

Nottingham City Council

The City of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Economic Prosperity Committee

Minutes of the meeting held at Ceres Suite - Worksop Town Hall, S80 2AH on 6 March 2020 from 9.01 am - 10.50 am

Membership

Present

Councillor David Mellen (Chair)
Councillor Richard Robinson
Executive Mayor Andy Abrahams
Councillor John Clarke
Councillor Mrs Kay Cutts MBE
Councillor Simon Robinson
Councillor Keith Girling
Councillor Matthew Relf
Councillor Jo White (Vice Chair)

Absent

Councillor Jason Zadrozny
Councillor David J Lloyd

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Carol Cooper-Smith - Chief Executive, Ashfield District Council
Neil Taylor - Chief Executive, Bassetlaw District Council
Ruth Hyde OBE - Chief Executive, Broxtowe Borough Council
Mike Hill - Chief Executive, Gedling Borough Council
Haley Barsby - Chief Executive, Mansfield District Council
John Robinson - Chief Executive, Newark and Sherwood District Council
Anthony May - Chief Executive, Nottinghamshire County Council
Katherine Marriott - Chief Executive, Rushcliffe Borough Council
Chris Henning - Corporate Director for Development and Growth, Nottingham City Council
Catherine Ziane-Pryor - Governance Officer, Nottingham City Council

Call-in

Unless stated otherwise, all decisions are subject to call-in. The last date for call-in is 18 March 2020.

Decisions cannot be implemented until the working day after this date.

11 Welcome and apologies for absence

Appropriate representatives attended as substitutes for the following absent members:

Councillor David Lloyd
Councillor Jason Zadrozny

12 Declarations of interests

None.

13 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2019 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

14 Carbon Reduction Work Update, N2 Councils

This item does not contain any decisions subject to call-in.

Katherine Marriott, Chief Executive of Rushcliffe Borough Council, presented the update report on the collective work undertaken by N2 Local Authorities on the carbon reduction agenda following the D2N2 adoption of an Energy Strategy.

The report provides statistics for 2017/18 against the challenging D2N2 Energy Strategy Targets which are to be achieved by 2030.

The Key Themes have been identified as follows with further detail provided in the report:

- Rationalising each Local Authority's own estate to improve energy efficiency
- Planning – reducing carbon emissions from new developments
- Housing – retrofitting existing stock
- Leisure – reducing emissions from and offsetting leisure centres
- Transport and infrastructure – planning for alternative fuel sources for council vehicles and electric charging point infrastructure
- Procurement – how to influence the supply chain to be more carbon neutral including reducing use of single use plastics
- Off-setting with confidence and investing in alternative energy sources
- Acting as community leaders to encourage change within communities
- Supporting businesses to make their changes.

The Committee's discussion included the following points:

- a) This work is welcomed and it is pleasing to hear that all representatives with N2 have attended all 3 working group events. Whilst a lot of LAs have already started work on the environmental agenda and included it within their Local Plans, it is essential that we work collaboratively for the best outcome and to avoid duplication;
- b) The broader impact of the recent Heathrow ruling by the court of appeal (that the Government's plans for a third runway at Heathrow Airport failed to consider the UK's commitments to reduce carbon emissions under the Paris Agreement and so cannot proceed) should be taken into consideration with regard to how Local Authority environmental and energy plans and commitments are reflected within planning permission and new developments;
- c) It was noted that Warwick District Council is holding a referendum to ask residents if there should be a 1% rise in Council Tax to help fund and accelerate delivery of a 'Climate Emergency Action Programme';

