
SPECIAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 1st December, 2022

Present: Councillor Josh Allen (in the Chair),
Councillors Zak Khan, Bernard Dawson
Co-optees: Shahed Mahmood

In Attendance: Councillors Miles Parkinson and Peter Britcliffe

Apologies Councillors Noordad Aziz, Susan Hayes and Patrick McGinley

130 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

Apologies were received from Councillors Patrick McGinley, Susan Hayes and Noord Aziz. Councillor Bernard Dawson substituted for Councillor Aziz.

131 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest or dispensations.

132 Minutes of the last Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting on 27th September 2022 were submitted and approved as a correct record, with no questions from Committee members.

Resolved - That the minutes from the Special Scrutiny Committee meeting on 27th September 2022 be approved as a correct record.

133 Levelling Up Update

The Leader of the Council presented the report to the Committee on Levelling Up. He highlighted that the bid was submitted on schedule. Details of what the bid included were outlined in the report, involving improvements to the Market Hall, Burtons Chambers and Market Chambers. The outcome of the bid will be known before Christmas.

The Leader referred to the Levelling Up bigger picture, including progress with the Local Plan, which will see a large scale development bringing aspirational housing to Huncoat Garden Village and the Leisure Transformation Project.

The Chair asked the Leader what was intended as the remit of this Committee. Was it to Scrutinise the levelling up bid, or was it to have input into the general levelling up of the area? The Leader indicated that he felt the Committee had a role to play in the bigger picture of levelling up of the area.

The Leader suggested the Committee may wish to scrutinise opposition views on the local plan at a future date.

The Leader highlighted the following in terms of levelling up the area:

- Housing strategy including use of brownfield sites (former Huncoat power station as an example) where they are available
- Strategic employment development close to the M65
- High quality housing and jobs integral to keeping people and attracting people to live in Hyndburn
- External funding availability dictating which projects are brought forward at certain times

Councillor Khan said he agreed that investment is required in housing and employment and he was supportive of the Local Plan. He suggested that the Council could communicate its intentions better in order to get a more positive response from the public. The Leader agreed with this, however, he pointed out that consulting with the public was not always straight forward, as the public often engage more if they are against something rather than if they are in support of it.

Councillor Khan said a lot of positive work is going on unseen and that we need to get better at showing the positive work. The Leader responded that positivity is high amongst local business leaders and stakeholders and the politics is causing negative issues.

Shahed Mahmood asked why the Local Plan has taken so long to develop. The Leader responded that the Local Plan is a long term strategic document that is developed to a timeline and follows on from the previous local plan.

Councillor Bernard Dawson said that people have a right to object to a Local Plan, and no plan will ever be created which is supported by all politicians.

Councillor Kahn asked what "Plan B" was as the levelling up bid was unsuccessful. The Leader responded that the projects put forward for the Levelling Up bid are 3 of many plans for the town centre. The Council will continue to look for funding to deliver these and other priorities for the town. Councillor Britcliffe also pointed out that our current focus should be optimistic based on a successful bid.

Shahed Mahmood asked how the Council was engaging with the private sector. Councillor Britcliffe responded, highlighting that private sector engagement was essential, particularly with regards to the Arndale Centre which is in private ownership. He referred to the potential of an Economic Development Officer who would have a role focussed on engaging with private businesses.

Councillor Bernard Dawson asked if the Levelling Up bid is all or nothing. Officers responded that this was the case for round 1 so is assumed to be the case for round 2.

Additional questions were asked and responded to on the following:

- Timelines for UK Shared Prosperity Fund decision
- Timelines for LCCs Levelling Up Bid
- Role of an Economic Development Officer
- Improvements to street scene

The Chair thanked Councillor Parkinson, Councillor Britcliffe and Officers for their report to the Committee.

The report was noted.

Signed:.....

Date:

Chair of the meeting
At which the minutes were confirmed