

Meeting	Economic Development and Transport Policy and Scrutiny Committee
Date	22 July 2015
Present	Councillors Cuthbertson (Chair), D'Agorne (Vice-Chair), N Barnes, Cullwick, Gates, D Myers, Rawlings and Warters

7. Declarations of Interest

At this point in the meeting Members were asked to declare personal, prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests that they might have had in the business on the agenda.

Councillor Cullwick declared personal interests in Agenda Items 5) (Attendance of Executive Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods) and 6) Executive Paper on Business Improvement District as he managed a number of Houses in Multiple Occupation, was employed by York diocese and was a trustee of The Spurriergate Centre.

No other interests were declared.

8. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the last meeting of the Economic Development and Transport Policy and Scrutiny Committee held on 17 June 2015 be signed and approved by the Chair as a correct record.

9. Public Participation

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

10. Attendance of Executive Member for Transport & Planning

The Chair reported that he had received apologies from the Executive Member for Transport and Planning. It was suggested that his attendance be deferred to the September meeting.

11. Attendance of Executive Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods

The Executive Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods attended to detail his priorities and challenges for the municipal year.

His three overarching priorities were;

- 1) Homelessness
- 2) Housing Strategy
- 3) Private Sector Housing

He also wished to control Anti Social Behaviour, and to work with the Police and charities to control street drinking and combat “homelessness” in York.

The Executive Member felt that “homelessness” was a misnomer in York as the word was often used for as a catch all for street drinkers. Council Officers were aware of individuals who had homes but for reasons, possibly, mental health or challenging behaviour, chose to sit outside. He felt it was inaccurate to say anyone was homeless in the city.

Questions from Members to the Executive Member included;

- What did he believe was an appropriate level of affordable housing in each development?
- Would the Gypsy Council be involved in a potential review of the management of traveller sites?
- Why was a percentage of 20% of all properties being Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) across a neighbourhood not imposed?

Discussions took place around the definition of affordable housing. It was noted that the previous government defined affordable housing as 80% of the market rate, but that rates and averages differed across the country.

The Executive Member felt that the requirements for affordable housing within new developments had acted as a deterrent and had affected the economic viability of other projects.

The Executive Member confirmed that a report in respect of the management of traveller sites would be considered at an Executive meeting.

In regards to the percentage of HMO's, it was noted that the numbers of students in the city were levelling and the number of planning applications for HMO's was tailing off. One Member requested that the Supplementary Planning Document and threshold document in regards to the percentage of HMO's permitted per neighbourhood be re-examined by Members at the Local Plan Working Group. The Executive Member confirmed that he would investigate this.

Resolved: That the priorities and challenges be noted.

Reason: So that the Committee are kept up to date.

12. Executive Paper on Business Improvement District for York City Centre

Members considered a report which was due to be presented to the Executive on 30 July. The paper asked the Executive to agree to a ballot to take place in November 2015 to allow city centre businesses to decide whether they would like to form a Business Improvement District in York city centre.

Adam Sinclair, from City Team York and Steve Hughes, York Business Improvement District Manager, presented the report and gave Members some background to the proposals for the Business Improvement District (BID).

They reported that businesses had concerns about cleanliness of streets, Christmas lights and shopping experience. The expensive cost of rent to occupy listed buildings also discouraged business. They explained that BIDs attracted funding by charging a levy on businesses within the BID area (approximately 1% based on rateable value with a threshold of £12,500) and this would generate income for the city. BIDs, once established, were also successful in attracting more funding.

Regarding the governance arrangements it was reported that Luton, Leeds and Newcastle had all recently voted to have BIDs and that terms were five years and renewable.

It was often found on the renewal election that the percentage to keep the BID in place increased. It was reported that the average turnout for these elections was 40%.

Questions from Members related to;

- The boundaries of the BID
- The composition of the BID governance structure in relation to levy payers and non levy payers
- Waste Collections
- City Centre Parking

It was reported that the proposed BID area is largely within the boundary of the inner ring road, but includes businesses facing the inner ring road.

One Member asked how the BID would balance levy payers with non levy payers and was assured businesses below the threshold will still benefit from investment in the BID.

If a BID was approved then a not for profit limited by guarantee company would be established, an AGM would be held along with an election for Directors. There was also the opportunity for there to be cross sector BID champions (or a steering group) in the public, cultural and private sectors. It was noted that churches were not subject to rates and so did not pay the levy, and as a result of this they did not get a vote on the BID proposal. However, the City Team York had consulted the Dean and Chapter of York Minster on the proposals, as they ran some commercial properties.

