

Meeting	Economic & City Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Date	11 June 2014
Present	Councillors Semlyen (Chair), Barnes, Burton, Cuthbertson, D'Agorne, Riches and Watt (Vice-Chair)

1. Declarations of Interest

At this point in the meeting, Members were asked to declare any personal, prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests, other than those listed in their standing declarations that they might have had in the business on the agenda.

None were declared.

2. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the last meeting of the Economic & City Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 29 April 2014 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

3. Public Participation

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

4. Attendance of the Cabinet Member for Transport

The Cabinet Member for Transport attended the meeting to give a verbal report on the priorities within his portfolio area. He outlined the following priorities;

- Access York- new Park and Ride sites had recently opened.
- Examination of transport implications from hosting the Tour de France.
- Urban Traffic Control.

- The Better Bus Area Fund.
- Pinch point funding for the A19, it was expected that this would start to be delivered over the next year.
- New cycle schemes-particularly those from Haxby to Clifton and University Road.
- A roll out of 20 mph zones across the city.
- Securing funding for Outer Ring Road improvements.
- The setting up of a Transport Commission to look at congestion in the city.

He added that there needed to be clearer communication with residents on the aims of some of the schemes underway, such as the roll out of the 20 mph zones, to inform the public what the aim of the schemes were.

Members asked a series of questions to the Cabinet Member including;

- How much money had the Council given to the West Yorkshire Combined Authority?
- Who decided that the traffic restriction on Lendal Bridge should be lifted?
- What had happened to funding bids for the Outer Ring Road and a Transport Interchange at the railway station?
- Who sat on the Transport Commission?

West Yorkshire Combined Authority

The Cabinet Member informed Members that although he did not have the figures to hand, he was happy to pass these on. In response to a question about whether York could help formulate a transport plan with the Combined Authority, the Cabinet Member reported that there were a number of technical boundaries to overcome in regards to geographical boundaries. However, he underlined the Council's representation and its voting rights on the Combined Authority and on its Investment Committee.

Lendal Bridge

It was reported that the Leader, under delegated powers and with the agreement of the Chair of Corporate & Scrutiny Management Committee, had lifted the traffic restriction on Lendal Bridge.

Funding for Outer Ring Road and Transport Interchange

It was reported that both funding bids had been accepted by the Combined Authority. The design for the Outer Ring Road was out to tender and the design process was currently funded by the Council.

Network Rail would take over management of York Rail Station and costs for a Transport Interchange would be received shortly. However the plans were at an early stage and public consultation was planned.

Composition of the Transport Commission

The Cabinet Member informed the Committee that it was the intention for it to be a cross party commission, but that further details would be provided in his report in October.

The Chair requested that it would be more useful for the Committee to receive a written report from the Cabinet Member when he appeared at the Committee in the future.

Resolved: That the verbal report be noted.

Reason: So that Members are aware of the Cabinet Member's priorities within his portfolio area.

5. Update on Youth Unemployment Statistics

Members received a report which provided them with the latest youth unemployment statistics for York.

Officers were pleased to inform Members that reductions in youth unemployment had exceeded both:

- The target to reduce youth unemployment by 40% from the position in May 2012 where 875 young people (aged 18-24) were not in a job.
- The Skills Strategy target of reducing youth unemployment to pre-recession levels at February 2008 of 2.1%.

However, there was still a need for more sustainable, higher paid full time jobs and jobs with training where there was potential for career progression.

Officers identified that there were remaining issues in employment for a number of groups including;

- Graduates who had not found a specific sector to work in
- Lone single parents who tended to feel less confident and were less willing to compromise on time taken for childcare in relation to their job.
- Those with learning difficulties, although specific jobs which would suit their condition could be supported.

Some Members thought that although the youth unemployment statistics were positive they still had concerns about the large numbers of young people who were still to finish at college, who might bump up unemployment figures. It was also unknown what the impact of benefit rules would mean for the statistics.

Officers reported that they now had funding (from Leeds City Region and the Council's Economic Inclusion Fund) to offer mentoring at pre employment and during the first six months of a job to those longer-term unemployed who needed that support and that a more robust approach had been taken to gain local training for those were unemployed and those who were under employed.

Resolved: That the report be noted and no further updates be received.

Reason: To make Members aware of the youth unemployment position in York.

6. Online Business/E-Commerce Scrutiny Review Update Report

Members received a report which updated them on work carried out to date by the Online Business/E-Commerce Task Group.

The Chair of the Task Group, Councillor Cuthbertson notified the Committee that their current work had identified three distinct groups who could benefit from support.

