

## Minutes

Corporate Services, Commerce and Communities  
Policy Overview Committee  
Tuesday, 23 July 2019  
Meeting held at Committee Room 5 - Civic Centre,  
High Street, Uxbridge



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### **Members Present:**

Councillors Richard Mills (Chairman)  
Wayne Bridges (Vice-Chairman)  
Lindsay Bliss  
Nicola Brightman  
Farhad Choubedar  
Alan Deville  
Jazz Dhillon  
Scott Farley  
Martin Goddard

### **Officers Present:**

Nigel Cramb, Partnerships and Business Engagement Manager  
James Rodger, Head of Planning, Transportation and Regeneration  
Luke Taylor, Democratic Services Officer

### **Also Present:**

Becki Selby, U+I  
Richard Upton, U+I

## **10. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

## **11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **12. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 JUNE 2019**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2019 be agreed as a correct record.

## **13. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

It was confirmed that all items were marked Part I and would be considered in public.

**14. 2020/21 BUDGET PLANNING REPORT FOR SERVICES WITHIN THE REMIT OF CORPORATE SERVICES, COMMERCE & COMMUNITIES POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE**

The Operational Finance Manager and Financial Planning Accountant were in attendance at the meeting to introduce the 2020/21 Budget Planning Report for Services within the remit of the Committee.

The Committee was informed that budget projections remain in line with the February 2019 position, with a budget gap of £28.4m, which is consistent with previous years and similar to what other Local Authorities are facing.

Members asked whether a rising population was leading to a higher demand on any specific services, but were informed that this was not the case.

**RESOLVED: That the 2020/2021 Budget Planning Report for Services within the remit of Corporate Services, Commerce and Communities Policy Overview Committee was noted.**

**15. REVIEW C: LOCAL COMMERCE, EMPLOYMENT, SKILLS & JOB CREATION**

Richard Upton and Becki Selby were in attendance at the meeting to represent U+I and give evidence to the Committee.

Mr Upton noted that U+I work across 46 local authorities in England and Northern Ireland, with projects ranging in budgets from £60m to £500k, and their aim is regeneration and transformation through buildings, but the key to success was the local community.

U+I were leading on the regeneration of The Old Vinyl Factory in Hayes, which was a valuable site in the Borough in an area that required regeneration. The Committee heard that U+I aimed to leverage economic growth through partnerships, particularly through mixed-use applications, and The Old Vinyl Factory was an example of this.

Mr Upton stated that there was a lot of value in understanding what a local authority would like in its town or borough, and early engagement with a council was vital to regeneration schemes. U+I had a number of meetings with the Council, local businesses and neighbouring residents to understand the comparative views of this diverse group, and Members heard that this often leads to better schemes that can suit many people.

The Committee noted the Council were keen to draw employment back to the Hayes area, and The Old Vinyl Factory Site, with good railways links and the emerging Crossrail project, offered an opportunity for this. Mr Upton stated that this project looked to stimulate the local economy and aimed to return close to the 4,000 jobs in the area that were lost.

Members were informed that U+I hoped to build 600 homes on The Old Vinyl Factory site, but unless the site became a great place to live and work with an appealing design, developments can easily be left with a number of un-let buildings.

Mr Upton confirmed that inspiration at an old music pressing factory was easy, but the development still required amenity space to attract tenants, and the Shipping Building is now fully let with 1,000 people working on the site.

The development was also home to a successful residential scheme, and although it is a dense site with very mixed uses, this situation has been managed well through relationships. There are currently 1,500 jobs on site, and this may rise to closer to 4,000 once the Powerhouse is completed, while amenities such as a cinema, expected in 2021, will attract people to the area and please residents.

Councillors heard that the Central Research Laboratory (CRL), a co-working space and Hardware Accelerator, was the tenant of the ground floor of the Shipping Building. The CRL worked alongside Brunel University graduates who wished to turn their ideas into a new business. A mentoring programme will be included in a purpose built site, and the output of the CRL has been measured at over 50 times the economic benefit of a standard office over five years, as it cultivates innovation to create jobs.

Mr Upton commented that Hillingdon proved a good opportunity for such a regeneration project, with a good record of growing small businesses and a shared vision for the site, which included unusual architecture. However, while the design was not standard, there was a sense of trust between U+I and the Council, and it often takes a brave design to help the rebirth of an area. The hope was that the project would bring life and growth to the area, and that is what the project would be measured by in 15 years' time.

