

ECONOMY & REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting: 16 July 2020

At: 6.00 pm

PRESENT

Councillor Steve Gribbon (Chair) in the chair; Councillor Tom Dowse (Vice-Chair); Councillors Will Dawson, Roy Driver, Helen Foster-Grime, Philip Harding, Colin MacAlister, Charlie Stewart and John Taylor.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes (copies of which had been circulated) of the meeting held on 11 June 2020 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors and officers were invited to declare any interests they had in any of the items on the agenda for the meeting.

The following interest was declared:-

Personal Interest

Councillor

Interest

Tom Dowse

Agenda item 6 'Clean Air Local Authority' as his stepfather is a taxi driver

Colin MacAlister

Agenda item 6 'Clean Air Local Authority Update' as a transport adviser to a number of companies.

3. CALL-IN

There were no call-in items to consider.

4. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST TEST

RESOLVED – That in order to prevent the disclosure of information which was not for publication, the disclosure of which would not be in the public interest, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any of the exempt information in Agenda Item 7 – 'St Thomas's Development' should it be necessary for the Scrutiny Committee to consider and comment on these aspects of the report.

5. LATEST SNAPSHOT OF TRANSPORTATION CHANGES POST COVID-19 PANDEMIC

A representative of the Corporate Director for Place Management and Regeneration made a presentation on the transport trends which had materialised during the Covid-19

lockdown, focussing on public transport, active travel, road traffic and an assessment of how things may in the future.

The following comments were made/issues raised:-

- It seemed surprising that the data did not indicate that a greater proportion of people had not been commuting to work during the Covid-19 pandemic and it was queried whether this was likely to reduce further as a result of an increasing number of people working from home.
- The perceived improvements to air quality as a result of the reduction in the number of commuters was highlighted.
- With regard to the reduction in the number of commuters during the pandemic, senior Council Officers would be looking at how Officers could work with more agility in the future which may not require them to work from the office on a permanent basis.
- The impact on local businesses as more people worked from home was raised.
- The issue of the storage of bicycles had been discussed with the local planning authority with the aim of increasing the amount of lockable storage in new developments as a response to people wishing to cycle more.
- The initial impression was that it would not be for public transport staff to challenge people who were not wearing face coverings.

RESOLVED – That the presentation be noted and Members updated on developments later in the year.

6. CLEAN AIR LOCAL AUTHORITY UPDATE

The Corporate Director for Place Management and Regeneration submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) setting out the progress that had been made following the Government's response to Greater Manchester's Outline Business Case to tackle Nitrogen Dioxide Exceedances at the Roadside, and the implications of pandemic management policies (the extent of which are not yet fully understood) for the ten Greater Manchester local authorities in relation to the schedule of work and statutory consultation on the Clean Air Plan and the link to taxi and private hire common minimum licensing standards.

The Cabinet Member for Economy and Regeneration (Councillor David Meller) attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- The statutory consultation on the Clean Air Plan and the link to taxi and private hire common minimum licensing standards needed to be prepared in such a way that taxi and private hire drivers were making decisions on their vehicles on the best knowledge available. It was noted that a proportion of businesses had stated their intention to pay the daily charge rather than make changes to their current vehicle fleet and that this may therefore not achieve the desired outcome of reducing nitrogen dioxide exceedances at the roadside.
- Clarity was required from the Government on the need for vehicle replacement funds for hackney carriage and light goods vehicles.

- It was suggested that taxi and private hire drivers could be incentivised to have electric or hybrid vehicles. It was commented that the success of the plan was partially predicated on the creation of an appropriate system of electric vehicle charging facilities and yet there was some doubt over whether this would be achievable
- Work had been ongoing to try and prevent the clean air zones being circumvented at their boundaries.
- Concern was expressed that roads maintained by Highways England, including the M60, were not included within the scope of the Clean Air Plan in the light of the fact that such roads were one of the biggest contributors to poor air quality in the borough.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

7. ST THOMAS'S DEVELOPMENT

A representative of the Corporate Director for Place Management and Regeneration submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) detailing a proposal to transform the site of the former St Thomas' Hospital, Stockport into a new intergenerational community with a view to reinventing the way the Council delivered intermediate care. Led by the Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) and delivered through Viaduct Housing, the ambition for the scheme was to deliver the vision and values of the MDC, and in partnership with Homes England bring forward an exemplar scheme that delivered sixty seven new affordable homes alongside a new Intermediate Care facility.

The report detailed the overall approach as well as a commitment to take the scheme to a detailed design stage which would also include planning submission and the procurement of a main contractor.

The Cabinet Member for Economy and Regeneration (Councillor David Meller) attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

(NOTE: This item included a not for publication' appendix that had been circulated to Members of the Scrutiny Committee only).

Members supported the excellent work undertaken on this project and were keen for the momentum to continue.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted and Members updated as the scheme progressed.

8. SCRUTINY REVIEW TOPIC SELECTION AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2020/2021

A representative of the Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) setting out a suggested process for the selection of scrutiny review topics and an explanation as to how the reviews would be supported. The Committee was invited to choose a topic for its next review.

RESOLVED – That further consideration be given to the scrutiny review topic to be included within the 2020/21 Scrutiny Work Programme.

9. AGENDA PLANNING

A representative of the Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) setting out the planned agenda items for the Scrutiny Committee's next meeting and any relevant Forward Plan items.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.11 pm