

MINUTES of a meeting of the CABINET held in the Board Room, Council Offices, Coalville on TUESDAY, 18 FEBRUARY 2020

Present: Councillor R Blunt (Chairman)

Councillors R Ashman, R D Bayliss, T Gillard, N J Rushton and A C Woodman

In Attendance: Councillors J Clarke, D Everitt, M D Hay, J Legrys, C A Sewell and S Sheahan

Officers: Ms E Tomlinson, Mr J Arnold, Mrs T Bingham, Mrs B Smith, Mr T Delaney, Mr C Elston and R Helliwell

93. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

94. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

In accordance with the Code of Conduct, Members declared the following interests:

Councillor N J Rushton declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 3 – Midlands Engine Development Corporation as a member of the Oversight Board of the Development Corporation.

Councillor R Ashman declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 3 – Midlands Engine Development Corporation as a member of the Oversight Board of the Development Corporation.

95. MIDLANDS ENGINE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

The Planning and Infrastructure Portfolio Holder, Councillor R Ashman presented the report to Members.

He explained the purpose of this report was to update Members on the Development Corporation programme and seek endorsement for the next steps, including the statement of intent.

Councillor Ashman explained that as East Midlands Airport in North West Leicestershire was one of the three proposed sites, the establishment of the Development Corporation would have an impact on the Council. Therefore, it was important that Councillors support the ongoing involvement of the Council in the development of the business case as the work progresses.

Councillor Ashman explained that if established and supported with the required resources and expertise, the Development Corporation would attract nationally and internationally significant investment and development into the East Midlands. This would support the developments at East Midlands Airport with improvements to connectivity on a scale and at a pace that could not be achieved by the Council or the airport acting alone.

Councillor Ashman explained that the report provided background on the Development Corporation proposition, details of the three sites to be included at Toton, Radcliffe Power Station and East Midlands Airport and the programme's governance

Councillor Ashman identified the potential risk that the Development Corporation could progress through east Midlands Engine without North West Leicestershire's involvement,

Chairman's initials

meaning the Council would not have a seat at the table to shape the vision for the Development Corporation and its impact on North West Leicestershire and the region. Therefore, it was important the Council continued to be involved in order to play a key role in shaping the Development Corporation to ensure the delivery of maximum benefit for North West Leicestershire and the region.

Councillor Ashman also acknowledged several uncertainties around exact implications such as on planning powers and business rates. He drew attention to the statement of intent included as appendix 1 and explained its intention to mitigate these concerns in lieu of the level of detail available at present. He added that as further details emerge, further reports and updates would be provided to members as required.

Councillor Ashman also explained that financial implications in relation to business rates arising as a result of the Development Corporation would be assessed, he added it was not intended that existing rates received by the Council would be redirected to the Corporation.

Councillor Ashman then outlined the proposed next steps going forward.

He explained that the Development Corporation Project Team would submit the outline business case to the Government in Spring 2020. He added that due to the required legislation changes to enable the establishment of the type of locally led development corporation being proposed, it was unlikely it would be in place until 2022 at the earliest.

Councillor Ashman explained that the Chief Executive and Officers from the Council continued to be engaged in weekly conference calls as well as focussed workshops to help shape the final stages of the outline business case. Additionally, he would attend the Oversight Board to ensure the ambitions of North West Leicestershire and partners were reflected.

He then explained that there was a proposal for an interim structure to be established to ensure that momentum would be maintained. He elaborated that it was proposed that this structure would have a board of shareholders made up of local authorities in the areas directly affected including North West Leicestershire District Council. He added that as further details of this emerged they would be shared with councillors for approval as required.

Councillor Ashman also advised Cabinet that the report had been considered by the Community Scrutiny Committee on Wednesday, 12 February and drew their attention to the minutes of that meeting included in their additional papers.

He explained that the Committee had received a presentation from Mr Ken Harrison from the Development Corporation Programme providing background information on the proposition and proposed sites.

Councillor Ashman outlined several concerns members of the Committee had expressed, in particular the level of detail in relation to the statement of intent, infrastructure and connectivity, sustainable transport, the level of growth considering the Council's movement towards zero carbon, the need for new housing, community engagement and local consultation, and engagement with members. Councillor Ashman confirmed he had noted these comments and would lobby for more detail on all these concerns.