- d) With the targets set for 2030 (and some for 2028), the timeline of action is important. There is already good work being undertaken but the supplementary planning measures need to be rolled out as soon as possible;
- e) A D2N2 meeting was held last Friday whereby several Local Authority high level representatives from Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, Architects, Developers and Planners met to try and find as strong as possible routes to swiftly progress the carbon neutral target. However, it was noted that additional funds need to be found to progress the green agenda;
- f) It is important that Local Authority members who sit on Planning Committees take the opportunity to question the green commitment of developers;
- g) In a broader context, some LAs need more information and realistic advice to support the meaningful progression of environmental work to combat the climate change crisis. In a recent survey, whilst 25 of approximately 200 LAs had declared a climate change emergency, only 4 had actually acted to meet those policies;
- h) If there is too much emphasis on pursuing the renewable electric route for carbon reduction, and diversification doesn't take place, there is a risk that it will not be possible to meet demand, so a broader consideration of energy generation is needed with the inclusion of other environmentally sound energy sources incorporated into the energy supply framework. Heat pumps need to be reconsidered as large areas of Nottinghamshire are built over coal mines where the ambient temperature is approximately 30° and can be utilised, particularly as one heat pump can serve up to 30 individual homes and structures. Methane extraction is ongoing and has been further extended at some former landfill sites, and anaerobic digesters are already in use;
- i) Whilst electric vehicle technology continues to develop, there needs to be wider, better quality information and advice for their use to ensure that they can be effective in the majority of environments, even hilly landscapes. There are different approaches to driving which can save and generate power and extend charge life. Whilst the purchase of electric cars remains very expensive, LAs need to encourage more use and promote the availability of charging points and the ease of charging;
- j) The current issues with the urgent Clifton Bridge works on the A52 have highlighted the need to improve the transport infrastructure with an additional bridge across the River Trent to the South of the County. In addition to the economic and social impact, such traffic delays are causing additional air pollution;
- k) The scale of an energy efficient retro-fit to existing housing stock is a huge challenge. Some Housing Associations are willing to take rent but are not acting to address basic energy efficiency issues for tenants such as fitting double glazing and insulation. The investment required of home owners is extensive and loans may be applied with a pay-back timescale so long that if home owners move house, the debt may well transfer with them, which is an added deterrent. There needs to be either a local or national solution. Central Government needs to be lobbied to support a loan system whereby repayment is attached to, and remains with the property, not the owner, possibly via the Council Tax system;
- l) The City Council is undertaking a retro-fit of energy saving measures to its older housing stock, but this has only been possible with the grant funding support of the European

Union and resources from Energiesprong which is based in Holland. With the withdrawal from European Union, Central Government needs to be pushed to meet the funding gap from Europe;

- m) More agility and flexibility is required with regard to recycling to include further materials. Contracts of providers are being reviewed within the County but each household needs to engage and ensure they recycle appropriately;
- n) We should not lose sight of some of the positive local achievements to date in the region, such as HS2 which will enable faster travel and UDICA, the operator of the Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station Site is moving from high carbon fuel to low carbon fuel;
- o) However, there is still much to do, including preventing the pumping stations along the River Trent from discharging raw sewage into the Trent at times of excessive demand and a ban on single use plastics;
- p) Nottinghamshire County Council is spending £28m on ensuring that its offices are fit for purpose and as carbon neutral as feasible, or replaced. It is essential that they are based where the demand is so that officers and citizens do not need to travel. There needs to be ongoing consideration of space sharing to increase efficiency;
- q) Green energy generation, such as photovoltaic cells, needs to be included on all spare Local Authority roof capacity as a matter of common policy;
- r) Across the county weed killer will not be used on road verges and they will not be cut more than twice a year (unless there are safety issues). Trees and hedges will be planted where possible;
- s) There should be further encouragement for citizens to install their own charging points for electric vehicles where this is possible, although it is not yet practical in terraced streets, but does merit further consideration. Already requested in new developments, the new Broadmarsh Centre Development will include electric charging point for buses and also 82 electric vehicles;
- t) Incineration of non-recyclable waste to generate heat energy needs to be reconsidered, specifically the initially proposed plant at Mansfield which initially failed to achieve planning permission due to the objections of environmental protestors. With no alternative, this has resulted in continued use of landfill;
- u) Although obviously unplanned and to be rectified as soon as possible, the impact of the A52 Clifton Bridge closures and traffic delays has resulted in a positive behaviour change for many commuters who are now utilising public transport including the tram, buses and trains. It is hoped that this will continue even once the bridge works are completed;
- v) Central Government needs to reconsider the unrealistic targets for housing provision to take into account any additional cost, space and build time required for many environmentally efficient homes, with added pressure to revise building regulations which support the green agenda. If efficiently insulated and heated, it is possible for household running costs to be significantly reduced in cost and carbon footprint;
- w) By working together a lot more can be achieved in Nottinghamshire much faster and possibly at a lower cost if agreeing elements of a shared supply and procurement policy;

Resolved to note the update.

