

Economy Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 27 May 2015

Present:

Councillor Richards – in the Chair
Councillors Bridges, Davies, Ellison, Farrell, Green, Hackett, Hacking, Moore, Raikes, Razaq, Shilton Godwin, Siddiqi, Simcock, Smitheman and Strong

Councillor Leese, Leader of the Council
Sir Howard Bernstein, Chief Executive
Councillor Wilson, Ward Member for Didsbury East

Apologies: Councillors Amesbury, Karney and Peel

ESC/15/25 Opening comments by the Chair

Councillor Richards opened the meeting by welcoming the members of the Committee to this, the first meeting of the new municipal year. She made particular welcome to those new members appointed to the Committee.

ESC/15/26 Minutes

Decision

1. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2015 as a correct record.
2. To note the minutes of the Living Wage Task and Finish Group meeting held on 3 March 2015.

ESC/15/27 The City's Economy

The Committee welcomed the Chief Executive who delivered a presentation entitled 'Manchester: Key challenges to unlock growth'. His presentation highlighted key factors that will stimulate economic growth across the city. These included population growth, the growth of the skills and labour market, the development of the Northern Powerhouse, the continuing growth of the city centre, further developments in a range of areas that included the housing market, science and technology, the growth of the Airport City and the Civic Quarter.

The Chief Executive stated that the Graphine Centre and Manchester University had established relationships with business and industry that would help maximise economic potential for the city. He advised members that Manchester attracts a significant level of overseas investment as the city is internationally recognised as innovative and a growth hub.

The presentation further described the importance of funding streams such as the Evergreen Fund in attracting high levels of additional match funding to deliver projects and invest in growth. The example of the One Spinningfields development was given to demonstrate how the fund had helped secure match funding from the private sector to deliver this project, due for completion by 2016 with the creation of approximately 1,670 jobs. The Committee acknowledged the importance of such funding schemes in stimulating growth and stated that if the United Kingdom were to leave the European Union following a referendum that this would have implications for such schemes in the future.

The Chair welcomed the presentation and requested that this be circulated to members. She stated that the Committee would be discussing the work programme for the forthcoming year in more detail following the meeting and the content of the presentation was helpful in informing that discussion. The Chair agreed that if a future update is provided to the Committee that it be submitted in advance. The Chief Executive acknowledged this request.

A member said that she welcomed the suggestion to re-regulate bus services. The Committee welcomed Cllr Leese who responded by stating that this was an opportunity to design a service that will enable residents to access employment. He stated that this was important as increasing access to employment and training opportunities would help address economic inequalities and child poverty. The Head of Work and Skills advised that as greater powers are devolved this would allow for the co-commission of services designed to tackle worklessness. This would also facilitate links between schools and local businesses to promote work experience and job opportunities.

A member stated that he recognised the benefits to be made by the re-regulation of bus services, however measures needed to be taken to promote alternative methods of transport such as walking and cycling. Cllr Leese responded by advising that the importance of this was recognised and there were a number of initiatives to support this, such as investment in cycle routes and ensuring that residential developments include facilities for bike storage.

In response to a question regarding the development of the HS2 rail programme, Cllr Leese advised that he was confident that this would still be going ahead and further updates are expected as this progresses through Parliament. Sir Howard stated that discussions are ongoing with partners such as Network Rail to ensure that planning for this development is effective and will deliver regeneration and that the wider infrastructure required will have a positive impact and not prohibit future ambitions.

Decision

1. The Committee noted the presentation.
2. The Committee requested that the presentation be circulated to members of the Committee.

ESC/15/28 Overview Report

The Committee considered a report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit which provided a summary of the key decisions due to be taken that are relevant to its remit, an update on actions taken as a result of recommendations and the current work programme.

A member commented upon section three of the report and requested that further information be shared with her, outside of the meeting regarding the Newton Heath section of the District Centres Update. Officers agreed that this information would be shared with the member.

The Committee noted that it would be discussing the work programme for the forthcoming year in more detail in a private session following the meeting, and that an updated work programme reflecting this discussion would be circulated as normal in the papers for the next meeting.

Decision

To note the work programme.