Councillor Ashman then set out several details of the proposed Member Working Group, that it would be cross-party, formed along committee proportionality lines and include Members whose wards were directly affected, and that it would be chaired by himself as Portfolio Holder. Furthermore, terms of reference would be required and meetings would be arranged on a quarterly basis, or as and when needed, to give the Working Group the

opportunity to have an input into key decisions in advance of the establishment of the locally led Development Corporation.

Councillor Ashman then commended the recommendations on page 4 of the report. Furthermore, he proposed an additional recommendation that the Working Group report its views to Cabinet.

The Chairman, Councillor R Blunt invited Cabinet to make comments.

Councillor Blunt acknowledged he had initially hoped this would not have happened as the Council had always endeavoured in northern wards to balance growth and quality of the areas as a place to live and this had not been a difficult balance.

He explained that ultimately they could not ignore momentum behind the proposals, as walking away risked losing the ability to influence the decisions due to be taken. He acknowledged that there was a lot that could go well and a lot that could go wrong, and that the Development Corporation had many ambitions. He stated that it was best to be at the table for both officers and members.

Councillor Blunt also expressed a desire for the Working Group to appoint a deputy chairman who, when appropriate, could present to Cabinet the views of the Working Group outside Cabinet.

He further stated that there was a need to improve the links between backbenchers and Cabinet and the Development Corporation presented a chance to do so.

Councillor Blunt then reinforced that it was important for the Council to be in a position to influence the Development Corporation as it was set to happen regardless of whether the Council was involved and the proposals were the best way to ensure influence was maintained.

Councillor Blunt also acknowledged concerns about a lack of detail about the proposals at this time and observed that the proposals had to be light in detail in order for them to move forward to the next stage. In addition, that as government aspirations and funding came forward this would enable more details to be set down.

Councillor N J Rushton spoke in support of the proposals and stated that in order to influence the shape of the Development Corporation, North West Leicestershire would be better on the inside than observing from the side. In particular, this would allow the Council to influence infrastructure that would come alongside the Development Corporation. Councillor J Rushton particularly identified the needs of the northern wards potentially impacted by a number of jobs being created. Both in terms of housing for those living in the District and improvements in transport infrastructure for commuters from pockets of unemployment.

Councillor A Woodman spoke in support of the proposals, he stated that East Midlands must be taken as a region that needed projects like the Development Corporation to be able to compete with projects in the West Midlands. He also observed that the West Midlands was receiving a large amount of investment as a result of the presence of a Combined Authority and Mayor.

Councillor Woodman also observed that the Development Corporation could work well alongside the proposals for a Freeport at East Midlands Airport and other opportunities for economic growth.

Councillor R D Bayliss spoke in support of the proposals and observed that it was difficult to have a debate when members were in agreement, he also added that concerns about a

lack of detail could be best resolved by being at the table and involved in discussions to decide those details.

Councillor T Gillard echoed the comments of the rest of Cabinet and confirmed his full support for the proposals.

It was proposed by Councillor R Ashman, seconded by Councillor N J Rushton and

RESOLVED THAT:

- A) The Statement of Intent (Appendix 1) which has been agreed by relevant local authority chief executives and which sets out the shared aspirations of the local authorities for the Development Corporation proposition be endorsed.
- B) North West Leicestershire's participation and involvement in the establishment of a suitable interim delivery structure created to undertake development activities in advance if the establishment of a statutory locally-led Development Corporation be endorsed.
- C) A Member Working Group be established to be regularly consulted on the progress of the Development Corporation work over the next two years, during the period of the interim delivery vehicle.
- D) And that the established Member Working Group report their recommendations to Cabinet.

Reason for decision: If established and supported with the required resources and expertise, the DC would attract nationally and internationally significant investment and development into the East Midlands. This would support the developments at East Midlands Airport (EMA) with improvements to connectivity on a scale and at a pace that could not be achieved by the Council or EMA acting alone.

The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 5.11 pm

Chairman's initials