

Improvement and Review Commission Minutes

Date: 13 March 2019

Time: 7.00 - 8.11 pm

PRESENT: Councillor (in the Chair)

Councillors M C Appleyard, H Bull, Mrs L M Clarke OBE, A D Collingwood, A E Hill, M E Knight, H L McCarthy, Ms C J Oliver, R Raja, J A Savage, C Whitehead and R Wilson,

37. CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTIONS

Councillor Collingwood informed the Commission that he would be acting as Chairman for the meeting as Councillor Knights was absent due to family commitments.

38. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors K Ahmed, D Knights, Mrs W J Mallen and D Shakespeare.

39. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declaration of interests.

40. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Regarding Minute 30, the Chairman confirmed that the Cabinet Member for Community would be invited to the meeting in June 2019 to update on the appointment of the Street Wardens and resources for the future.

Regarding Minute 31 the Cabinet Member for Housing would be invited on 6 monthly basis to provide an update on the Licensing of HMOs. It was noted that if the Cabinet Member required any support on issues or resourcing then the invite was open to when this was necessary.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Improvement and Review Commission held on 24 January 2019 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

41. LOCAL INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

The Chairman welcomed Ian Barham, Buckinghamshire Thames Valley LEP to the meeting. Ian provided the Commission with a presentation outlining details of the development of a Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) for Buckinghamshire. The following main points were made:

- The LIS was not intended to replace current strategies such as the Strategic Economic Plan or to replace the Transport Plan.
- Areas of high growth would be considered.
- The LIS would cover the Oxford – Cambridge Arc.
- The exam question from the government was to “identify distinct economic assets”.
- The LIS would be based on sound and solid evidence.
- High Wycombe was at the top end of the arc.
- There were high levels of employment across Buckinghamshire.
- Bucks was the poorest regarding digital connectivity.
- The significant assets in Buckinghamshire were outlined as: creative and digital economy (Pinewood Studios), super high tech (Silverstone), upstream space and Westcott, medical technology and innovation, intelligent mobility.

Members asked a number of questions and were concerned at the lack on the inclusion of apprentice schemes, and information on the environment and biodiversity offsetting. In response to a query Ian explained that digital connectivity was poor due to rural areas in the county. He also explained that there had been a clear indication of an aging population; significantly over 90 year olds, and consideration had to be given to this data.

In response to a further query Ian provided information about the BTVLEP: that representatives on the Board included business leaders and leaders of the councils in Buckinghamshire, funding was provided by the government, and that the LEP also bid for other available funds from the government and there were four team members who reported to the Board.

Members were also concerned that the Wycombe area was barely mentioned in the consultation document, there was a lot of business jargon and no firm deliverables outlined in the document. It was noted that there would be an action plan in the final document and the first 5 years would be detailed. The LEPs vision of the future of Wycombe should be mentioned and the heritage, industry and geographic advantage were highlighted. Ian also noted that links to Heathrow was a challenge and the Easton Street Quarter development would be a benefit; as are the links to London. Employment was also an important area and career breaks or changes in career should be supported. Access to opportunities for disabled or people with special needs would be considered for the final document. Travel times and transport issues was covered under the transport strategy however it was confirmed that connectivity of different transport modes would be considered.

The Chairman commented that the main issues missing from the draft document were: the focus on the main junctions from the M40 and the connections from these to important locations in Buckinghamshire, the Chiltern line station points, Cressex Industrial Area in High Wycombe, Globe Park in Marlow and the integration of work and play.

It was requested that all the documents relating to the draft LIS be made available to all members of the council. Members were concerned that this information had not been made available at an earlier opportunity for comments to be noted. The closing date of the consultation was the 8 March, however Ian confirmed that any comments provided by members before the LEP Board meeting on the 22 March would be taken into account.

The Chairman thanked Ian for attending.

42. TASK AND FINISH GROUP UPDATES

Regarding the Parking Task and Finish Group it was reported that Councillor Lesley Clarke OBE would act as Chairman and Councillor Alex Collingwood would act as Vice-Chairman. A scoping meeting with the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Cabinet Member for Environment and senior officers would be taking place on 28 March. Following this the first full meeting of the TFG would be taking place and members would be notified of the date via email.

Regarding the Waste Contract Task and Finish Group it was reported that this would meet on an ad-hoc basis to inform the new contract and improve and enhance the process. The following members volunteered for the TFG: Councillors Lesley Clarke OBE, Jon Savage, Alex Collingwood and Mahboob Hussain JP. If there were any further volunteers then contact the Democratic Services Officer.

43. COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD PLAN

The Commission considered the work programme report along with the appended completed work programme suggestion form regarding the Waste Contract TFG, the Cabinet Forward Plan and Commission Work Programme.

The members had previously discussed the Parking TFG and the Waste Contract TFG. The Chairman noted that as these TFGs would be substantial items then no further TFGs would be required at this current time.

44. COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION

There were no Councillor Calls for Action.

45. SUPPLEMENTARY ITEMS

There were no supplementary items.

46. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

Chairman

The following officers were in attendance at the meeting:

Jemma Durkan - Senior Democratic Services Officer
Catherine Whitehead - Head of Democratic, Legal & Policy.