

# Public Document Pack

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & MANAGED GROWTH SCRUTINY BOARD - 17 January 2019

### MINUTES

Present: Councillors: M Parker (Chairman), A Adeyemo, K Hawkins, K Blunt, M McLoughlin, C Williams, K Allsopp and D Holl-Allen (Substitute)

Guests: Chris Lane (Transport for West Midlands)  
Tim Rudman (Resorts World)  
Phil Farrell (Urban Growth Company – UGC)

Officers: Perry Wardle (Assistant Director, Growth and Development)  
Alan Smith (Head of Growth Programmes)  
Lucy Lee (Finance Manager)  
Ashley Prior (Head of Highway Services)  
Sangeeta Leahy (Public Health),  
Paul Rogers (Democratic Services)

The Economic Development and Managed Growth Scrutiny Board meeting commenced at 6:00 p.m.

#### 1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor R Grinsell (Councillor Mrs Holl-Allen MBE substituting).

#### 2. DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY OR CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 3. QUESTIONS AND DEPUTATIONS

No questions or deputations were submitted.

#### 4. MINUTES

##### RESOLVED:

The Minutes arising from the Economic Development and Managed Growth Scrutiny Board meeting held on 13th November 2018 were confirmed as a correct record, subject to the correction of a typo on page 8, line 2 to be amended from 'cross-bounder' to 'cross-boundary'.

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**5. SOLIHULL CLEAN AIR STRATEGY 2019-2024**

The Consultant for Public Health introduced the report. Members were informed that the report provided the Scrutiny Board with an update on the development of the Solihull Clean Air Strategy 2019-2024 and provided a further opportunity for Members to comment before the Strategy passed to Cabinet for approval on 7th February 2019.

Two Member Clean Air Strategy workshops had been facilitated seeking all Members input to the draft Strategy. The Clean Air Strategy was a planned five year strategy, which would be subject to updating during the life of the strategy. An annual review would be undertaken of the strategy once implemented. A total of six themes comprised the Strategy, which consisted of short, medium and long-term objectives. Extensive consultation had been undertaken and included all Council Members, Cabinet, Corporate Leadership Team, Assistant Directors Group and the Health and Well Being Board. Implementation and delivery of the Clean Air Strategy is to be overseen by the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Environment & Housing.

In response to questions raised by Members of the Scrutiny Board, Members were further informed of the following:

Engagement and consultation with residents and the wider public was recognised as on-going through the life of the Strategy. Several of the actions detailed within the Strategy were dependent upon engagement with local schools and community groups. The Council would also support local community groups undertaking their own air quality sampling with technical advice and support.

The Strategy would be a live document and would be updated accordingly. For example, the Council is already planning to engage with registered users of wood burning stoves in the borough, as they were a recognised source of particulate matter. The on-going engagement was viewed as a wider public educational programme in respect of air quality in the borough. The Air Quality Survey data arising from the year long air quality monitoring programme would also be made public and available on-line.

The planting of trees in known pollution hotspots (as detailed in the Environment Action Plan) was classed as a medium-term objective rather than immediate objective based on current planning policy, scheduled housing and highways development and the Council was confident that tree planting in some locations fell under a three-year action. For example, when considering

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future planning applications, tree planting and the green infrastructure requirements would be taken into consideration as part of the application.

An air quality monitoring station was located at Birmingham Airport, with air quality readings showing that the legal air quality requirements were met, other than for ozone readings. A total of 28 diffusion air quality monitoring sites were in the borough. The data from the twelve months trial monitoring period has resulted in some monitoring locations being changed, and the Air Quality Monitoring Steering Group has approved further monitoring sites which commenced in January 2019. Both particulate matter (PM) and NO<sub>2</sub> monitoring will also be undertaken at three locations in the borough, through AQ Mesh mobile units. Monitoring on the A45 will also be undertaken at seven sites in triplicate for DEFRA reporting purposes.

In terms of sustainable modes of travel, Members were advised that although electric vehicles (EV) were considered a better environmental option than petrol or diesel vehicles, EV still produced a detectable level of PM. Walking and cycling remained the most sustainable mode of travel.

In response to the Scrutiny Board seeking definition for how 'success' was presented in terms of the outcomes arising from the Solihull Air Quality Strategy, Members were advised that the hard data arising from implementation of the strategy itself and air quality monitoring trial would provide some measure for success. There would also be examples of 'soft data' arising, such as the level of success arising from public consultation and engagement initiatives e.g. engagement workshops, evident changes in public travel behaviours. It was also noted that DEFRA were very supportive for the Council to undertake traffic surveys to ascertain the extent of any modal shift occurring in the borough.

