



Enterprise and Business Scrutiny Panel

Minutes - 2 December 2014

Attendance

Members of the Enterprise and Business Scrutiny Panel

Cllr Harbans Bagri
Cllr Philip Bateman
Cllr Payal Bedi
Cllr Craig Collingswood
Cllr Val Evans
Cllr John Rowley (Chair)
Cllr Tersaim Singh
Cllr Jacqueline Sweetman
Cllr Jonathan Yardley (Vice-Chair)

Employees

Ian Culley	Section Leader
Chris Huddart	Head of Commerce Services
Tim Johnson	Strategic Director, Education and Enterprise
Simon Latham	Planning Officer
Steve Woodward	Head of Service Public Realm

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

- 1 Apologies for absence**
Apologies were submitted on behalf of Cllrs Martin Waite and Zahid Shah.
- 2 Declarations of Interest**
There were no declarations of interest submitted.
- 3 Minutes of the previous meeting 30.9.14**
The minutes of the previous meeting were approved signed as a true record.
- 4 Matters arising**
There were no matters arising.
- 5 Scrutiny Review: Employability and Skills**
Sheila Collett provided a summary of the work so far of the Scrutiny Review of Employability and Skills.

She advised the Panel that the review group have met on three occasions to receive evidence about the scale of the challenge, what is already in place and what are the

barriers and to hear what more is needed from a business perspective (jobs and skills).

The Review group have one more evidence gathering session to gather evidence relating to learning and training from the Adult Education Service, the University, the College and training providers.

She advised that at the final session the review group would start to pull out the key findings and that several gaps in provision were emerging:

- Support for older people – over 50 age group, skill levels and experience are not reflected by qualifications
- Partnership working – needs to be strong, there are a raft of initiatives and work streams to work together

The Chair Cllr John Rowley indicated that one of the issues arising through the evidence was that the skills base was not adequate. He highlighted that out of 72 participants from Wolverhampton on a recent interview process at Jaguar Land Rover 40 participants had failed to make it through the programme and there may be a preconception of the type of person the company want to employ. Tim Johnson indicated that the standard required by the company needs to be reached and that it was good at this point to put into context the scale of the challenge.

Cllr Peter Bilson welcomed the review and echoed that points made so far, indicating that the issues for Wolverhampton are broader than learning skills, the issues take the softer employability skills into account such as having the right attitude; employers are looking to recruit work ready applicants. He indicated that the employment and skills commission will identify the broader issues.

The Chair thanked officers for their work.

Resolved:

That the update on the Scrutiny Review of Employability and Skills be noted.

6 **Budget Review - 2015/16 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2015/16 - 2018/19**

The Chair, Cllr John Rowley clarified the order that the budget savings proposals would be considered and welcomed the Cabinet Members and lead officers. He invited the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration and City Prosperity, Cllr Peter Bilson and Tim Johnson, Strategic Director Education and Enterprise to the table to provide a brief summary of the 'Economic Regeneration and Prosperity' savings proposals. The comments of the panel were recorded.

Cllr Peter Bilson introduced the savings proposal for Resources port-portfolio holder relating to 'Reduction in West Midlands Integrated Transport Authority Levy'. The comments of the panel were recorded.

The Chair thanked Cllr Bilson and officers for their attendance.

The Chair invited Cllr John Reynolds, Chris Huddart and Steve Woodward to the table to consider the City Services savings proposals. The comments of the panel were recorded.

Cllr John Reynolds invited questions on the Governance and Performance saving proposal relating to 'Occupational Health External Clients', none were received and the proposal was noted.

The Chair thanked them for their attendance.

Resolved

That the table of comments be referred to Scrutiny Board for consideration:

Savings Proposals		
Description of Saving	Directorate	Comments
City Services		
Acceleration of saving proposal 0037 (Highways Maintenance)	Delivery	Cllr John Reynolds advised that the proposed saving would be achieved by introducing more efficient machinery to repair potholes. Agreed to note the proposal
Efficiency Savings Arising from the Corporate Landlord Model	Delivery	Agreed to note the proposal
Staffing review of the Markets Service	Delivery	Cllr John Reynolds confirmed that the savings proposal would be achieved through reduction in staffing resulting from the closure of Heantun House. Agreed to note the proposal
Reduction of the winter service budget	Delivery	Cllr John Reynolds confirmed that the savings proposal would be achieved through reducing the amount of salt stock piled and retaining £50,000 reserve to buy in salt if the need arises. In response to further questions Steve Woodward, Head of Public Realm confirmed that if there was a high demand nationally, Wolverhampton has supply contracts in place for supply of salt. The Scrutiny Panel considered if joint procurement of salt was an area that could be explored in the future

