

GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 18 JANUARY 2018

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GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 18 JANUARY 2018

Present:

Councillor J Windle (Chair)
Councillor R Smith(Vice-Chair)
Councillor S Cornwell
“ C Cupit
“ A Powell
Councillor B Rice
“ C Smith

Also Present

Allison Westray-Chapman – Assistant Director Economic Growth (Min No 484)
Julian Cosgrove – Economic Development and Growth Manager (Min No 484)
Scott Chambers – Communications Marketing and Design Manager (Min No 484)
Sue Veerman – Overview and Scrutiny Manager
Richard Gadsby – Governance Officer

481 Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence had been received.

482 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.

483 Minutes of Last Meeting

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of the Growth Scrutiny Committee held on 9 November 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

484 Scrutiny Review – Interviews

Julian Cosgrove – Economic Development and Growth Manager

Q1 What is the scale of Tourism within North East Derbyshire?

The Committee were referred to the Housing and Economic Development Strategy where tourism is covered on page 38 of the document. North East Derbyshire District Council had produced a sector analysis that identified accommodation and food accounting for 8% of all sectors.

The Council were looking to refresh the document on an annual basis. Due to the nature of its contents the document is not in the public domain.

Q2 What is our marketing strategy and is it effective?

The Committee were advised that the District is promoted through the Visit Peak District Website, through Chesterfield Visitor Information Centre and the Developers' Forum to attract inward investors and developers.

Q3 How effective do you think our branding is?

The Sector has seen a 31.6% growth over the last three years therefore it is believed the branding is effective in this regard.

Q4 What is our offer?

It was noted that visitors are not concerned with local authority boundaries but rather the area as a whole. The offer is believed to be good overall with the Peak District being a key destination for tourists. Members noted the lack of hotel provision in Dronfield and in other parts of the District.

Q5 How do we compare with others similar to us?

In terms of investment, it was noted that the Council compares very favourably in comparison to similar authorities. The Council invested £10,500 to marketing in the Peak District and Derbyshire website and £8,000 to Chesterfield Borough Council per annum. The Council also supports businesses to translate their websites into different languages to attract international tourists. It was felt that working in partnership with a number of organisations is more effective than having a dedicated tourism officer.

Q6 Is there connectivity between our attractions?

The Council are looking to improve connectivity on the A61 and are currently working on a cycling strategy with Derbyshire County Council. It was noted that the Council are not working on bus routes but are working on improving the flow of traffic on roads.

Q7 What are the main barriers to developing Tourism within North East Derbyshire?

It was noted that the Council could do more consultation with tourists visiting and to identify why people haven't visited the District.

Q8 How much funding does the Council put into Tourism?

This was covered under question 5.

Q9 How is Tourism within North East Derbyshire supporting the Council's Growth Agenda?

The Council's Growth Agenda supports jobs, skills and apprenticeships and it has been identified that there are skills gaps at university level (higher apprentices) but the Council was addressing this through holding events with universities. In comparison to other authorities, the approach taken by the Council has led to increasing higher apprenticeship uptake.

Q10 How well are we working with our partners?

The Council could do more to establish regular contact with Chesterfield Borough Council.

Q11 What are the future development areas?

The Council is coming to the end of the strategy and there is a chance to look at new evidence and new and emerging attractions within the district.

Q12 Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

The Council considers tourism to be one of the key parts to developing economic growth in the district and it is integral to the Council's Growth Strategy.

Could work with more parishes on what they have to offer.

The Chair thanked the Economic Development and Growth Manager for his attendance at the meeting.

The Economic Development and Growth Manager left the meeting.

Scott Chambers – Communications, Marketing and Design Manager

Q1 What is the scale of Tourism within North East Derbyshire?

The scale of tourism within the district is hard to gauge. However, the district does benefit from unique characteristics, countryside neighbouring the Peak District, a range of market towns and villages with a range of independent shops. It was also noted that the Council could do more to sell itself to attract tourism by working with a range of partners including shop keepers, businesses and parish councils.

