

GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 15 JUNE 2017

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GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 15 JUNE 2017

Present:

Councillor J Windle (Chair)
Councillor B Rice Councillor K Tait

Also Present

Sue Veerman - Overview and Scrutiny Manager
Kath Drury - Information, Engagement and Performance Manager (Min No 87)
Niall Clark - Director of Property Services and Development Rykneld Homes (Min No 88)
Sarah Cottam - Senior Governance Officer (Acting)
Richard Gadsby - Governance Officer (minutes)

81 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C Cupit, C Smith, R Smith, S Boyle, S Cornwell and A Powell.

82 Declarations of Interest

Members were requested to declare the existence and nature of any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or other interests, not already on their register of interests, in any item on the agenda and withdraw from the meeting at the appropriate time.

There were no interests declared at this meeting.

83 Minutes of Last Meeting

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of the Growth Scrutiny Committee held on 13 April 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

84 Remit of the Committee

The Overview and Scrutiny Manager outlined the Terms of Reference of the Growth Scrutiny Committee. The Committee were advised of the purpose of Scrutiny Committees including reviewing decisions made by the Council and Officers, as well as reviewing the performance of the Council or other public body. Scrutiny Committees also will need to gather evidence from a range of sources to inform their work. The process for Scrutiny Review Reports referred to Cabinet for consideration was outlined and if approved, the Committee was informed that an action plan would be produced within 2 months

It was noted that the Committee had worked on a range of issues in the past 12 months. The Growth Scrutiny Committee has responsibility for scrutiny functions relating to the Local Enterprise Partnership and Combined Authorities, Business and Economy, Economic Development and Regeneration. The Committee also looks at Asset Management, Planning, Tourism, Partnerships and Strategic Housing issues.

RESOLVED – That the remit of the Committee and its Terms of Reference be noted.

(Members/Overview & Scrutiny Manager)

85 Selection of Scrutiny Review Topic

The Committee were asked to suggest possible review topics that they would like to be looked at in the forthcoming year.

A range of suggestions were put forward including:

- a) How people pay the Council for its services
- b) Maximising the use of brownfield sites and protecting the greenbelt
- c) Tourism in the district.

The Committee felt that brownfield land should be utilised wherever possible in preference of building on the greenbelt. It was noted that whilst the Committee would like to look into this they did not wish to delay the Local Plan. The Committee also felt that tourism into the district could be looked into as this can be advantageous to the economy. This topic had been reviewed previously.

Two suggestions were also submitted from Members of the Committee in their absence:

- a) Mapping land ownership of the district - A comprehensive ownership map would be of use to all departments and ultimately save time, energy and money. (Councillor A Powel)
- b) Assessing how the growth agenda is being pushed now that the devolution deals are off the table including LEP membership and links to other authorities in providing services. (Councillor R Smith)

The Committee were advised that the issue of the land ownership of the district should be identified following the action plan produced in response to the Vacant Land Scrutiny Review.

The Committee were advised that the Strategic Alliance Management Team (SAMT) have put forward several topics for the Growth Scrutiny Committee's consideration. These topics included:

- a) Updating the Growth Scrutiny Committee on the Joint Venture Company

- b) Identification of sites for growth
- c) Delivery of the Coalite project
- d) Hs2 high speed rail link
- e) Assessing the Growth Strategy
- f) What is the Council's next big project?
- g) Tourism for Growth

Several of these areas were currently being monitored by the Growth Committee.

The Committee were advised that they can re-visit any previous Scrutiny Reviews as they feel necessary. The range of suggestions put forward were considered and it was:

RESOLVED – That: –

- (1) The Growth Scrutiny Committee agree in-principle to undertake a Scrutiny Review on either (a) or (b):
 - a) Maximising the use of brownfield sites and protecting the greenbelt
 - b) Tourism into the District in support of growth
- (2) The feasibility of a Brownfield and Greenbelt Land Scrutiny Review will be assessed taking into account its potential impact on the delivery of the local plan and would be the first choice of review.
- (3) The Committee invite Helen Fairfax – Planning Policy Manager to the next meeting to discuss further review (a).
- (4) The Committee invite the relevant Tourism Officer(s) to update on Tourism Provision within the District.

(Members/Overview & Scrutiny Manager)

86 Draft Work Programme

The Committee considered its draft Work Programme for 2017/2018. The Overview and Scrutiny Manager advised the Committee that the Work Programme sets out a timetable for scrutiny activities for the year and gave an update on how the Work Programme is progressing. The Committee was asked to suggest any further items for inclusion.

RESOLVED – That the Growth Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme for 2017/2018 be noted.