The Chairman noted that Members were very aware of the site, and it was good to see such passion for a regeneration project. Councillors asked whether the project was futureproof when considering the UK's climate ambitions for 2050, and were informed that it was hard to forecast, but U+I followed the advice from the Council and Greater London Authority, and will continue to do so, although it is nearly always the case that more could be done. Mr Upton noted that the reuse of the building will prevent unnecessary use of embedded carbon.

The Committee questioned whether the jobs on site would pay enough for employees to also be able to live in the residential properties at The Old Vinyl Factory, and were informed that jobs would probably be well paid jobs relative to the local area, but the opportunities to help those residents most in need would come through the projects and training at the site. Mr Upton noted that the residential properties would be a range of rental and for sale properties, including Help to Buy properties, and would also be considered by residents wishing to commute to Central London using Crossrail.

Members noted that there was no shortage of opportunities to regenerate in the UK, and asked whether U+I chose their projects based upon the site available. Mr Upton noted that while sites do influence a decision, in the case of The Old Vinyl Factory, there was a greater need to drive productivity, and as such, the Council's role as an enabler is a big part of this. The Committee heard that the consistency of Members and their vision was very important to U+I, and a strong working relationship was key

to a great project. Mr Upton noted that U+I would look at sites within Hillingdon again for regeneration projects, but not just because of the location of the site.

Mr Upton confirmed that the Council was the only anchor tenant in the Borough, and there is a socioeconomic benefit of using a tenant that has no chance of moving out, which is an excellent way to encourage regeneration projects with businesses.

The Chairman stated that there was a 2022 completion date for the project, and asked whether there would be an impact for those residents already living on site as the building works for the scheme were still ongoing. Ms Selby noted that dialogue was key, and a lot of engagement had taken place with both residents and office tenants, and it was made clear to those already on site that the works would be ongoing for the foreseeable future. Members also heard that the scheme aimed to have full occupancy of commercial and residential properties by mid-2023.

Councillors agreed that the scheme was exciting, but asked how it would create jobs for locals or school children who were from deprived local areas, and were informed that the site was next to the college and a music academy was in place there. Local people would have to walk past an innovation factory on site, and there were a number of outreach programmes from Brunel University and the CRL that would increase college involvement, however, there was still the opportunity to improve in this area. U+I's representatives stated that the project also supports the Chandran Foundation which helps children falling behind at school with homework clubs, and this is very well attended and thought of.

The Council's Partnerships and Business Engagement Manager noted that it trying to engage companies that would build projects in the Borough, as well as providing training and local employment. Members heard that the CRL helps to put Hayes on the map, but also creates real jobs, while the CRL helps expansion from six to 48 small businesses, and this expansion must be housed locally. The foundations were, therefore, being laid to ensure that the project was a success.

The Committee asked whether the project would provide support for older people, particularly women born in the 1950s, and Mr Upton noted that this is something that U+I would take away and look into. There was an intention to encourage those less advantaged residents, and if there was an opportunity to add any benefit for them, then this would be considered.

The Head of Planning, Transportation and Regeneration confirmed that the benefit from the project was huge, with thousands of jobs provided – more than ever envisioned – and this was a huge difference in comparison with other mixed use sites in the Borough.

Responding to questioning from the Committee, the Partnerships and Business Engagement Manager confirmed that the proximity to Heathrow was a driver for developers and businesses to move to Hillingdon, as many like to situate their headquarters nearby. Councillors heard that there were a lot of managerial jobs, support services, and a growing logistics sector that was big in the Borough.

Members heard that encouraging small businesses to move to Hillingdon was a big challenge facing the Council, as available sites were so valuable for residential developers, and this has led to a ripple effect throughout the area, including in Ealing and Hounslow. Mr Upton noted that building small units next to bigger sites can help to create a community.

The Committee thanked the witnesses for their evidence, and confirmed that they would now move the review to its next stage. It was confirmed that a site visit to the CRL would take place in September.

**RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the evidence heard at the witness session.**

#### **16. FORWARD PLAN**

Members noted that the Committee's review into Community Safety and New Policing Structures in Hillingdon would be presented to Cabinet at the meeting on 25 July 2019.

**RESOLVED: That the forward plan be noted.**

#### **17. WORK PROGRAMME 2018/2020**

Members noted that the site visit to the CRL, as part of the review into Local Commerce, Employment, Skills and Job Creation, would take place in September. As such, all items scheduled for September would be moved to the October meeting, with further reports moved forward one meeting.

**RESOLVED: That the Work Programme be noted, subject to the changes agreed.**