Q2 What is our marketing strategy and is it effective?

It was noted that the Council doesn't have a Tourism Marketing Strategy. However, at Bolsover District Council there is a Cabinet Member with the responsibility for Tourism and the Council have bid for funding for a range of promotional videos, a range of leaflets for the four town centres and one dedicated events leaflet. The funding for this comes from Bolsover District Council's Transformation Centre

reserve and the total amount is £25,000. The Officer felt that North East Derbyshire District Council would benefit from a similar approach. However that would be subject to Cabinet approval. The marketing approach taken is destination marketing rather than tourism marketing alone. Members noted that in addition to leaflets it would be appropriate for the information to be on the internet.

Q3 How effective do you think our branding is?

It was felt that the Council's own brand was well recognised and well known, however there was an opportunity to create a sub-brand for tourism, ie Gateway to the Peak District. It was noted that there are no specific forums dedicated to tourism. However, there are a range of business and developers forums that the Council provides. It was felt that the Council would benefit from a specific tourism forum working with a range of partners to promote tourism within the district and the wider area. The Chair referred to a Peak District Forum that some members of the Committee had attended in relation to the previous review of tourism in 2014.

Q4 What is our offer?

This has been covered in response to question 1, however it was noted that shops on Sundays are often closed in towns and villages and this hinders tourism on weekends.

Q5 How do we compare with others similar to us?

Within the district itself it was not considered that there are any major tourism attractions compared to neighbours however, the district is in a good position and has good surroundings.

Councillor Powell left the meeting at this point.

Q6 Is there connectivity between our attractions?

It was noted that the County Council were in a better position to answer this question than the officer.

Q7 What are the main barriers to developing Tourism within North East Derbyshire?

The main barriers were considered to be public transport provision, the lack of connectivity in and out of the district and within the district and although accommodation was of good quality the amount of accommodation was not enough.

Q8 How much funding does the Council put into Tourism?

It was noted that at present North East Derbyshire District Council do not have a dedicated tourism officer. However, Bolsover District Council have invested £25,000 into a promotional campaign for the district.

Q9 How is Tourism within North East Derbyshire supporting the Council's Growth Agenda?

Tourism is considered key to supporting the Council's Growth Agenda with tourists visiting the area and spending money in the local economy which will support economic growth.

Q10 How well are we working with our partners?

It was felt that the Council do not work as well as they could with partners and do not liaise with Chesterfield Borough Council enough.

Q11 What are the future development areas?

See previous comments. It was noted that the Council could do more to liaise with parishes to promote the district. They could also do more promotional work

Q12 Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

Tourism is considered key and the Council's Communications Team could play a big part in promoting tourism.

The Chair thanked the Communications, Marketing and Design Manager for his attendance at the meeting.

The Communications, Marketing and Design Manager left the meeting.

Allison Westray-Chapman – Assistant Director Economic Growth

Q1 What is the scale of Tourism within North East Derbyshire?

The sectoral analysis was referred to and the Committee advised they had been informed of the 8% figure for the accommodation and food sector.

Q2 What is our marketing strategy and is it effective?

The contribution of Peak District and Derbyshire was considered appropriate and the organisation had not asked for any more financial contribution from the Council. Reference was made to the contribution to Chesterfield Borough Council and that the Council are starting to look at the renewal of the Service Level Agreement between the two Councils. It was felt prudent that the Service Level Agreement would benefit from setting out some targets.

Q3 How effective do you think our branding is?

The branding is mainly based around Chesterfield however, tourism is a growth area within the district.

Q4 What is our offer?

The district benefits from good quality self catering provision, good quality hotel in the neighbouring areas, the investment into the Avenue and also cycleways. It was noted that Chesterfield Borough Council represent the area on the Destination Management Partnership and it was noted that there was opportunity to market the district on an international basis through the Destination Management organisation.

Q5 How do we compare with others similar to us?