Savings Proposals		
Description of Saving	Directorate	Comments
		<p>to make further savings.</p> <p>Agreed to note the proposal</p>
Employee car parking fees	Delivery	<p>Cllr John Reynolds confirmed that income would be generated by implementing a sliding scale of car parking fees for employees. He confirmed that essential car users would retain access to car parks free of charge and that disabled employees would have access to disabled parking spaces.</p> <p>In response to a question relating to implementing car parking charges for councillors Cllr John Reynolds advised that this could be taken into consideration and suggested that a study of Local Authorities car parking charges for councillors could be undertaken to feed into the consultation process.</p> <p>Agreed to note the proposal and that a study of councillors car parking charges in other local authorities be undertaken and considered as part of the consultation process.</p>
Economic Regeneration and Prosperity		
Further merged and shared transportation services.	Education & Enterprise	<p>In response to questions Cllr Peter Bilson confirmed that the functional base for shared transportation services will be in Wolverhampton, but that not at Heantun House, which will be demolished following the two year relocation process to Civic Centre as part of the Future Space programme. Options for location are under consideration but are not part of this savings proposal. Cllr Peter Bilson confirmed that the</p>

Savings Proposals		
Description of Saving	Directorate	Comments
		<p>Metro will be considered in future transportation services proposals but that they are not part of this proposal.</p> <p>Tim Johnson advised that there will be further opportunities in time to broaden transportation services to become income generating.</p> <p>Agreed to note the proposal</p>
Highways Maintenance - Reduction in Borrowing for Treasury Management	Education & Enterprise	Agreed to note the proposal
Efficiency savings across the Directorate	Education & Enterprise	Agreed to note the proposal
Capitalisation of staff revenue costs associated with development schemes.	Education & Enterprise	Agreed to note the proposal
Savings from the restructuring of senior management in order to deliver the Council wide target, of a minimum of £350,000, approved by Full Council on 17 September 2014.	Education & Enterprise	Agreed to note the proposal
Resources		
Reduction in West Midlands Integrated Transport Authority Levy	Delivery	Agreed to note the proposal
Governance and Performance		
Occupational Health External Clients	Delivery	Agreed to note the proposal

7 **City Centre Area Action Plan (AAP) - Draft Plan Consultation Stage**

Simon Latham and Ian Culley were in attendance to present the report and respond to Panels questions. Simon Latham advised that the City Centre Area Action Plan (AAP) and draft plan were submitted as a pre-decision scrutiny item for Panel to feed comments into Cabinet 10 December 2014.

Councillors considered the 'Historic Character' and how a number of sites with local character and distinctiveness need to be designated to protect local character in All Saints, Blakenhall and Graiseley. Cllrs Jacqueline Sweetman and John Rowley requested identified several sites in their wards which could be considered historic in character and requested clarification of which of these that fall on the outskirts on the ring road have been considered for inclusion.

Cllr John Rowley referred to buildings that are historic in character, but non listed and in a state of disrepair, he asked how the AAP takes account of buildings that have urban importance? Ian Culley advised that the consultation document does contain a list of buildings for people to comment on.

Cllr John Rowley asked how officers encourage interest for revival schemes such as recent successes for the Sunbeam Land and the Springfield Brewery.

Cllr Jacqueline Sweetman asked what is the criteria for determination of revival schemes, does the Council identify the building then find the entrepreneur or is it the other way round. Ian Culley advised that it is a mixture of the two and that the regeneration team adopts a co-ordinator approach working with the interested parties.

In response to a comment relating to the condition and untidiness of car parks on Dudley Street into the Town Centre, the panel was advised that the site although in need of maintenance was not in a condition which warrants enforcement action, but that there could be a robust discussion with the car park owners to clean up the site.

Cllr Jonathan Yardley asked if the height of buildings was determined by the AAP. Officers advised that AAP is not as prescriptive as determining the height, however there is some flexibility and officers will recognise where there are important views and vistas when determining planning applications.

Resolved:

1. That the comments of the scrutiny panel are taken into consideration in the final report to Cabinet
2. That this item was considered as pre-decision scrutiny and will therefore not be available to call-in once a decision is made by the Executive