

## **Economy, Employment and Skills Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

### **Minutes of the meeting held on 3 September 2008**

#### **Present:**

Councillor Cameron – in the Chair  
Councillors Barrett, Bethell, Bridges, Green, Hackett, Lomax, Pagel, Pritchard, Walters

#### **Also Present:**

Councillor Cowell – Executive Member for the Environment  
Councillor S Murphy – Executive Member for Employment and Skills  
Councillors Eakins, Keegan, McCulley, E Newman – Wythenshawe Councillors

#### **EES/08/36            Minutes**

##### **Decision**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2008.

#### **EES/08/37            Information and Overview Report**

A report of the City Solicitor was submitted providing information about the Committee's work programme and other issues within its remit.

##### **Decision**

To note the report

#### **EES/08/38            Wythenshawe Strategic Regeneration Framework**

The Chair welcomed to the meeting those Councillors who represented wards in Wythenshawe. A report was submitted about the implementation of the Regeneration Framework.

The Framework was approved in December 2004. It set out the key challenges for Wythenshawe and the strategic opportunities for the area. The report set out the excellent progress being made towards the key development goals. The progress was welcomed by the Committee and by the Wythenshawe Councillors present. Members praised the improvements and achievements since the Framework had been adopted.

Members discussed the importance of the Airport and Wythenshawe Hospital to the economy of the area and to its continued development. Both enterprises were likely to continue to grow and create new jobs and both were involved in initiatives with the Council to allow Wythenshawe residents to access these new opportunities. The importance of public transport was debated. While the existing links to the city centre and the Airport were welcome, the lack of a good quality bus service running east-

west across the area was seen as a major constraint on how well residents can connect to the new jobs. Members also noted that the Metrolink development plans did not include creating a tram stop at the hospital, and so stressed the importance of a good bus service to and around the hospital site.

Members considered the further improvements they hoped to see in the area. Members believed that the retail centre of Wythenshawe needed redevelopment. The importance of improving facilities for young people was also stressed. Members felt that improved facilities will help tackle any anti-social behaviour problems in the area. Members also hoped to see improvements to road access to the Roundthorn Industrial Estate. That was being planned, but was not likely to happen in the next few years. The improvements in the schools and the college were seen as key to improving educational attainment and the employment opportunities of young people living in the area. Members were aware that a determined programme of engagement was underway to involve local people in the plans for the new Manchester Health Academy. Members were asked to encourage parents to get involved in this to ensure that the views of residents were fully taken into account.

### **Decision**

To note the report.

## **EES/08/39      Transport Innovation Fund Presentation**

A presentation explained the Transport Innovation Fund proposals and informed Members of the interim findings from the public consultation that was underway. Plans for the referendum in December were explained.

Members discussed the proposals and welcomed the proposed improvement in the public transport network, in particular the bus network. However, Members were concerned about a risk of those improvements being undermined by inadequate bus driver training and deficiencies in customer service standards.

### **Decision**

That the importance of high customer service standards is stressed in discussions with bus operating companies, and that the companies are made aware of the Committee's concerns over the importance of adequate training for bus drivers.

(Councillor S Murphy declared a prejudicial interest in this item and left the meeting)

## **EES/08/40      Eyesore Sites and Buildings**

A report was submitted on the steps the Council can take to deal with derelict buildings, other eyesore sites, and unsightly construction sites. The report explained the powers available under Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, and under Section 79 of the Building Act 1984. These allowed the Council to take action to deal with visual disamenity and derelict buildings, and the report gave examples of where these powers had been used successfully. The report also gave

examples of where temporary hoardings had been used to screen off developments and provide locations for public art works.

The Committee welcomed the report. Members felt that there were many sites in the city where the use of these powers would improve the visual amenity of the neighbourhood. However, they were aware that exercise of these powers often involved lengthy delays and that priority had to be given to the most harmful sites. Members discussed whether it would aid the Council to have more comprehensive information on land ownership across the city, and whether it would be cost-effective to compile that information.

The use of site hoardings to display public art works was commended. Members asked for more to be done to make the Cultural Strategy Team aware of such sites as they were being planned. In this way it was hoped that more opportunities for public art and community art projects could be exploited in the future.

### **Decision**

To note the report.