's Work Programme as listed on the Forward Plan of Key Decisions were submitted and noted.

#### **65. WORK PROGRAMME**

The Commission's Work Programme was submitted and noted.

It was confirmed that the Healthy Streets audit be included on the Work Programme for future discussion.

#### **66. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

##### **Chair's Closing Comments**

As this was the final meeting of the municipal year, in closing the meeting the Chair expressed thanks to members and officers for their contribution to the work of the Commission.

#### **67. CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 7.30pm.

