

Improvement and Review Commission Minutes

Date: 13 January 2016

Time: 7.00 - 8.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor R Gaffney (in the Chair)

Councillors Mrs S Adoh, K Ahmed, Ms A Baughan, Miss S Brown, H Bull, Mrs L M Clarke OBE, A D Collingwood, M P Davy, C Etholen, M Harris, D Knights, A Lee, Ms C J Oliver, S K Raja, R Raja and J A Savage.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M E Knight

22. CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

The Chairman wished all Members a Happy New Year and looked forward to another busy and productive year for the Commission.

The Chairman was delighted that with the exception of one Member who submitted his apologies, it was a full attendance, with no deputies required.

23. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

24. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Improvement & Review Commission held on 11 November 2015, be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

25. REGENERATION DELIVERY TASK AND FINISH GROUP

At the last meeting of the Commission (11 November 2015) it had been agreed to establish a task and finish group to investigate the capacity, decision making process and project delivery arrangements required to achieve the Council's income targets in respect of both commercial and residential regeneration.

The Meeting noted the Council's plans to use its assets and capital in such a way that not only delivered regeneration and growth in a sustainable way, but also generated annual revenue to support Council services, helping towards offsetting the Council's projected funding shortfall in future years.

The Meeting had before it a report outlining the arrangements for the proposed task and finish group including the following terms of reference:

1. To investigate and help shape the emerging arrangements for the delivery of the Council's Regeneration and Infrastructure priority in order that the Council can make the smooth transition to financial self-sufficiency, specifically focusing on:
 - (a) The prioritised regeneration programme to deliver the scale of recurring annual income required by 2018;
 - (b) The organisational resources, decision-making and project delivery arrangements in place to ensure delivery of the regeneration projects on time and on budget; and
 - (c) The partnership arrangements in place to ensure delivery of the regeneration projects on time and on budget, in particular with Buckinghamshire County Council and the Bucks (Thames Valley) Local Enterprise Partnership.
2. To make recommendations to the Improvement and Review Commission on 14 September 2016 for submission to Cabinet on 19 September 2016.

The proposal was to hold the first meeting of the Task and Finish Group in March, when an update on progress could be provided on the programme of work and resources in place to deliver them, which could act as the starting point for the Task and Finish Group's work.

It was noted that the work of the proposed Group continued the recent work of the Budget Task and Finish Group and to this end, Councillor A Collingwood was proposed as the Chairman of the new Group to ensure continuity.

The Commission indicated that it wished the Group to also explore the advantages and dis-advantages of an arms-length organisation to deliver commercial and housing projects, along with ensuring timely decision making arrangements in the fast moving commercial market place. The indication of no central government revenue support funding for the Council after 3 years, implicit in the Government's Autumn Statement, made the Group's research work imperative.

RESOLVED: That

- (i) The Terms of Reference and scope of the Regeneration Task and Finish Group as set out in the report be agreed, with a final report back to the Commission on 14 September 2016 ; and

- (ii) The Task and Finish Group be Chaired by Councillor Collingwood with Councillor Mrs Clarke OBE as Vice-Chairman, together with Councillors Bull, Miss Brown, Mrs Clarke OBE, Davy, Etholen, Knights & S K Raja, plus any other members that wish to serve to give cross-party representation.

26. RURAL ISSUES - DISCUSSION ITEM

Members considered the discussion paper before them in respect of Rural Issues. At the last meeting of the Commission (11 November 2015) when discussing the Council's Corporate Plan the need to focus on rural issues had been highlighted.

As a result a report had been put before the Commission with 4 featured options. It was envisaged that the bulk of the work of the proposed task and finish group would be externally focussed, meeting with key stakeholders. The recommendations arising from the review were therefore likely to be directed at partner agencies, as well as the District Council.

The Commission decided to link the issues of employment and tourism with the connectivity (transport and broadband) issues. Given the involvement of the voluntary and community sector in delivering solutions to these issues, a combination of all of the first three options into the work of the Group was agreed.

Councillor Etholen, member for the rural ward of Bledlow and Bradenham was appointed to Chair the Group, supported by Councillor Harris (Greater Marlow) as Vice Chairman. Councillor Ms Adoh of Stokenchurch & Radnage ward also agreed to serve. An e-mail to secure further volunteers to be issued.

RESOLVED: That

- (i) A Rural Task and Finish Group be established with a specific focus on connectivity, employment and tourism, and rural quality of life, with a final report back to the Commission on 9 November 2016; and
- (ii) The Chairmanship, Vice Chairmanship and membership to date, as featured above, be agreed and further members be sought to serve on this Task and Finish Group.

27. COMMISSION'S WORK PROGRAMME & CABINET FORWARD PLAN

Before considering the item the Chairman reported that the Cabinet Member for Housing had been keeping him regularly informed of the work being undertaken on the Houses in Multiple Occupation recommendations, which had been submitted to

Cabinet in February 2015, although a formal Cabinet response had not yet been made. Recently her Service had responded to a Government consultation in respect of the proposals to extend the mandatory licensing of HMO's.

A suggestion was made that there was a considerable need for the Commission to carry out work on the provision of Housing as a whole within the District, including affordable housing. The Commission indicated that Housing should be the subject of a Task and Finish Group in the future when there was sufficient space in the Commission's work programme.

Members also mentioned the Saunderton Lodge facility. It was therefore suggested that the Cabinet Member be invited to the next meeting on 9 March to give an update on the Council's housing strategy in general, as well as Saunderton Lodge and HiMos, as this could help inform the timing and scope of the Task and Finish Group in the future.

The status of the four current task and finish groups was considered and discussed, the imminent work of the Local Plan Task and Finish Group the next week in respect of the Princes Risborough Town Plan was noted. Councillor S K Raja volunteered to join the Group and Councillor Collingwood had replaced Councillor Savage as Chairman, who was thanked for his contribution.

The imminent finalisation of the Phase 2 Budget Task and Finish Group recommendations was referred to, along with their referral directly to the 8 February 2016 Cabinet meeting. Members paid tribute to the work of the Chairman of the Budget Task and Finish Group.

In considering the Cabinet Forward Plan appended to the report, the Commission asked a number of questions regarding the proposed Castlefield Community Centre Transfer. As this was going to the February meeting of Cabinet (and therefore not to delay consideration) the Commission asked if they could have a briefing note, which would hopefully answer their queries. If there were still concerns the Chairman of the High Wycombe Town Committee could be asked to defer Cabinet's consideration of this item and/or be invited to speak at the Commission's next meeting.

The Commission also requested that the CCTV and the Bucks Infrastructure Items featured on the Cabinet Forward Plan be brought to the Commission meeting for review ahead of submission to Cabinet.

RESOLVED: That

- (i) The update on the Work Programme and current task and finish groups be noted;
- (ii) The Cabinet Member for Housing be invited to the next Commission meeting to update Members on the Council's Housing Strategy and issues, including the Commission's Houses in Multiple

Occupation recommendations and the plans for Saunderton Hostel;

(iii) An information sheet in respect of the Castlefield Community Centre Transfer be issued; and

(iv) The Commission previews the Cabinet items in respect of CCTV monitoring services (to consider options for future of the service) and the Bucks Infrastructure Plan by and items be submitted to the appropriate Commission meeting before Cabinet consideration.

28. COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION

There were no 'Councillor Calls for Action'.

Chairman

The following officers were in attendance at the meeting:

Peter Druce - Democratic Services
Charles Meakings - Head of Democratic, Legal and Policy Services