(Members/Overview & Scrutiny Manager)

87 NEDDC Growth Summary Report 2016/17

The Chair welcomed Kath Drury – Information Engagement and Performance Manager to the Committee.

The Committee were advised that the NEDDC Growth Summary Report goes to the Committee every 6 Months for consideration, and that this report is in effect the outturn for the 2016/17 year.

It was reported that the trends in the Growth Summary are generally positive with performance measures around Planning, property letting Income and commercial property exceeding targets.

The Committee were also advised of a number of exceptions not meeting 2016/17 targets. These included:

a) Number of Business Growth Fund grants awarded –

To date five successful applications have been awarded a total of £15,858, generating £15,741.85 match funding and contracted to deliver 7.4FTE jobs, which is a unit cost of £2,143 per job. Successful companies include a civil engineer, training provider, osteopath, fabricator and administrative support business. Following evaluation in late 2016 the fund has been extended by Cabinet until March 2019, with the total funding available increased to £66,500.

b) Number of BNED LEADER grants awarded (scheme total) –

There are currently 8 live Outline Applications in the process, 7 from the NEDDC area; a further bid from the BDC area is currently being appraised. 3 projects totalling £108,606.08 have been approved to date in NED. The Chancellor's Autumn Statement (23/11/2016) confirmed that Brexit would have no immediate impact on the LEADER programme.

c) Deliver an average of 100 affordable homes each year –

No Affordable homes will be completed in 2016/17. The Lead officer is expecting to deliver an average of 100 homes when taking into account previous year's numbers. Commuted sums have been secured this year which will be used to unlock stalled affordable sites across the district.

d) Bring 20 empty properties per year back into use by March 2019 –

No properties bought back into use however the Empty Property Officer Post has now been filled and 100 letters have been sent to owners of long term empty properties in NEDDC in March, as at 03/04/2017 35 have responded and 13 have requested contact from the Empty Properties Officer. Of the 35 who have responded 8 owners of properties that require refurbishment have indicated that their property will be reoccupied within 6 months. 300 further letters will be sent out to owners of long term empty properties by the end of April 2017.

e) Deliver 5 additional units of affordable housing each year through the Private Rented Sector Leasing Scheme –

Letters have been sent out to owners of long term empty properties in the District which will open up conversations with owners and give the Empty Property Officer the opportunity to sell the advantages of Private Sector Leasing. A good working relationship has been developed with Environmental Health and Action Housing to help ensure targets are met.

The Committee queried why the target of 55.4% for NNDR arrears collected was so low. It was noted that the target had been met, but it wasn't known why the figure was set at that particular level.

RESOLVED – That:-

- (1) The 2016/17 Growth Summary Report be noted.
- (2) The Information Engagement and Performance Manager makes enquiries about the target for NNDR arrears collected and provides an update for the Committee.

(Information, Engagement and Performance Manager)

88 Update on Garages

The Chair welcomed Niall Clark - Director of Property Services and Development Rykneld Homes to the Committee.

The Committee were advised that 54 garages have been disposed of since 2014 but 168 garage sites remain around the district. 85% of these garages are currently occupied. Tenants pay £8.26 per week and non tenants pay £9.91 per week which includes VAT at 20%, with garage plots costing £3.10 per week.

It was noted that there are no plans for new garages to be built and the viability of existing sites is decreasing each year. Rykneld repair garages where viable and recommend to Asset Management Group to demolish garages which are beyond economic repair, taking the overall condition of the block into account.

The Committee were advised that many garages are used for storage as they are not large enough for modern vehicles, however many older tenants and residents do still use garages to keep their cars in. It was noted that there have been no known fires in any council garage.

The Committee were advised that residents can rent more than one garage and there are a number of locations where this occurs. There is a planning requirement for 1.5 parking spaces per two bedroom dwelling for new homes. Where Rykneld Homes are building new homes, this is increased to 2 parking spaces wherever possible.

The Chair on behalf of the Committee thanked the Director of Property Services and Development for attending the meeting.

RESOLVED – That: -

- (1) The Committee notes the update on garages.
- (2) The Committee invites the Director of Property Services and Development – Rykneld Homes to give an update on garage sites next year.

(Director of Property Services and Development - Rykneld Homes)

89 List of Key Decisions – Issue No 61

The Committee considered Issue No 61 of the List of Key Decisions which set out the major decisions being taken over the next few months.

RESOLVED – That the List of Key Decisions Issue No 61 be noted.

(Governance)

90 Additional Urgent Items

There were no additional urgent items to be considered at this meeting.

91 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Growth Scrutiny Committee will be held on Thursday, 20 July 2017 at 1.00 pm in Chamber 1.
