

Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 4 November 2015 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Brian Little (Chair), Martin Kerin (Vice-Chair), Robert Ray and Peter Smith

Apologies: Councillors Robert Gledhill and Steve Liddiard

In attendance: Matthew Essex, Head of Regeneration
Les Burns, Chief Highways Engineer
Tim Rignall, Economic Development Manager
Jessica Feeney, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting may be filmed and was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

14. Minutes

The minutes of the Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 16th September 2015 were approved as a correct record.

15. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

16. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

17. Economic Development Strategy Refresh - Update

The Head of Regeneration explained that Thurrock's ambitious growth agenda was backed by more than £6 billion of private sector investment and aims to deliver 18,500 new homes and 26,000 new jobs by 2021. The Thurrock Economic Development Strategy 2007 was created to provide strategic guidance to the Council and its partners in their attempts to create the required economic conditions to achieve these ambitious goals.

At the Planning Transport and Overview and Scrutiny Committee in March 2015 Members were advised of the need to refresh the strategy reflecting progress that had been made in implementing the strategy and changes in the external environment, for example the recession. It was explained that the following had been undertaken since that meeting:

- Work had been undertaken to refresh the economic baseline for Thurrock to understand the extent to which progress had been made against the economic challenges identified in the 2007 EDS;
- To make sure that the Council, and its partners, are in the best position to focus attention (and resources) on the most pressing issues, an analysis has been undertaken to map out key changes brought about since the previous EDS.

Councillor Smith asked how or if highways were being considered with the increasing numbers of logistic jobs. The Head of Regeneration informed members that highways were being considered in the economic development strategy and that work had currently been undertaken at the Manor way A13 and M25 due to increasing numbers of logistic movements.

Councillor Ray questioned whether residents objecting to new housing developments would affect the employments rates of job opportunities provided in Thurrock. The Head of Regeneration informed the Committee that homes were driven by the jobs provided in the borough, it was added that information regarding this would found in the strategic plan.

The Chair of the Committee queried how the Council were encouraging diverse job opportunities within Thurrock. The Economic Development Manager explained that many diverse opportunities were currently available in the borough such as the Thames Enterprise Park specialising in Energy and Environment and the High House Production Park specialising in Arts. It was also added that more work would be undertaken to promote other job sectors within Thurrock.

Councillor Smith questioned whether the paramount studios would create any job opportunities in Thurrock, the Head of Regeneration explained that the Paramount studios would open more job opportunities to Thurrock residents, but added that Paramount Studios would act as a universal theme park if funding was secured. The Committee was made aware that connections had been made with Paramount Studios regarding access paths from Thurrock.

The Committee discussed business rates; The Head of Regeneration explained that Thurrock created a high net income of over 100 million in rates. It was added that Discounts given in the small business scheme were very helpful to many businesses.

The Chair of the Committee requested that in future the Economic Development Strategy should include the Councils targets for the future. The Committee also agreed that they would like a bespoke workshop session to discuss the emerging draft strategy during November 2015.

Resolved:

- 1. The Committee noted the report and acknowledge key achievements in addressing the economic challenges identified in the 2007 EDS despite the economic downturn.**

2. **The Committee identified areas of focus for the refreshed Economic Development Strategy.**
3. **It was considered that the Committee would like a bespoke workshop session to discuss the emerging draft strategy during November 2015.**

18. Highway Maintenance Update

The Chief Highways Engineer explained that the Council was committed to following best practice guidance to obtain maximum added value for investment in highway asset. Following on from the Local Government Association strategic review which was completed in January 2015 the Council had invested in new software to make better use of its highway asset information sets. The integrated data sets will inform the refresh of Council's policies which will determine priorities for the 2016-17 Highway Capital Programme.

The Chief Highways Engineer gave further information regarding the new software App through a PowerPoint presentation.

Councillor Ray questioned what quantity of street lamps in the borough had been replaced by LED Lamps. The Chief Highways Engineer informed members that a testing programme was currently being undertaken and that various columns had been replaced. Councillor Smith queried whether the old street lamps were being recycled once replaced, The Chief Highways Engineer explained that he would investigate further and report back to the Committee.

Councillor Ray felt that various old tarmac roads with in the borough had begun to fall apart. The Chief Highways Engineer explained that intervention levels varied and that some tarmac Roads falling apart were not seen as a danger compared to potholes that ranked higher a risk of danger, it was added that the draft plan for 2016 included the resurfacing work plan.

The Chair of the Committee questioned further if the majority of Highways funding was from the Department for Transport (DfT) The Chief Highways Engineer confirmed that this was the case.

The Chair of the committee requested that a list of all road repairs was circulated to the Committee.

Resolved

1. **Noted the improvements being made in the Transportation & Highways department to make better use of the available information.**

2. **Agreed to receive a report including a draft 2016-17 Highway Capital Programme of capital investment priorities at its January 2016 meeting.**

19. Work Programme

The Chair of the Committee explained that a report including the draft 2016-17 Highway Capital Programme of capital investment priorities would be added to the work programme for January 2016.

The meeting finished at 8.26 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk**