



Leicester
City Council

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

Held: THURSDAY, 27 JUNE 2019 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Waddington (Chair)
Councillor Sandhu (Vice Chair)

Councillor Porter

Councillor Valand

In attendance:

Sir Peter Soulsby – City Mayor
Councillor Clarke – Deputy City Mayor (Environment and Transportation)

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Joel.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

3. MINUTES

AGREED:

The Minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 14 March 2019 be confirmed as a correct record.

Councillor Porter expressed a view that the Minutes had omitted a level of detail in respect of questions he had asked at the meeting and responses concerning:

- The level of subsidy allocated to Park and Ride schemes.
- The financial information of individual projects undertaken as part of the Townscape Heritage Initiative.
- The numbers of homes occupied against previously stated targets at Ashton Green.

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Chair referred to the Terms of Reference for all Scrutiny Commissions, as circulated with the agenda.

It was noted that revised guidelines were being proposed to define and enhance the role of the scrutiny function. The guidelines demonstrated added value with identified achievable targets and would increase public engagement in scrutiny.

The revised guidelines had been submitted to the Overview Select Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the Terms of Reference for Scrutiny Commissions be noted.

5. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMISSION

AGREED:

That the membership of the Economic Development, Transport and Tourism Scrutiny Commission for 2019/20 be noted as follows:

Councillor Waddington (Chair)
 Councillor Sandhu (Vice-Chair)
 Councillor Broadwell
 Councillor Fonseca
 Councillor Joel
 Councillor Porter
 Councillor Rae Bhatia
 Councillor Valand

6. DATES OF COMMISSION MEETINGS

AGREED:

That the dates of meetings of the Economic Development, Transport and Tourism Scrutiny Commission in 2019/20 be noted as follows:

Thursday 27 June 2019

Thursday 22 August 2019
Wednesday 16 October 2019
Wednesday 4 December 2019
Wednesday 5 February 2020
Wednesday 18 March 2020

7. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

In accordance with Council procedures, the Monitoring Officer reported that no Questions, Representations or Statements of Case had been received.

Questions to the City Mayor and Executive

The Chair asked the City Mayor whether he would be willing to answer questions put by Commission members, similar to the process undertaken at Overview Select Committee. Such questions would relate to issues within the scope and remit of the Commission's portfolio.

The City Mayor indicated that he would support the introduction of a 'Questions' agenda item, adding that prior notice should be given where detailed and specific responses were required to ensure Commission members received full answers. It was recognised that should the City Mayor be unable to attend meetings, the questions could be put to any Deputy City Mayor or Assistant City Mayor in attendance.

The principle having been accepted, the City Mayor invited questions from members for this meeting:

a) Trees

The Chair commented on a recently publicised initiative in the local TV news bulletin where some authorities had begun to give away trees to members of the public to help address environmental, air quality and climate issues.

The Deputy City Mayor (Environment and Transportation) agreed to investigate the previous news reports and assess the schemes feasibility in Leicester. It was noted that the Council had an adopted Tree Strategy as part of the response to the climate change emergency.

b) Bus Lane Enforcement

Councillor Porter referred to the recently announced proposals for additional cameras on bus lanes to enhance enforcement and increase the modal shift from cars to public transport. He asked whether data existed on previous enforcement enhancements to show that numbers of bus passengers had actually increased. He added that if further bus lane enforcement cameras were necessary the implication was that the existing cameras had limited effect.

The Deputy City Mayor (Environment and Transportation) advised that the need and positioning of enforcement cameras was evaluated in accordance with advice received from Area Traffic Control. It was expected that the additional cameras would discourage problems of rat-running in the area, which had been reported to and accepted at a recent Aylestone Ward Community Meeting.

Councillor Porter disagreed with the Deputy City Mayor's assessment of the outcome of the recent Ward Meeting.

The Chair advised that if any member was dissatisfied with any answers received the issue should be followed up with members and officers separate to the meeting and if not then resolved she would be happy for the matter to be referred to her.

8. PETITIONS

In accordance with Council procedures, the Monitoring Officer reported that no Petitions had been received.

9. OVERVIEW OF THE COMMISSION'S REMIT

The Director of Planning, Development and Transportation and the Director of Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment presented an overview of the Commission's remit.

The presentation provided details of the scope of the Planning, Development and Transportation Directorate, which included:

- Transport strategy and programmes
- Highways programmes
- Planning (non-regulatory)
- Regeneration and development
- Environment
- City centre and tourism development
- Place marketing and inward investment
- Workspace
- Jobs and skills
- Business support

The scope of the Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment Directorate included:

- City Centre and Tourism Development
- Place Marketing and Inward Investment
- Priorities 2019/20 - Tourism / Investment
- Economic Regeneration
- LASALS - Adult Skills and Learning

The Commission was informed of the names of Lead Officers from each of the Directorate's areas of work and responsibility. Examples of recent activities and future priorities were also reported and noted.

It was recognised that some policy areas involved a wide remit across other Commission's and portfolios, the improved health implications and objectives of transport strategy policies and sports provision were discussed as examples.

In terms of specific areas of the Commission's remit, the consultation on the Draft Local Plan was highlighted, including consideration of any proposals related to the longstanding Evesham Road link. It was noted that the Local Plan consultation timetable would be considered by the Commission in due course.

In considering the economic regeneration aspects the Chair commented on the frequency of European funding being mentioned in the presentation to support various projects and initiatives. She expressed concern at the likely effect of the UK's exit from the European Union (Brexit).

Councillor Porter disagreed with the statement, expressing a view that the position was unknown.