15 Midlands Engine Development Corporation

This item does not contain any decisions which are subject to call-in.

Anthony May, Chief Executive of Nottinghamshire County Council, presented the report which provides an update on examining the feasibility of a Midlands Engine Development Corporation: a single delivery vehicle, initially providing a business case which will be submitted to the Secretary of State for the development of the area around the HS2 line to include the proposed HS2 station at Toton, connecting to East Midlands airport, and the Ratcliffe on Soar power station.

The potential developments of the area would include residential, leisure, industry and commerce, with excellent road rail and air links. The power station site is important to Ratcliffe and the owner, Uniper UK Limited, is very progressive in its approach to low carbon energy generation, which will be attractive to industrial and residential consumers. The airport has recently been substantially expanded and has the capacity to be the busiest UK cargo airport in the UK with a huge area provided for logistics operators near to the new rail link.

Facilitated by Nottinghamshire County Council Officers, representatives of local stakeholders, including Universities, LEAs, and the private sector investors, have agreed a statement of intent, which is attached to reported appendix A.

During the discussion the following points were made and questions responded to:

- a) There is potential for construction of a Freeport within this scheme. Central Government has launched this initiative for 10 sites across the country to be designated as Freeports whereby goods enter, are manufactured/assembled, then distributed either within Britain or flown elsewhere, with tax breaks provided. A Freeport must not negatively impact the greater area as a result of displacement. A detailed proposal for East Midlands airport has been formulated by a working group with public consultation closing on 12 April 2020;
- b) The wider economic benefits for the County are welcomed as is strengthening of the business case to reopen the Maid Marian rail line, which would further increase connectivity into the County;
- c) It is a concern that this scheme could draw investment into the area to the detriment of the North the County. Increasing connectivity to the Newark and Sherwood area may benefit employment, but more assurance is needed with regard to the wider benefit across the County;
- d) The overall business case is very exciting and it is good to be ambitious for our citizens, but the inclusion of a Freeport must be very carefully considered, particularly with regard to the implications on the carbon agenda. Carbon offsetting does have benefits but would not necessarily address carbon emission issues within the immediate area. Although the greater scheme is planned over several decades and technology will undoubtedly progress, more detailed information is required with regard to air-quality;

- e) The rail line will connect with other areas in the county, and into Lincolnshire, removing freight from our roads and freeing them up for cars. A passenger rail link to the airport is most welcome;
- f) This is a whole package and it is not possible to select or reject elements in isolation, such as the Freeport;
- g) Further consideration must be given to citizens of North West Leicestershire, in the region of the airport, as they feel that this is being done to them and not with them so their positive engagement is necessary. Anthony May set out the extensive efforts which were being made to engage partners across the region;
- h) The economic benefits are welcomed with what may be a 'goldmine' for the whole region. The opportunities for our young people and employment as a whole are welcomed and will hopefully help retain graduates from local universities. However, we must ensure that the benefit catchment includes the broader area of the County;
- i) The overall scheme is supported and the way forward for our region but this must be in addition to existing business and not drawn from other areas of the City and County, and must benefit the whole county;
- j) In addition to increasing business potential for surrounding areas the scheme will also act as an incentive for the adaptation of other power station sites within the County. Central Government does not appear to be focusing on carbon capture technology, so possibly the Midlands could take the lead;
- k) An estimated £450 million is needed to put the connective infrastructure in place, to build the proposed development will be more than £1 billion, so the scheme must attract investment. There is already a commitment of £25 million into existing road systems. Whilst business and local authorities have great ambition for what may be a globally leading model, bold decisions may be required, we must consider this one step at a time.

