

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

ECONOMY AND SKILLS O&S COMMITTEE

1000 hours on 24th March 2021, Online Meeting – Actions

Present:

Councillor Shabrana Hussain (Chair)

Councillors Nicky Brennan, Maureen Cornish, Chaman Lal, Simon Morrall and Julien Pritchard.

Also, Present:

Mark Gamble, East Birmingham Development Manager

Ceri Saunders, Acting Group O&S Manager

Baseema Begum, Scrutiny Officer

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.

Cllr Shabrana Hussain also advised Members of the pre-election period guidance as shared with all Members and issued by the Council's Monitoring Officer.

2. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

Cllr Shabrana Hussain was confirmed as Chair for the rest of the municipal year.

3. APOLOGIES

None.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

5. ACTION NOTES

The action notes of the meeting held on the 24th February were agreed.

6. EAST BIRMINGHAM INCLUSIVE GROWTH STRATEGY – CONSULTATION FEEDBACK AND NEXT STEPS

(See item No.6)

The Chair, Cllr Shabrana Hussain welcomed Mark Gamble, East Birmingham Development Manager to the meeting who talked Members through his presentation and highlighted the following points: -

- The strategy sets out the regeneration and vision for East Birmingham for the next 20 years in the context of the East Birmingham and North Solihull inclusive growth corridor. The Council is working in partnership with Solihull Council and the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) on this.
- 240,000 people in 20 wards are affected by the strategy and the consultation seeks to put in place the building blocks for long term and ongoing engagement. Partnership working is key to this.
- The consultation closed shortly after the last update to Committee having been open for 8 months. It was a challenge due to having to hold it during a pandemic and was redesigned because of this.
- There were a number of people that couldn't be reached as part of the consultation due to covid-19 restrictions however the priority is to make contact when things return to a more normal way of working especially those who couldn't be connected with digitally. To compensate for the lack of face to face engagement a longer period of consultation was agreed, and this allowed for more detail to be discussed with those that were engaged with.
- Feedback from the consultation exercise showed that the stakeholders engaged with helped in identifying others and were able to cascade the information resulting in a very good reach. It was noted that there was some blind spots e.g. digitally excluded people and young people and the Council is keen to address this going forward.
- The consultation helped to build links and establish new routes of engagement and develop relationships with groups. This resource will help when project delivery commences.
- Since the last update to Committee in September governance arrangements have been put in place to deliver the strategy and identify how this will work practically. This includes how the strategy will be delivered, financed and the approval process. Structures have been set up to help with co-ordination and closer working together between partners. A representative of the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) will be added.
- The East Birmingham board was set up and met in November for the first time and the strategy was adopted by City Council in February.

During discussion and in response to questions from Members the following points were made: -

- During the development of the strategy officers worked closely with the Local Employment & Skills Board and the WMCA to understand the overall landscape in relation to jobs & employment. This work has continued during the consultation and up to the present time and is high on the list of priorities.
- The WMCA set up the East Birmingham Taskforce in response to the development of the strategy. Thematic groups have been set up looking specifically at how various stakeholders can be working together more effectively. In terms of specifics there are some ideas that can be potentially delivered into projects as part of the programme. One of the ideas is to have a key workers skills hub and pathways. There is an Anchor Institution network that the Council is a member of alongside some of our key partners and a key task is setting out to create pathways into these institutions such as the Council, Police and Heartlands hospital. Discussions are also taking place with HS2 and private businesses on this agenda and how this is plugged into social and job recruitment and activities. The implementation plan will have more detail on this.
- The WMCA is represented on the East Birmingham Board and play an active role as a partner. It has been very supportive of the work particularly around public sector reform.
- The Commonwealth Games team alongside other areas of key activity in the Council will be co-ordinated and expanded on as part of the implementation plan. There will be more detail on this as it is developed over the coming months and an update on the progress made will be shared at the next update.
- It is important to provide clear goals that are SMART that local people can follow and that people can engage with. This can show that improvements are being made in an evidence-based form rather than high level strategy documents that can seem abstract. The next few months are key to demonstrating this commitment and ensuring that resources are in place across the area to get going quickly. Ward forums and Planning are helpful in this in terms of priorities. Colleagues in Public Health are also involved to ensure that monitoring of the right things is taking place so that impact and performance can be measured, and this will form part of the business case.
- Recognise that young people are key beneficiaries and as part of the consultation with schools information packs have been sent to Head Teachers to seek the views of young people. Amongst the questions asked of young people include what they want in their area, what they feel is missing and what they feel would be a positive inclusion. However due to the pandemic and young people not in school it has not yielded a big response and the suggestion of using outreach options such as sport hubs, youth clubs and other social settings for young people will be incorporated in further engagement activity.
- The education strand of the strategy is an ongoing piece of work with schools and is focussed on the engagement with young people to ensure that their views are captured and that it is representative of the diverse young people in the area. The Principal of South and City college is on the East Birmingham Board and it is anticipated that this will provide a feedback link at least periodically for students to be plugged in and to be able to share their views. Work is also taking place with Birmingham City University through co-funded

work to boost engagement and maximise localism in the area and involves their students who are from East Birmingham. There is still more to be done to set up good relationships with local stakeholders who support and work with young people in different settings that the strategy is looking to get input from.

- Creating quality jobs is a key issue. Social value is being looked at with Cllr Chatfield and what can be done through the Birmingham Charter for Social Responsibility. Also, by using the recruitment power of public sector jobs through the Anchor Institutions network to set up a local recruitment initiative in Birmingham to recruit locally and support this by bringing in private businesses.
- Monitoring the performance of each objective will take place at the point of project delivery and business cases being agreed as each will have to demonstrate outputs and benefits. Evidence of delivery has been requested by Cabinet and will be provided and this can also be shared with committee.
- The affordable housing target is in line with the Birmingham Development Plan (BDP) target and will deliver at least 35% affordable housing options in the area. If it is possible to go beyond the standard BDP requirement then this will be done however there is an issue with providing affordable housing in the city and currently the Council is not where it wants to be on this. It is a high priority and work is going on within the Inclusive Growth directorate to address this and includes being more proactive and creative about the sites available going forward to get the best possible outcomes.
- In relation to engagement and understanding the impact of digital exclusion and inclusion it is worth noting that consultation on different documents brings very different outcomes and with big strategies this is always a challenge. It is difficult to comment on how this impacts face-to-face encounters versus online engagement in terms of demographics and number of people engaged. There is however a plan to go out to talk to people face to face when restrictions are lifted, and it is safe to do so. It was originally anticipated that there would be more informal interactions such as speaking to people in shopping centres and in parks to engage a wider range of people that might not otherwise engage with the strategy online or in a more formal setting.
- More engagement activity is planned moving forward, and time has been put aside to talk to and maintain contact with local organisations. It is imperative that the strategy is used as a talking point to discuss ideas and is a snapshot in time to constantly test the thinking and build the capacity for community leadership and ownership.
- A bespoke engagement plan has been put in place for specific parts of the area covered by the strategy and taking the opportunity with local stakeholders to co-design this and collaborate on ideas and options. Different approaches are being considered including the use of a webinar and how that can be best utilised.

RESOLVED: -

1. An update to be programmed later in the year.

7. WORK PROGRAMME DISCUSSION

(See item No.7)

The Chair raised the possibility of inviting the Chamber of Commerce to a future meeting.

Considering the pre-election guidance given to Members and no scheduled items for the April meeting it was agreed that it would be cancelled.

RESOLVED: -

1. Members noted future items for discussion.
2. The Committee's April meeting to be cancelled.

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.

The meeting ended at 11:12 hours.