

**BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL**

**ECONOMY AND SKILLS O&S COMMITTEE**

**1000 hours on 23rd September 2020, Online Meeting – Actions**

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**Present:**

Councillor Lou Robson (Chair)

Councillors Nicky Brennan, Maureen Cornish, Zaheer Khan, Chaman Lal, Simon Morrall, Julien Pritchard and Lucy Seymour-Smith.

**Also, Present:**

Richard Brown, Interim Project Lead

Garry Woodward, Planning Development Manager

Mark Gamble, Development Manager

Ceri Saunders, Acting Group O&S Manager

Baseema Begum, Scrutiny Officer

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**1. NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST**

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

**2. APOLOGIES**

None.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

None.

**4. ACTION NOTES**

The action notes of the meeting held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> July were agreed. Cllr Seymour-Smith stated that her apologies were given for this meeting but not recorded.

## 5. SMITHFIELD MASTERPLAN - UPDATE

(See item No.5)

The Chair introduced the item and noted the report circulated to members. Richard Brown talked through the key points and in discussion with Members the following points were made: -

- The impact of Covid-19 on land usage and any required changes cannot be predicted at the moment as it is too early to say although active discussion is taking place on a weekly basis to capture change and manage the risk as far as possible. Any changes required to the Masterplan as a result for example of more people working from home in the longer term and the need for office space will be considered in due course however it should be noted that the process is still in the preferred bidder stage and not yet finalised.
- Following the finalisation of the joint venture agreement with Lendlease (the preferred bidder) the next stage will be the submission of a planning application (in 2021) with final plans for the site. However, consultation and significant stakeholder engagement will take place before the planning application is submitted to pick up on issues raised such as the impact on and needs of residents, green spaces and the night-time economy in the area. There is an expectation that some changes will need to be made to the 2016 Masterplan.
- It is expected that the legal contract will be completed in late 2020/early 2021 and there have been delays due to road testing the scheme to ensure it is viable and the finalisation of funding from the Greater Birmingham & Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP). An informal paper is being presented to a sub-committee of the GBSLEP and is scheduled for 7<sup>th</sup> October. Upon agreement of this a further formal process will follow with approvals by the GBSLEP Board and the Council's Cabinet and Lendlease. Approval of the budget is an essential requirement and scrutiny of this will be done through the project itself and the respective Project boards.
- The scheme has been designed to fit in with wider city centre regeneration schemes. The scheme needs to work in all areas and that will be part of the consultation.
- The site will be used in part to help the city host the Commonwealth Games for about a period of 8 months. No real changes are being made that will affect the ongoing development of the site. The delivery programme is being modified to accommodate this.
- The affordable housing allocation in the plan is 10% and is based on an assumption. The site is a mixed-use development with space for other provision. It will be reviewed, and the Council is working with Lendlease on this. Currently the plan includes residential apartments with public green spaces. The scheme will take note of the city's climate change commitment as set out in the Birmingham Development Plan (BDP).

- The site is 17 hectares and the freehold of most of this is owned by the Council with some third-party land to be acquired to fit with the vision in the Masterplan. Until the joint venture agreement has been signed no changes can be made in terms of land disposal. Land transfer will be done in 4 key stages. The Council will be looking to let the site on a long lease.
- A review of the financial process will be done pre and post development. Following completion, a reconciliation on the value and profit will be done. Further details of this cannot be shared due to the confidentiality agreement between the Council and Lendlease.

**RESOLVED: -**

1. The report was noted.
2. Richard Brown to provide further details on the employment and training opportunities available for local people.
3. Details of the paper to be presented to the sub-committee of the GBSLEP on 7<sup>th</sup> October to be shared with the Committee if possible, following the meeting.
4. A further update to be scheduled on the Committee's work programme in the new year following the signing of the legal contract with Lendlease.