These were;

- Those who only used the computer for emails but continued to use manual methods in certain processes in their businesses (such as payroll management).
- Those who were aware of the possibilities that an online presence could bring but did not know how to use social media and did not see marketing as an opportunity to promote and raise awareness of their business.
- Those businesses with advanced skills who could be eligible for super fast broadband.

Members were also informed that the Task Group had considered “pop up” workshops to make smaller businesses aware of online opportunities.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To progress this scrutiny review.

7. Verbal Report on Gross Value Added (GVA)/High Value Jobs

Members received a verbal report which identified ways to attract graduates and young entrepreneurs to start up or relocate to York.

It was suggested that the title of the review be changed from Gross Value Added (GVA) to *More Productive* and Higher Value Jobs.

Councillor Burton, the Task Group’s Chair, informed the Committee that the focus of the review had shifted to examining graduates who were in low value jobs and that they would be visiting York St John University and the University of York to gather evidence. This was to examine why York seemed not to be producing profitable businesses in comparison with other cities. Some Members reported that York had one of the highest business start ups in the UK but once established they did not expand.

Resolved: That the report be noted and the title of the scrutiny review be changed to More Productive and Higher Value Jobs.

Reason: In order to keep Members apprised of ways in which graduates and young entrepreneurs can be attracted to start up or relocate to the city.

8. Report and Cabinet Member Feedback on Potential Scrutiny Topics for Review proposed at the Scrutiny Work Planning Event

Members received a report which included introductory information, along with comments from the Council Leader and Cabinet Members, on possible topics for scrutiny review in the new municipal year.

Some of the discussion on the proposed topics took place whilst the Cabinet Member for Transport was in attendance.

'Supporting Elderly People' Corporate Review

Discussion took place on what area the Committee could examine to support the overarching Corporate Review set by Corporate and Scrutiny Management Committee (CSMC).

It was felt that a focus on employment for older people would be beneficial as it was recognised that there was a large increase in an elderly working population and that a review could examine the economic contribution and the effect on the health and wellbeing of elderly people in the workforce.

Bulk Buying of Energy

It was felt that this could be re-examined by the Committee in October.

Public Transport Provision

Some Members felt this was a worthwhile topic as retail and leisure patterns were changing in the city, for example venues such as the Vangarde Retail park which was located on the outskirts of the city were attracting more visitors. Therefore these Members felt that there would merit looking at cross city travel routes as a result of this. It was added that a review could also examine whether bus routes should take into account traffic pinch points.

The Cabinet Member was concerned that there may be duplication of work if the Committee carried out a review as there were plans for a bus review.

Low Emissions Strategy

Some Members questioned what measures had been taken since proposals for a Low Emission Zone and Air Quality Strategy had been suggested in 2012.

The Cabinet Member responded that two reports had been submitted to the Government and would be put on the Council's website.

Lendal Bridge

Some Members supported conducting a review into the Lendal Bridge trial mainly as it would allow for the Committee to look at the implementation of a controversial decision to see if lessons could be learnt. Other Members felt that the move was purely for political reasons, that the proposal had not been evidenced, that the Independent Transport Commission could go deeper into the process in the autumn. Some also felt that scrutiny of the trial by a small Task Group would not add any value and could be used as a forum for attributing blame.

Councillor Watt moved the suggestion to examine Lendal Bridge in a scrutiny review. Councillor Cuthbertson seconded the motion. On being put to the vote this was lost.

Resolved: That the following topics be progressed to review;

- Employment for older people as part of the Committee's contribution to the 'Supporting Elderly People' Corporate Scrutiny review.
- Bulk Buying of Energy

Reason: To keep Members informed of suggested topics for review in the new municipal year.

9. Work Plan 2014-15

Members considered the Committee's work plan for the 2014-15 municipal year.

Following discussion between Members, amendments were made to the following meetings;

23 July 2014

- That an Interim Report on the Online Business/E-Commerce Scrutiny Review be received.
- That a report on the Corporate Review on Supporting Elderly People be received.
- That an update on the implementation of recommendations and targets from the External Funding Scrutiny Review be received.

1 October 2014

- A verbal report on the Online Business/E-Commerce Scrutiny Review and/or a Draft Final Report on the More Productive and Higher Value Jobs Scrutiny Review be received (subject to the situation of the work in both reviews).
- The six monthly update report on Major Transport Initiatives including an overview of public transport provision in light of changing travel patterns be received.
- That a report on a Low Emissions strategy be received.

Resolved: That the work plan be noted and the suggested amendments be made.

Reason: To ensure that the Committee has a planned programme of work in place.

Councillor Semlyen, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 7.25 pm].