In terms of future monitoring arrangements for the Solihull Air Quality Strategy, both Cabinet and Corporate Leadership Team requested six monthly updates via Member briefings. It is to be proposed that the current Air Quality Steering Group remains in place, and that the air quality working group stands down to be replaced by six task themed groups which would also report back annually to the Economic Development and Managed Growth Scrutiny Board as part of the Boards on-going annual work programme.

To support the on-going review of the Air Quality Monitoring Strategy, the Chairman requested that the minutes arising from any future Steering Group/ themed action groups were also made available to the Scrutiny Board in order to support its review of the strategy. Furthermore, the Chairman stated that he

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would like all Ward Members to have the opportunity to input as to where the monitoring diffusion tubes should be located in their wards in order to ensure that any prospective pollution hotspots or new, intensive development sites were duly recognised.

In respect of some phrasing used in the draft strategy, the Scrutiny Board referenced the introduction and assertion that vehicles travelling at slower speeds caused higher emissions. The Scrutiny Board noted this was not necessarily the case and that the intermittency of speed (i.e. stop/start) was the greater cause of higher emission levels.

The Scrutiny Board did not agree with the reference within the draft strategy which stated rail travel negatively impacted on air quality, considering studies finding that rail was a cleaner mode of travel than private car transport for producing NO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The Consultant in Public Health clarified for the Scrutiny Board that the reference pertained to diesel freight trains passing through stations and acknowledged that efforts continued nationally to make train journeys cleaner still in terms of emissions.

The Scrutiny Board also referred to the projected passenger growth at Birmingham Airport in future years from fifteen to eighteen million, as well as the advent of HS2, both of which were likely to exacerbate problems with management of air quality.

In terms of the draft strategy's reference to Workplace Travel Plans, the Scrutiny Board agreed that it would prefer to see fewer, effective plans put in place, which could be properly supported, monitored, evaluated and used as a future model for the wider Council.

Members noted that whilst it was recognised that EV's were a positive step towards addressing the production of PM's, they were still capable of producing PM 2.5, which would be increased significantly with a switch nationally from petrol/diesel to electric, and that this should be acknowledged within the strategy.

**RESOLVED:**

The Economic Development and Managed Growth Scrutiny Board supported the development of the Solihull Clean Air Strategy 2019-2024:

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1. To provide comments to the Consultant in Public Health regarding the draft Strategy to enable any changes required before the Cabinet meeting scheduled for 7th February 2019;
2. That the Economic Development and Managed Growth Scrutiny Board programmes the annual review of the Solihull Clean Air Strategy into its future forward work programmes to be taken at the Scrutiny Board every March;
3. An additional column will be added against the six themes detailed in the Solihull Air Quality Strategy providing a definition as to what shape success would take against the strategies short, medium- and long-term targets;
4. To request that the Consultant in Public Health e-mails all Council Members seeking their comment concerning any potential pollution hotspots or significant development sites within their wards for the potential future placement of air quality monitoring diffusion tubes;
5. To request of the Consultant in Public Health that any future Air Quality engagement event intended for Council Members is facilitated at a convenient time in order to accommodate those Members who work full-time; and,
6. To recommend to the Consultant in Public Health and Cabinet Portfolio Holder Environment & Housing that they review the policy implemented by Birmingham City Council in respect of taxi licensing arrangements to support the introduction of EV taxi fleets.

**6. THE UKC HUB (ZONE 1) – MAXIMISING THE OPPORTUNITY FOR SOLIHULL AND THE WEST MIDLANDS**

The Head of Growth Programmes introduced the report. Members were informed that the report detailed the anticipated economic growth arising in the designated Hub area and further detailed how the distinct phases of planned development within the Hub area could be maximised for the economic benefit of residents.

It was noted that the HS2 interchange planned for 2026 would increase connectivity and economic growth in the region through the Arden Cross site. In conjunction with the Hub proposals, Birmingham Airport had published its

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Masterplan, the NEC and Birmingham Business Park had plans for further expansion and JLR had continued long term growth aspirations to produce electric and autonomous vehicles. In economic and managed growth terms these were obvious positives for the region, but there were some challenges and issues to be addressed in order to successfully deliver the growth potential of the Hub.

Potential congestion around the Hub is recognised as a potential barrier to growth. The M42 and existing arterial routes in the area experiencing congestion at peak times and whilst junction improvements could be undertaken to help alleviate the problems, further highway construction did not provide a means of addressing all of these issues in the future. It was recognised that encouraging people onto sustainable modes of transport, supporting modal shift and supplying quality public transport systems was an important means of ensuring continued sustained economic growth in the area. The Council was working with a range of partners to address the above, which included local businesses, chambers of commerce, the procurement chain and local communities.