**6. EAST BIRMINGHAM INCLUSIVE GROWTH STRATEGY CONSULTATION - UPDATE**

(See item No.6)

Mark Gamble highlighted the key points from his presentation and during discussion with Members the following points were made: -

- 130 responses have been received to the online survey so far. Over 300 surveys were sent out. There has been a total of 100 meetings with stakeholders. A webinar for large groups has also been run and officers are working on an online workshop to continue engagement activity.
- It is difficult to compare online consultation due to the pandemic with a normal consultation that would include more face to face meetings and local engagement in the area with residents, businesses, communities and other stakeholders.
- Officers have worked with a variety of stakeholders including housing associations and other organisations such as Sifa Fireside to engage hard to reach groups.
- Work is taking place with Peter Bishop, Director of Digital and Customer Services and his team on improving digital inclusion targeting those who are more likely to be excluded such as older people by working with Age Concern.
- Initial analysis and feedback received so far to the consultation suggests that a range of people have responded.

- The East Birmingham area covers a very diverse part of the city that is quite transient. With approximately 230,000 people this does make engagement harder although it is also essential to capture the views of everyone living and working in the area by identifying points of contact/inclusion to ensure local people buy into the process. This will ensure that the right jobs and skills are made available benefitting local people, allowing them to access those opportunities first.
- Further work needs to take place with local employers to ensure that local people have the rights skills and qualifications to get the jobs being created.
- The consultation and engagement has also allowed for insight into what is happening in the area. Specific local work interests' people more as it relates to where they live, study or work. Therefore, the strategy does need to consider the human aspect of what is important to the people living in the various neighbourhoods that cover the East Birmingham area. Furthermore, integrated thinking on planning and transport need is required.
- Local centres and the character and ownership of individual areas is very important to the people living there. There is a need to engage with communities to protect neighbourhoods and ensure that future aspirations are sustainable. This includes using Council estate assets for example to benefit local people.
- Officers are working with the University of Central Birmingham (UCB) and South and City College in involving young people in the consultation. The Council supports a Building Birmingham Scholarship programme, a graduate programme and work is being done to encourage more young people to look at a career in design and architecture. It is imperative that these opportunities are more visible to young people and that support is available to them to take up the opportunities being created locally.
- Feedback following the closing of the consultation needs to be provided to all those that have engaged. A key part of the consultation process is that engagement and communication is meaningful and consistent.

**RESOLVED: -**

1. The report was noted.
2. A further update to be scheduled on the Committee's work programme in the new year with feedback on the consultation and next steps.

**7. WORK PROGRAMME**

(See item No. 7)

Changes to dates and times of future meetings were discussed and changes agreed for the November & December meetings.

Cllr Morrall highlighted that career pathways for young boys that are failing in the education system could be looked at in more depth with Cllr Francis, Cabinet Member

for Education, Skills and Culture including what the city is doing to promote employment opportunities to young people.

A discussion item to be added on the impact of cultural and leisure facilities on the night-time economy in the city centre and specific areas across the city.

Regular updates on the economic impact of covid on various disadvantaged groups. It was agreed that updates could be scheduled every couple of months to allow the Committee to continue with other scheduled items on the work programme. An in-depth piece of work on the cost of the pandemic to the city was suggested by the Chair as piece of work to be conducted in the new year.

Cllr Robson suggested that Members could use the November meeting to start an inquiry looking at the use of the Council's property assets.

**RESOLVED:** -

1. Members noted future items for discussion.
2. Changes to future meetings was discussed and changes agreed. Officers to send amended calendar invitations.
3. A discussion on the impact of Covid-19 on cultural and leisure facilities of the night-time economy in areas of the city with significant activity to be scheduled for the December meeting.

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

None.

**9. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

**10. AUTHORITY TO CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS**

Agreed.

**RESOLVED:** -

That in an urgent situation between meetings the Chair, jointly with the relevant Chief Officer, has authority to act on behalf of the Committee.

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The meeting ended at 12:17 hours.