

## **BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL**

# **ECONOMY AND SKILLS O&S COMMITTEE**

**1000 hours on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2023, Committee Rooms 3&4, Council House**

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**Present:**

Councillor Akhlaq Ahmed

Councillors Raqeeb Aziz, Katherine Iroh, Jon Hunt, Simon Morrall and Jamie Tennant

**Also Present:**

Paul Kitson, Strategic Director, Place, Prosperity and Sustainability

Paul Clarke, Assistant Director, Programmes, Performance and Improvement Division (PPI), Strategy, Equality and Partnerships Directorate

Richard Smith, Head of Insight, Policy & Strategy, Strategy, Equality and Partnerships Directorate

Raj Mack, Head of Digital City and Innovation

Razia Butt, Director for Thriving Children & Families

Hannah Redfern, Acting Head of Service, 14-19 Participation and Skills Team

Kev Jones, Head of Birmingham Careers Service

Greg Ward, Levelling Up Programme Lead (online)

Naomi Todd, Improvement and Change Partner Programmes, Performance & Improvement Division

Fiona Bottrill, Senior Overview and Scrutiny Manager

Baseema Begum, Scrutiny Officer

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The meeting began at 10.07 hours

### **1. NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST**

The Chair advised those present that the meeting would be webcast for live and subsequent broadcast and that Members of the press/public may record and take photographs except where there are confidential or exempt items.

## **2. APOLOGIES**

Councillor Richard Parkin.

## **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

## **4. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND COMMITTEE**

This was noted and Cllr Hunt highlighted that there was an error in the spelling of Cllr Hunt's first name on the agenda sheet.

## **5. ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIR**

Cllr Iroh was nominated and agreed as Deputy Chair.

## **6. ECONOMY AND SKILLS O&S COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Fiona Bottrill clarified the Terms of Reference for the Committee, and these were noted.

## **7. MINUTES**

(See Item No.7)

The action notes of the last meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2023 were approved.

## **8. ACTION TRACKER**

(See Item No.8)

The action tracker was noted.

## **9. DELIVERING EFFECTIVE AND FLEXIBLE SCRUTINY**

(See Item No. 9)

The Chair set out the purpose of this item as outlined in the report circulated with the agenda and clarified that Members were being tasked with holding the Council to account by undertaking their role in the best way to achieve positive outcomes. This included using different methods to investigate and scrutinise the work that they choose to undertake for example this could include visits and holding meetings in an informal setting.

Cllr Hunt highlighted some concerns namely that there was an absence of participation by Scrutiny in the formulation of reports to Cabinet meetings. He felt that it was imperative that there is greater participation by Scrutiny Committees with the Executive needing to hear the views from Scrutiny and this would have an impact on the number of reports being 'called-in' due to closer working between Scrutiny and the Executive.

It was added that it was crucial that the Committee's work programme and focus aligns with the Council's programme of work specifically in relation to the economy and regeneration of the city.

Cllr Iroh added that she was pleased to see a focus on adding value through the work carried out by Scrutiny that would mean driving standards in the city forward.

**RESOLVED: -**

1. The report was noted.

**10. DEVELOPING THE ECONOMY AND SKILLS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24**

(See Item No.10)

The Chair gave an overview of the item and thanked officers for attending and asked them to introduce themselves and give some background on their respective area of work. Cllr Ahmed explained that officers would be asked to help and support the work programme.

Cllr Ahmed asked Members for their input on areas of interest and priority for the Committee's work programme. The Chair added that setting the agenda for the next meeting was the priority and stated that the work programme mapping document gave some options that Members may wish to consider. These included Cabinet Member priorities and issues raised by the Committee that were considered during the last municipal year but were not completed.

During a discussion Members identified the following areas of interest: -

- How is regeneration and its benefits being spread across the city and what are the main regeneration programmes for those areas that are not in the inner core or covered by Our Future City Plan (OFCP).
- Input into the OFCP consultation process.
- Further information on the Birmingham Development Plan (BDP) 2031 and plans for renewing including process and timescale to enable the Committee to schedule it into their work programme. It was highlighted that it was key that Scrutiny links in with cabinet decisions beforehand especially significant pieces of work relating to the Leader's priorities.
- When considering the timescales for the BDP Members have identified further work in relation to the building of residential properties in the city centre and the impact of this on businesses and venues that operate as part of the night-time economy.

- Promoting the city especially in relation to tourism and events that fall within the Leader's priorities especially those that boost employment opportunities for young people in the city.
- Understanding the number of apprenticeships created or due to be created through the social value elements of Council contracts and where any further recommendations can be made to improve employment and skills opportunities in Birmingham.
- Meeting with employers particularly SMEs and those in specific sectors previously identified by Members during the Committee's Inquiry into Employment and Skills for young people. This would enable Members to understand how the Council can support local businesses following on from feedback received from young people as part of the Inquiry and inform the discussion on the Local Skills Improvement Plan intended for later in the year.
- Most of the businesses in the city are SMEs and it is crucial that they are encouraged and developed to support entrepreneurship and apprenticeship opportunities for young people as data shared demonstrates the high levels of youth unemployment in the city. This also offers young people the ability to skill-up and take on upcoming opportunities such as the significant area of work related to retrofitting of the Council's housing stock.
- It is imperative that tackling poor skills levels and unemployment requires investment in better transport links cross-city to ensure that people can take up the opportunities on offer.

Cllr Ahmed thanked Members for their contributions and explained the need to understand and review the regeneration work that is happening across the city so that good work can be highlighted and celebrated.

Fiona Bottrill, O&S Manager explained that monitoring of the recommendations that were approved for implementation by City Council following the Committee's report in April on Youth Employment and Skills would be scheduled for October. Therefore, items of interest and discussion surrounding skills could be considered alongside this.

Officers added that information on performance and delivery can be provided to support the committee in its work once the work programme has been set.

**RESOLVED: -**

1. The report was noted, and the recommendations agreed.
2. For the July meeting two items were agreed for discussion:
  - a) Regeneration across the city
  - b) Understanding the number of apprenticeships created and due to be created through the social value elements of Council contracts.
3. The work programme to be updated with the priorities raised.

**11. REQUEST(S) FOR CALL IN/COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION/PETITIONS RECEIVED (IF ANY)**

None.

## **12. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

## **13. DATES OF MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE**

Members agreed all future meeting dates including a request to move the September meeting from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup> September to accommodate a meeting of the Education, Children and Young People O&S Committee.

## **14. AUTHORITY TO CHAIR AND OFFICERS**

Agreed.

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The meeting ended at 11:12 hours