Mr Phil Farrell (UGC), Mr Tim Rudman (Resorts World) and Mr Chris Lane (Transport for West Midlands) presented to the Scrutiny Board regarding project implementation of the respective phases of the Hub proposals, accessing employment opportunities in the Hub area and associated transport infrastructure issues.

In response to questions raised by Members of the Scrutiny Board, Members were further informed of the following:

In seeking further clarity and a definition supporting an understanding of what was meant by references to 'inclusive growth', Members were advised that this was an issue for the Scrutiny Board to consider and discuss further. In the immediate term, the foreseen benefits arising for Solihull residents from the Hub development included an improved quality of life, for example through accessing greater employment opportunities, as well as an improved, high quality environment. The inclusive growth agenda was also seen to reach disadvantaged and hard to reach groups in the borough to ensure they have equitable access to new employment opportunities. The approach to delivering inclusive growth entailed a series of project delivery activities addressing transport, wider economic infrastructure and supporting business growth.

Key considerations for economic inclusive growth and the need to address wider societal issues such as isolation, mental health and dependency issues, which entailed a whole Council and partnership approach. The Council Plan, for example, discussed delivery of universal, targeted and specialist services and it was recognised that the inclusive economic growth agenda might similarly adopt a tailored approach for delivering in specific areas of the borough to ensure equitable and accessible growth for all residents. This approach has been recognised through the Solihull Together Board. The Scrutiny Board acknowledged the approach towards delivering inclusive

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growth, but also noted that inclusive growth was not a geographically defined issue.

Regarding the project implementation timescales detailed in the report, the Scrutiny Board noted that economic benefits would accrue the sooner the projects were delivered through the programme, but queried what risks were associated with the programme timescale. The significant risks were principally seen to be implementation programme for HS2, some junction improvement works and further development of Birmingham International Station being dependent on other elements of the programme in order to progress. It was recognised, however, that it was inherent with the scale of the projects / phases involved in the Hub area that there would be an element of risk associated with programmes of such scale and complexity.

In respect of public transport infrastructure and connectivity, specifically provision of bus routes to access employment opportunities in the Hub, the Scrutiny Board sought further detail on what studies had been undertaken to prove to the bus operators that demand for routes existed. Members were informed that a trial had taken place, but this was cancelled. Evidence of demand for new routes in the Hub area was largely anecdotal at this time.

The Scrutiny Board was informed that Resorts World had jointly funded a bus route trial in 2018, but such support was not financially feasible in the longer term for private business operators located in the Hub area. Resorts World employ over 1,400 employees who worked non-standard shift patterns, which presented issues for employees working late at night in terms of catching final bus services from the site. This presented significant issues for those staff who were not able to own their own transport and it was recognised that the issue of public transport access and connectivity had to be addressed directly with TfWM and the commercial bus operators going forward. Accessibility to the site via public transport for both employees and the public seeking to access the Hubs night time economy was also noted by the Scrutiny Board as an issue requiring attention and a joint approach through the WMCA, TfWM, Solihull Council and the commercial transport operators, especially if the Councils Inclusive Growth Strategy was to be delivered successfully. The issue of access for the public to late night transport provision was an issue of demand versus on-going subsidy.

The Scrutiny Board noted that the scalability of the Hub site in respect of any application for future Garden City status was not sufficient in terms of the number of dwellings on the site.

The Assistant Director for Growth & Development advised the Scrutiny Board that in relation to the Board's discussion, UGC was the body responsible for co-ordinating the respective programmes delivery in the Hub area. Parking access at the Arden Cross site for the next ten to fifteen years was under review as a component of the wider Hub programmes. Solihull Council held responsibility for the wider transport policy. The robustness of partnership working already in

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place to deliver the Hub programmes was evident by the presence of several partners at the Scrutiny Board meeting.

With specific reference to Birmingham Airport, it was noted that the airport authority had indicated it wanted future provision of wider roads to cater for its projected passenger growth and it was questioned how this would fit with the policy for greater provision of public transport and encouraging modal shift. Members were informed that although there were proposals for increasing the capacity of the local road/motorway network, such expansion was not for the sole benefit of single occupancy/private vehicles but would also benefit commercial vehicles and larger bodied vehicles capable of carrying large numbers of people. Implementation of modal shift remained integral to the future transport planning policy for the Hub area and wider West Midlands region.