Councillor Porter also referred to an apparent discrepancy in the reported numbers of homes being developed at Ashton Green, which had formed part of the presentation. The Director of Planning, Development and Transportation provided clarification and indicated that the reported numbers were correct as the information differed due to the current status of planning approvals.

The Chair invited Councillor Porter to contact officers directly with any other specific questions arising from the presentation, advising that its purpose was to provide a broad overview of the Commission's remit.

AGREED:

That the presentation be noted.

10. MANIFESTO PROGRAMME ISSUES RELATING TO THE COMMISSION'S REMIT

The Chair provided details of the manifesto programme relating to the Commission's remit and invited the City Mayor to comment.

The City Mayor reassured the Commission that he aimed to deliver on the manifesto commitments made at the local elections in May 2019.

He reported that he had met separately with Chairs of commissions to suggest appropriate ways in which the Commissions could engage in the manifesto process to ensure meaningful input and accountability.

The Chair referred to the various timeframes involved in the manifesto projects and advised that a schedule of priority areas could be established.

In discussing the current major and long-term aspects, the following manifesto commitments were highlighted as possible areas for the Commission's future engagement:

- A living wage city, as a provider and driver for conditions and rights for all sectors including textiles.
- Development of job creation skills and investment plans that are within economically excluded areas and increasing young people's engagement in employment activities.

It was also noted that work programme items identified by the previous Commission in 2018/19 should not be ignored, such as the Task Group work on bus use and bus company partnerships. Review of the effects of introducing a workplace parking levy was highlighted.

Councillor Porter expressed caution at the proposed investigation of the textile industry in Leicester and suggested that if any unlawful practice or exploitation was known it should be immediately reported and not be the subject of a lengthy scrutiny exercise.

The City Mayor responded, advising that the issue was directly related to the wellbeing of people in the city, as the textile industry in general was reputed to have exploitative businesses and manufacturers. It was considered that the Council had a responsibility to help and work on its joint responsibility alongside The Home Office, Police, HMRC, Labour Market Enforcement and a number of other agencies.

In conclusion and in response to a question from Councillor Porter, the Chair agreed that the manifesto commitments related to the Commission's remit could be forwarded to Commission members.

AGREED:

That the position be noted and Members consider specific elements of the Manifesto to develop a programme.

11. CONNECTING LEICESTER

The Director of Planning, Development and Transportation submitted a report, which provided an update on the existing and proposed Connecting Leicester Programme.

The Commission was reminded that the Programme had since 2012 delivered schemes to provide safe and attractive links between areas of interest in the city centre and neighbouring communities. The project had helped support the vitality of the city centre as the primary retail, business and leisure destination for all city residents.

The report also provided an update on the Transforming Cities Fund through which a number of schemes had been developed, with others expected to be started. It was reported that a further bid was being developed for the remainder of the fund, with a final submission in November 2019. It was expected that the bid would be focussed on connecting transport hubs and links in the city centre, further electrification of park and ride services, cycle and bus infrastructure on main radial corridors serving city growth.

It was confirmed that further details of the Transforming Cities Programme would be reported to the Commission in due course.

In debating the content of the report, Councillor Porter suggested more information on data concerning road safety was necessary. He also commented on the need to increase incentives to encourage the use of electric cars.

In response, it was reported that specific accident data was available over considerable time periods. It was also noted that an increase in electric cars would help to improve air quality, but not congestion. It was reported that a modal shift away from cars to other forms of transport was therefore encouraged.

In respect of the cycle hire schemes and docking stations, it was noted that the experiences of other cities and the types and durability of equipment were being monitored.

The Chair referred to a question she had received from a Councillor concerning the design and effect of cycle lanes and routes, particularly in the city centre. The question referred to areas where cyclists found the design and layout confusing in some areas. Officers noted references in the report to how this was being addressed and agreed to respond to any follow up questions and concerns separately. It was reported that during the design stage of cycle routes, the layout was discussed in partnership with the Leicester Cycle Forum.

In conclusion and in response to a question from Councillor Porter, Officers confirmed that there was not a defined expected number of new cyclists using any routes following works, but that schemes were designed and undertaken to encourage their use.

AGREED:

That the report be noted.

12. TASK GROUP REVIEWS

The Chair referred to the process in establishing Task Groups to undertake specific scrutiny reviews and members were invited to make proposals for issues which could be considered.

The Chair also advised of four significant items within the Commission's remit and it was suggested that these be sent to Commission members following the meeting. It was noted that scrutiny, and especially Task Groups, needed to be able to bring demonstrable added value to the work of the Council and such reviews involved significant commitment from Councillors.

The four suggestions for a possible task group review were noted as follows, not in any order of preference:

- Accessible Leicester for people with disabilities
- Transport improvements with the funds raised from a workplace parking levy
- Fair wages and working conditions – making Leicester an affordable city
- To develop job creation, skills and investment plans for areas which are doing less well – looking for encouragement of business development, opportunities for young people.

It was reported that Commission members be contacted separately by the Scrutiny Policy Officer to further consider the list as detailed above and to advise of any other suggested areas suitable. Commission members would be given a deadline for responses in order that a report could be submitted to the next meeting.

AGREED:

That Commission members be contacted separately to gain their views and preferences.

13. WORK PROGRAMME

The Commission's Work Programme was attached for information and comment.

It was noted that the Work Programme would be updated in accordance with the Commission's previous deliberations during the meeting in terms of the portfolio and manifesto items.

AGREED:

That the Work programme be noted.

14. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 7.20pm.