Resolved

- 1) to endorse the progress with work to examine the feasibility of a Midlands Engine Development Corporation:**
- 2) to endorse the statement of intent, as attached as Appendix A to the report.**

16 D2N2 and Local Industrial Strategy - Update

This item does not include a decision which is subject to call-in.

Chris Henning, Corporate Director for Development and Growth at Nottingham City Council presented the report which updates the Committee on the development of the D2N2 Local Industry Strategy (LIS) and other business.

The following points were highlighted:

- a) The draft LIS has now been submitted to Government and will be finalised following feedback;

- b) Several million pounds has become available from the current Local Growth Programme which must be spent by the end of March 2021 so additional projects will be considered;
- c) The individual Place Plans for the for principal D2N2 authorities will be merged into a plan for D2N2 which will recognise the broader D2N2 area, the development capacity, city centre transformation growth zones, innovation sounds and transport corridors to benefit the whole region.

Discussion form Committee members included:

- d) New bids for the money have to be fully costed with planning permission in place and able to start immediately. Given these requirements provided extreme timeline challenges, it is suggested that such possibilities are taken into account regarding future funds and potential projects;
- e) It is suggested that the members of the EPC support each other to ensure that Nottingham and Nottinghamshire gets proportionate funding including developing a project pipeline;
- f) D2N2 appears to be moving in a new direction with the positive influence of a new Chair, including better quality bids which has increased member confidence going forward.

Resolved to note the latest progress of the development of the Local Industrial Strategy and other D2N2 related issues.

17 Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan (Core Strategy Reviews)

This item does not include any decisions that are subject to call-in.

Chris Henning, Corporate Director for Development and Growth, Nottingham City Council, presented the report which informs the Committee that as part of the Core Strategy Reviews, the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan is to be reviewed, as required every five years.

- a) The majority policies are already included in several Local Authority Local Plans;
- b) Consultation on 'growth options' is required with regard to potential development capacity, including residential;
- c) Previously, Erewash in Derbyshire has been included within the greater Nottingham area covered by the plan, but it is now to publish its strategic plan independently.

The Committee's discussion and response to questions included:

- d) The City Council should consider the conversion of empty shops for residential accommodation in preference to the expectation that housing development will take place on greenfield areas around the city;
- e) There is a commitment to build 4000 homes over the lifetime of the Council Plan within the City which includes 1000 Council or Social homes to be available to rent. The new City Centre strategy has just been published and includes an expectation of higher density development. With regard to vacant shops, there needs to be better understanding of what people want from the City Centre beyond a retail experience, such

as somewhere to eat, activities and dwelling a while. It is recognised that retail is going through change and we need to consider different ways to sustain our City and Town Centres and provide the desired amenities;

- f) In addition to housing growth, connectivity impact is important and Local Authorities need to be more open to considering different approaches to development;
- g) Whilst it may appear illogical that Erewash is considered part of Greater Nottingham, and Ashfield is not, a consultant was commissioned to identify the area for the scope of the Plan and although complicated, multiple aspects were considered at the time in great detail by all parties, and the boundary determined;
- h) There needs to be a collective EPC approach towards empty shops, particularly with smaller town centres. Compulsory purchase should not be dismissed, nor bringing shops into the middle of town. Further consideration, possibly in the form of a working group, is required, particularly with regard to investment company landlords which demand high rents and expect local authorities to lower business rates.

Resolved to note the report.

18 Future Work Plan

This item does not contain any decisions subject to call-in.

Chris Henning, Corporate Director for Development and Growth, Nottingham City Council, presented the future work plan which proposed items for the next meeting, and invited Committee Members to propose further items for consideration.

Resolved to note the following issues proposed for discussion at future EPC meetings:

- **Devolution and the prospects for a Combined Authority;**
- **Clean Growth and Carbon Reduction**
- **Future transport;**
- **Preparations for 5G;**
- **D2N2 future funding proposals;**
- **Housing Developments; and**
- **Empty Shops.**

19 Date of next meeting

This item does not contain any decisions subject to call-in.

The date of the next meeting is to be determined outside of the committee, but members requested that future dates are scheduled in advance.