

Contact Officer: Jodie Harris

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

ECONOMY AND NEIGHBORHOODS SCRUTINY PANEL

Tuesday 2nd November 2021

Present: Councillor Harpreet Uppal (Chair)
Councillor Gwen Lowe
Councillor Yusra Hussain
Councillor Andrew Pinnock
Councillor Adam Gregg
Councillor Elizabeth Smaje

Co-optees Andrew Bird

In attendance: Councillor Martyn Bolt
Councillor Robert Iredale
Councillor Nigel Patrick
Councillor Bill Amer
Councillor Peter McBride
Councillor James Homewood
David Shepherd, Strategic Director, Growth and
Regeneration
Richard Hollinson, Head of Major Projects - Economy and
Skills
Edward Highfield, Service Director of Skills and
Regeneration
Sarah Kerns, Project Officer- Economy and Skills
Steven Hanley, Major Transport Schemes Programme
Lead (Major Projects)

Apologies: Chris Freind (Co-Optee)
Councillor Donald Firth

1 Membership of the Committee

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Donald Firth and Chris Friend (Co-optee).

2 Interests

Cllr Yusra Hussain declared an interest in relation to Item 4 regarding her position as a member of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority Transport Committee.

Cllr Harpreet Uppal declared an interest in relation to Item 4 regarding her position as a ward Councillor for Ashbrow, a ward partly affected by the A62 to Cooper Bridge Corridor Improvement Scheme. Cllr Uppal declared that in her capacity as a ward Councillor she had met with residents of Oak Road as a part of the consultation

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process and declared meeting with Cabinet Members and the Leader of the Council in relation to the scheme.

Cllr Martyn Bolt declared an interest in relation to Item 4 regarding his position as a member of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority Transport Committee. Cllr Bolt also declared that in his capacity as a ward Councillor for Mirfield, a ward affected by the A62 to Cooper Bridge Corridor Improvement Scheme he had met with residents of Oak Road and other affected areas in relation to the scheme. He also declared that he had been involved in reviewing the scheme as a member of the Economy and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Panel.

3 Admission of the Public

All items were considered in public session.

4 Call-in of Cabinet Decision in relation to the A62 to Cooper Bridge Corridor Improvement Scheme

The Scrutiny Panel considered the grounds of a call-in request, in respect of the final decision taken by Cabinet on 12 October 2021 in relation to the A62 to Cooper Bridge Corridor Improvement Scheme.

The three decision making areas which were the focus of the call-in review meeting were;

- Relevant considerations – Issues relating to a number of unanswered technical questions
- Clarity – In respect of the objectives and the measurable outcomes the scheme hopes to achieve.
- Options - No details of the alternatives considered were presented as part of the Cabinet report

At the review meeting the Scrutiny Panel considered verbal submissions from councillors who were signatories to the call in and views from members of the public and ward councillors affected by the decision. The Panel also considered the response of the Cabinet Members and senior officers of Major Projects (Growth and Regeneration) to the areas of focus.

The Panel considered everything that had been submitted in writing and verbally at the hearing. This included the background reports, information that had informed the Cabinet's final decision and the responses to the unanswered technical questions asked at the Cabinet meeting 12 October 2021.

The Panel considered the three decision options set out on the Council's Constitution, that were available to it:

- (1) To take no further action and free the decision for implementation
- (2) To refer it back to Cabinet with recommendations for amendment
- (3) To refer it back to the next Council, if the Panel considered that the decision was not made in accordance with the budget or policy framework

RESOLVED -

The recommendation of the Panel was to refer the matter back to the Cabinet with recommendations for amendment as follows:

Relevant Considerations

The Panel concluded that the report and information provided at the Cabinet meeting held on 12 October 2021 should have been clearer in relation to what exactly the decision committed the Council to with regard to the Outline Business Case and what issues would return for further decision as part of the process for agreeing the Full Business Case.

The scheme also needed to demonstrate clearly how it fit with the Master Plan for the area and the wider issues for Bradley.

Clarity

The Panel found that delegations and language within the report needed to be clearer and reference that they related specifically to the Outline Business Case as stated at the Scrutiny Panel meeting. Officers recommendations needed to be clearer in the Cabinet paper to clearly set out that Cabinet were deciding on the Outline Business Case and that the Full Business Case would be coming back to Cabinet for approval.

Options

More clarity and awareness was required in explaining the stages and process of developing both the Outline Business Case and Full Business Case

A high-level summary or short narrative of the 30 options should be included within the Cabinet report for consideration.

The Panel recognises Councillor McBride's commitment to future re-appraisal of contentious areas of the scheme

The Panel further recommended that the following Learning Points arising from the Call-in meeting to be considered by the Cabinet:

- Clarity of language was important and future reports should be drafted using simple and clear language to help people to understand the different stages of the process.
- Answers to the technical questions were provided at the Scrutiny Panel meeting, but these should have been answered at Cabinet prior to the decision being taken.
- The Panel recognised that the scheme was an evolving process over many years. As a result, some aspects of the scheme were addressed in informal processes and meetings but some important areas, particularly in reference to the options available, were not made clear in the formal report before Cabinet.

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In addition to the recommendations and Learning points relating to the Call in, the Panel requested a commitment that further regular reports be submitted to Pre-Decision scrutiny and the Economy and Neighbourhoods Panel as the scheme develops and progresses. The reports should include issues around modal shift, air quality measures and community engagement.