

Minutes of the Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board

12th June, 2018 at 5.30pm
at Sandwell Council House, Oldbury

Present: Councillor Hickey (Chair);
Councillors Ashman and Singh (Vice-Chairs);
Councillors Ahmed, Ali, Allcock, Chidley and E M
Giles.

Apology: Councillor Preece.

In attendance: Dr Alison Knight (Executive Director –
Neighbourhoods)
Amy Harhoff (Director – Regeneration and Growth)
Chris Ward (Director – Education, Skills and
Employment).

9/18 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 15th March, 2018 be approved as a correct record.

10/18 **Work Programme 2018-19**

The Council's Executive Director – Neighbourhoods; Director – Regeneration and Growth and Director – Education, Skills and Employment attended the meeting and provided the Board with an overview of the work of the directorates and areas of key activity.

During the presentation and discussion several matters were highlighted as potential areas for scrutiny.

From the comments and questions by members of the Scrutiny Board the following responses were made and matters highlighted:-

- Sandwell Council was working with business communities, skills training providers and colleges to raise skills levels and re-skill the

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older workforce to meet employment requirements for the future. The Board would continue to monitor skills for Sandwell.

- The Board wanted to look at different ways of servicing schools and working with sectors to encourage early decisions on the skills offer, to encourage wider ambitions and a range of career options for young people.
- The West Midlands Combined Authority Regional Skills Plan set out a clear roadmap for equipping local people with the skills they needed to support on-going economic growth across the region.
- Improvements to Birchley Island and other major traffic schemes would be considered by Cabinet in the Autumn; there would be a role for scrutiny to comment on the proposals before Cabinet made its decision.
- Road safety should continue to be monitored by the Board.
- Sandwell was a good location close to Birmingham, Wolverhampton and Dudley; there was a role for scrutiny to consider how to make transport work better.
- The delivery of the West Midlands Metro was considered important to the Board, the relationship with housing viability, proximity to workplaces, the local economy and the Commonwealth Games was noted to be a priority.
- The Compulsory Purchase of buildings for regeneration of areas was highlighted as a potential item for pre-decision scrutiny.
- There was a role for scrutiny to consider whether Town Plans would meet the needs of local communities and whether they linked to regeneration plans for the area.
- The rebuilding and building of schools was high on the agenda to meet the school place demand in Sandwell.
- New housing delivery was to be considered by the Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board, however housing delivery supporting regeneration of an area may be a matter the Board would want to consider, including scrutiny of the current planning guidance and permitted development schemes.
- There was a role for the Board to consider the impact of plans for the 2022 Commonwealth Games on regeneration in Sandwell.
- The local economy as a location of choice would bring together all of the elements of the Board's remit.
- The demise of the retail offer in out of town shopping centres and town centres and the impact on local economy and regeneration would be a valuable scrutiny topic.
- It would be useful to invite the Member Business Champion to tell the Board about the Sandwell Business Ambassador Programme

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and update the Board about how the Council supported local businesses and helped them to grow and evolve.

- The work of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) in relation to land remediation was highlighted as a potential item for the Board.
- Bringing services together and working with partners to make best use of resources in Sandwell was referred to in relation to Sandwell having a reputation for getting things done.

The Board thanked the Directors for attending the meeting.

The Chair referred to some outstanding elements of work from the 2017-18 municipal year and the list of issues raised through public consultation, which fell within the remit of the Board.

Resolved:-

- (1) that the following items be included in a draft work programme for the Scrutiny Board:-
 - Skills - Fuller working lives and links to the devolution of Adult Education Budget and the work of the WMCA;
 - Regeneration and skills - tying together;
 - Consolidated highways report – road works, the process and performance;
 - Environmental issues and performance – matters raised by public in consultation;
 - Transport matters - Pre-decision scrutiny – Birchley Island; Adoption of roads;
 - Waste and recycling management;
 - Town Centre revitalisation;
 - Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and Sandwell Business Ambassadors Programme;
 - Invite Cabinet Members for Regeneration and Economic Investment and Highways and Environment;
 - Land remediation;
 - Regeneration and Commonwealth Games 2022 legacy;
 - Vice Chair's focus: Skills - Fuller Working Lives;
 - Vice Chair's focus: Transport - focus on metro and town centre revitalisation;
 - Regeneration and Canals in Sandwell. Suggest update to Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board in relation to Canals.

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- (2) that Director – Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chair of the Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board to determine the best dates for the items to be included on the work programme to ensure efficiency and timeliness;
- (3) that subject to (2) above, the completed work programme be submitted to the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board for approval.

(Meeting ended at 18:40 pm)

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