### **RESOLVED:**

1. Noted the update on activity in the Hub and the work of the Urban Growth Company (UGC);
2. Noted the barriers and issues affecting access to economic opportunities in the Hub for communities in the borough;
3. To support the recommendation that proposals to improve access to economic opportunities in the Hub across communities be developed further through the Councils approach to delivering inclusive economic growth; and,
4. Agreed to receive a final draft for consideration at the Economic Development and Managed Growth Scrutiny Board of the Inclusive Growth Strategy.

### **7. BUDGET FRAMEWORK 2019/20 – 2021/22**

The Finance Manager (Managed Growth) presented the Budget Framework 2019/20 – 2021/22 report to the Scrutiny Board, outlining the pertinent detail specific to the appendices relevant to the Managed Growth Portfolio. The report sought comments from the Economic Development and Managed Growth Scrutiny Board concerning the Councils budget proposals for 2019/20 to 2021/22 within the Managed Growth portfolio, to go forward to the Resources and Delivering Value Scrutiny Board meeting scheduled for 6th February 2019 and thereafter to the Full Cabinet meeting scheduled for 7th February 2019.

Members were further informed that the Budget Strategy Group had convened three times between August to September 2018 to consider budget pressures and mitigating actions, Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) updates, actual savings 2020/21 and any amendments to previously identified savings.

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Following delivery of the presentation, the Chairman sought clarification for a number of points related to the proposed increase in parking charges for Shirley town centre.

The Chairman noted that Shirley had faced a number of challenges over recent years to keep the town centre commercially robust, and referenced the recent failed BID ballot attempt as one such example. Clarification was sought as to what the likelihood was of achieving the additional £75,000 through the increase in parking charges proposed for Shirley. The Chairman sought further detail pertaining to what risks had been identified should the additional parking revenue figure not be realised, of any potential risk placed on local businesses located in Shirley in raising additional parking revenue and whether any risk rating had been applied against the additional parking charge proposals for Shirley.

The Head of Highways Services responded by referencing the increase applied to on-street parking charges in Knowle in 2018, and advised that local business needs continued to be met which appeared to be supported by a recorded 10% increase in user numbers to the area. Members were further advised that further options remained available, such as aligning on-street and car park charges, provide a set free period of on-street parking ('stop and shop') or extend long stay charges. It was recognised that there needed to be a range of charges for different parking options. The Scrutiny Board did not agree that a comparison between the retail conditions in Knowle and Shirley was comparable.

The Scrutiny Board raised the prospect of increased parking charges motivating shoppers towards the major supermarkets located in Shirley, due to parking accessibility, leading to an increase in supermarket footfall, which would be a potential threat to the commercial viability for business located in the high street.

Members were advised that no studies had been undertaken addressing any potential parking displacement in Shirley arising from the proposed parking charges. The Scrutiny Board was further advised that the proposed increase in parking charges was the first increase in ten years.

The Chairman reiterated the importance of the Council consulting with both residents and businesses in Shirley over the proposed increase in parking charges. With increased competition from online retailers, no business body in place (such as a BID) to co-ordinate a cohesive response to the Council and the proposal to reduce the three free hours to half an hour free parking, the issue of the setting of parking charges was viewed as a significant issue for businesses located in Shirley.

The Economic Development and Managed Growth Scrutiny Board:

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**RESOLVED:**

1. Noted the recommendations for allocations from future business rates windfall income outlined in the report (paragraph 3.5) and agreed to feed comments back to the meetings of Resources and Delivering Value Scrutiny Board scheduled for 6th February 2019 and the Full Cabinet meeting scheduled for 7th February 2019.
2. Considered the changes to the three-year savings proposals as outlined in the report (Appendix B1) and agreed comments to be considered at meetings of Resources and Delivering Value Scrutiny Board scheduled for 6th February 2019 and the Full Cabinet meeting scheduled for 7th February 2019.
3. Considered the savings proposals in the report (Appendix B2) and agreed comments to be considered at meetings of Resources and Delivering Value Scrutiny Board scheduled for 6th February 2019 and the Full Cabinet meeting scheduled for 7th February 2019;
4. Considered the schedule of fees and charges proposed for 2019/20 (Appendix C) and agreed comments to be considered at meetings of Resources and Delivering Value Scrutiny Board scheduled for 6th February 2019 and the Full Cabinet meeting scheduled for 7th February 2019; and,
5. Recommended to the Managed Growth Finance Manager that future Budget Framework report appendices detailing fees and charges proposals include an additional column allowing for each fee and charge listed to be identified as either a statutory or non statutory service requirement..

On learning of her pending departure from the Council, Members of the Economic Development and Managed Growth Scrutiny Board thanked Lucy Lee for the professional support she had provided to the Scrutiny Board and wished her every success in her new career.

The Economic Development and Managed Growth Scrutiny Board meeting closed at 8:35 p.m.