

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3)
held at 1.30 pm on Wednesday, 5 December 2018

Present:

Members: Councillor J McNicholas (Chair)
Councillor J Birdi
Councillor J Clifford (substitute for Councillor C Miks)
Councillor G Crookes
Councillor R Lakha (substitute for Councillor R Lancaster)
Councillor B Singh
Councillor K Taylor

Other Members: Councillors J O'Boyle (Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration)

Employees:

G Holmes, Place Directorate
C Knight, Place Directorate
L Knight, Place Directorate
A Williams, Place Directorate
M Yardley (Deputy Chief Executive (Place))

Apologies: Councillor R Auluck
Councillor R Lancaster
Councillor C Miks
Councillor T Skipper

Public Business

23. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

24. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st November 2018 were agreed and signed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

25. Coventry City Council and West Midlands Manufacturing Group: Driving Growth in Partnership

The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) received a briefing note and presentation that provided details of the partnership working between Coventry City Council (CCC) and Warwick Manufacturing Group (WMG) which was increasing innovation and productivity and ensuring the leadership of the region in defining the future of mobility in the UK. Councillor O'Boyle, Cabinet

Member for Jobs and Regeneration, attended the meeting for the consideration of this item. Dr Nick Mallinson, HMVC Programme Manager, WMG, also attended at the commencement of the meeting for the discussion on the very light rail.

The briefing note indicated that UK Battery Industrialisation Centre (UKBIC) - A consortium of Coventry Council, Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (CWLEP) and WMG, would establish the UKBIC, a cutting edge manufacturing research facility which would help to transition the UK to become a world leader in the design, development and manufacture of batteries for vehicle electrification. £80m grant had been secured through the Faraday Challenge, with the City Council as lead body. Scheduled for launch in early 2020, the UKBIC would enable industry, via open access, to scale up and commercialise advanced technologies central to the development of batteries, initially for the automotive sector but with wider application.

Reference was made to R&D in the Steel Industry. The Board were informed that WMG were in the process of creating a range of facilities and a dedicated support programme for companies in Coventry and Warwickshire to understand every aspect of the steel process and develop new products. The project had received £1m funding through Growth Deal and would unlock benefits for manufacturing businesses across the region.

UK Connected Intelligent Transport Environment (UKCITE) was a project to create the most advanced environment for testing connected and autonomous vehicles (CAV). It involved equipping and testing over 40 miles of urban roads, dual-carriageways and motorways with 'talking car technologies' to establish how these technologies could improve journeys, reduce traffic congestion, and provide entertainment and safety services through better connectivity.

CAV Testbed was a joint project with Transport for West Midlands and numerous technology partners including WMG and Jaguar Land Rover to develop a route linking Coventry, Birmingham and Solihull, centred on the A45 that would be set up as a test route for CAV. This included roadside technology for monitoring and communicating with the test vehicles allowing performance of CAV technology to be rigorously examined. The installation of the technology would take two years and the CAV routes would be operational for at least eight years after that.

Europe's first multi-million-pound Smart City Mobility Centre would be based at the University of Warwick's Wellesbourne campus. The Centre brought together WMG's research expertise and Jaguar Land Rover's leading research and engineering capabilities to develop driverless capable vehicle testing. This would be in real world conditions alongside a specially designed 5G communications network on the University of Warwick's main campus.

The briefing note referred to Mobility Data Institute. The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) would receive up to £20m, subject to approval of a satisfactory business case, to enable WMG to create the UK Mobility Data Institute, a focused research centre to collect, process and analyse transport data generated by the advent of new mobility technologies such as autonomous vehicles and smart charging of electrified vehicles.

Very Light Rail (VLR) was an innovative mode of travel aiming to create an affordable system for medium size towns and cities which was unique and epitomised 21st century travel. It would be a mass transit system using battery powered, autonomous, light-weight vehicles, which was cheaper to construct and cheaper to operate than current systems. A three-way collaboration between WMG, Transport for West Midlands and the City Council was in place for the R&D phase. The project funding was £57.46m in total comprising £55m WMCA Devolution Deal Funding and £2.46m through Growth Deal. R&D was currently underway and by the end of March 2019 there would be a detailed virtual demonstrator model. Activity was planned to coincide with the 2021 City of Culture programme and the first route in Coventry was planned for December 2024.

The briefing note provided an update on WMG Academy for Young Engineers offering students a career-led education involving work placements, interactive industry activities and visits to businesses. The Academy received £700k through the Growing Places Fund. The briefing note also provided an update on the delivery of a new facility at the WMG Degree Apprenticeship Centre to increase capacity for higher level skills through degree apprenticeship programmes for existing employees in high growth, advanced manufacturing and engineering businesses in the CWLEP region. The project had been allocated £10m through Growth Deal.

The Board questioned officers and discussed the following issues, with responses being provided:

- The opportunities to commercialise Very Light Rail to sell to other cities as well as details about ownership.
- The relationship with Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) and Tata.
- The opportunities to showcase Very Light Rail in 2021, the City of Culture year.
- How the UK was ranked in the world in relation to the design, development and manufacture of batteries for vehicle electrification.
- The requirement for developments in the City Centre to be completed by 2021, if possible, to help showcase the city.
- The importance of economic development being able to support local communities across the city, in particular residents in the deprived areas.
- Further information about renewable energy that could support the expansion of the city.
- How likely it was that battery production would happen in the city.
- The suggestion of having an all Elected Member seminar to update members on the developments taking place in the city including timescales if available.
- The importance of gaining public support for the introduction of Very Light Rail to the city.
- Further information about track and vehicle development in connection with Very Light Rail.
- An understanding of the financial implications associated with the Very Light Rail project.

RESOLVED that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3):

- 1) Notes the content of the presentations.**
- 2) Supports the City Council continuing to work with WMG to drive innovation in industry and skills delivery, using the city as a testbed and securing new funding, involving delivering key projects, largely through the Growth Deal – £131m of capital funding managed by the City Council on behalf of Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership, and identifying new opportunities.**
- 3) Agrees that arrangements be put in place for a seminar for all Elected Members early in the New Year providing information about the future plans and developments for the city.**

26. Outstanding Issues

There were no outstanding issues.

27. Work Programme 2018/2019

The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) considered the Work Programme for the current municipal year and discussed the scheduling of proposed issues for consideration at future meetings of the Board.

RESOLVED that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3):

- 1) Notes the Work Programme for 2018/2019 including an additional meeting to be arranged in March 2019, with the date to be determined.**
- 2) Approves that a date for a Green Space Strategy Task and Finish Group meeting be determined.**
- 3) Agrees that arrangements be put in place for a visit to Dudley to view the test track facility once the test vehicle is operating there.**

28. Any other items of public business - Coventry Canal Basin

The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) received an update from the Chair of the Board, Councillor McNicholas, on a recent meeting that he had attended with representatives from The Canal Basin Trust and The Canal and River Trust, with discussion centring on what the Canal Basin could offer the city and the need for a vision. It was acknowledged that the views from this meeting tied in with the recommendations from The Canal Basin Task and Finish Group. Reference was made to the option to visit other cities to see the works that had been undertaken around the canal networks.

RESOLVED that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3):

- 1) Notes the update on the Canal Basin.**
- 2) Agrees that arrangements be put in place for a visit to see developments around a canal and to understand any lessons to be learnt.**

(Meeting closed at 3.00 pm)