Members welcomed the BID proposal to have Street Ambassadors in the city centre to assist police officers and the proposal to introduce new city centre waste collection arrangements which would bring economies of scale.

It was reported that some professional firms had stated that they would not return to the city centre due to parking charges and would remain on the outskirts due to free parking. The installation of 'pay on exit' and pay by credit card charges were discussed along with the early closing hours at night of the Park and Ride service.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To support the continuing development of a Business Improvement District in York, and subsequent progression to ballot stage.

13. York Economic Strategy and related Policy & Scrutiny Committee Work

Members considered a report which provided them with background on the development to date of a new Economic Strategy for York and made proposals for how the Committee might wish to contribute to it in their cross party policy development role.

The Committee were given some background to the report and how Officers were currently working with businesses in the city to develop the refreshed existing Economic Strategy and how they felt that this would provide a good opportunity for Members to get involved.

The report gave the Committee the option to attend and contribute to cross-sector workshops to deliver the priorities in the Economic Strategy.

Discussion took place during which the following questions and points were raised;

- What would the attendance levels for the workshops be, would a Member voice be represented?
- Given greater housing demand and population numbers, could Members be given sight of growth numbers for the city as contained in the Arup report.

It was not known at this stage what the attendance figures would be but it was important to ensure that Councillors did not outnumber business people on certain topic areas and vice versa.

Therefore there was a suggestion that there be an amendment to Option 2 to make attendance to the workshops open to all Councillors.

In relation to growth figures it was suggested that these would be presented to the Local Plan Working Group and that they would be best placed to consider these rather than the Committee.

The Chair proposed the priority of Creative City as he felt that there were not enough job opportunities produced in the creative sector even though the Yorkshire Film Archive was located in the city.

Further discussion took place over the priorities. Option 2 of the report to select two priorities was agreed.

It was agreed that “Unlocking Brownfield Sights for Jobs and Housing” and “A Creative City Uniquely Utilising its Distinct Heritage” would be chosen as the topics.

One Member suggested that the Creative City priority might clash with potential work carried out by the Learning and Culture Policy and Scrutiny Committee. It was therefore suggested that if this was the case then the remaining votes for the next highest topic, “A Tangible Shift to Higher Value Sectors and Jobs” be the alternative topic.

It was noted that the workshops would likely take place in the late afternoon or early evening as they involved businesses. The Strategy & Policy Group Manager (Economy and Place) stated that he would update Members following the meeting of the York Economic Partnership meeting in August and also that he could provide a link to the papers for the meeting.

Resolved: (i) That Option 2 be confirmed and the following priorities be selected;

- A Creative City Uniquely Utilising Its Distinct Heritage
- Unlocking Brownfield Sites

(ii) That the Members assigned to each priority as follows;

A Creative City Uniquely Utilising Its Distinct Heritage

Councillor Cullwick
Councillor Cuthbertson
Councillor Myers
Councillor Rawlings

Unlocking Brownfield Sites

Councillor D'Agorne
Councillor Barnes
Councillor Gates
Councillor Warters

(iii) That if it is found that the Creative City priority clashes with work carried out by the Learning and Culture Policy and Scrutiny Committee then it be replaced with the priority "A Tangible Shift to Higher Value Sectors and Jobs".

(iv) That the wording be amended so that workshops be open to all Members to attend and contribute.

Reason: To enable the Committee to fulfil its policy development role in a tangible way, contributing to the key decisions and actions to be taken around York's economy for the next five years.

14. Work Plan 2015-16

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

One Member asked whether the Update Report on the Implementation of the Recommendations in the Higher Value Jobs Scrutiny Review could be presented at the Creative City workshop. Another Member asked for general clarification as to what the Finance and Performance Monitoring Reports might include in advance of the meeting to allow for Members of the Committee to prepare questions for Officers. Clarification was also sought as to whether the Committee remit included the examination of Outstanding Section 106 payments. It was reported that this was the responsibility of the Corporate and Scrutiny Management Policy and Scrutiny Committee.

Resolved: That the work plan be noted and the following amendments be made;

- That the attendance of the Executive Member for Transport of Planning be deferred until September.

- That the attendance of the Executive Member for Economic Development and Community Engagement be slipped to November depending on his availability.

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

Councillor I Cuthbertson, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 8.20 pm].