The Council was regarded as being aspirational in its approach looking for partnerships, opportunities and different ways of working.

Q6 Is there connectivity between our attractions?

The historic houses theme including Chatsworth House was a key anchor to the district.

Q7 What are the main barriers to developing Tourism within North East Derbyshire?

Congestion and connectivity are barriers to developing tourism in the district.

Q8 How much funding does the Council put into Tourism?

Not answered.

Q9 How is Tourism within North East Derbyshire supporting the Council's Growth Agenda?

The strategic sites within the district would provide opportunities in the future including supporting tourism.

Q10 How well are we working with our partners?

It was considered that the Council had a good working relationship with all partners.

Q11 What are the future development areas?

Connectivity was the major development area in the future. Sustainable transport around the A61 needs to be considered and improved connectivity to Sheffield at the north of the district. The Growth Strategy would be revised and would address the major barriers to tourism including connectivity within the district.

Q12 Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

It was noted that tourism is split between portfolio holders including environment, economy finance and regeneration, but is mostly covered by the Leader's portfolio – Building a Better Council.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Director Economic Growth for attending the meeting.

The Assistant Director Economic Growth left the meeting.

Discussion on any further questions/interviews

The Committee discussed the next steps in the scrutiny review process. The Overview and Scrutiny Manager would prepare the summary of the evidence gathered so the Committee could triangulate this information provided to the Growth Scrutiny Committee during the review.

RESOLVED – That:-

- (1) The information gathered as part of the Scrutiny Review be noted.
- (2) The documents referred to by the Economic Development and Growth Manager be made available to the Committee.

(Members/Overview and Scrutiny Manager)

485 Growth Summary 2017/18

The Committee considered the Growth Performance Indicators as presented by Kath Drury the Information, Engagement and Performance Manager. It was noted that the majority of performance indicators were shown to be on target or above target. However there were a number of exceptions which were not currently on track to meet 2017/18 targets. These exceptions were:-

- *Work with partners to deliver an average of 100 affordable homes each year:-* It was noted that none have been completed so far this year. However, there are currently 134 affordable units under construction;
- Through the Private Renting Sector Leasing Scheme deliver five additional units of affordable housing each year. Action Housing is the Council's delivery partners for the scheme. However, zero have been completed upon the half year position 2017/18;
- *Bring 20 empty properties per year back into use by March 2019:-* Action Housing is a registered provider of social housing undertaking an empty property scheme on behalf of North East Derbyshire District Council. They have yet to bring any properties back into use through private sector leasing or their sustainable tenancy project. However discussions are being held with owners of two empty properties that maybe suitable for private sector leasing.

A sheltered unit in Dronfield is potentially going to be decommissioned in early 2018, Action Housing have approached the current housing association to register their interest in purchasing the scheme. If agreed this could bring 13 empty properties back into use and in total 33 units could be converted into affordable housing;

- *Number of BNED LEADER grants awarded (scheme total and value of grants awarded):-* Ten of the 36 endorsed expressions of interest are from Bolsover District and three of the 11 full applications and in development);
- *Apprenticeships started (apprenticeship levy from October 2016):-* The Committee were advised that two apprentices from existing staff started in August. Another apprentice was due to start in October. One apprentice would start in Finance and the start date was to be confirmed.

The Chair on behalf of the Committee thanked the Information, Engagement and Performance Manager for her update.

The Information, Engagement and Performance Manager left the meeting.

RESOLVED – That the Growth Summary 2017/18 be noted.

486 List of Key Decisions – Issue No 68

The Committee considered Issue No 68 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 68 be noted.

487 Work Programme

The Committee considered its Work Programme for 2017/18 which sets out the items which the Committee would consider over the forthcoming year.

RESOLVED – That the Growth Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme for 2017/18 be noted.

488 Additional Urgent Items

There were no additional items to be considered.

489 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Growth Scrutiny Committee is scheduled to take place on Thursday 8 February 2018 at 1.00 pm.