

GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 4 AUGUST 2015

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GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 4 AUGUST 2015

Present:

	Councillor J Windle	(Chair)	
Councillor	S Boyle	Councillor	R Smith
"	C Cupit	"	C Tite
"	B Rice		

Also Present

Allison Westray-Chapman	-	Assistant Director – Economic Growth (Min No 205)
Sue Broadhead	-	Overview & Scrutiny Manager
Sarah Cottam	-	Governance Officer

199 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors W Lilleyman, A Powell and K Tait.

200 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.

201 Minutes of Last Meeting

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of the Growth Scrutiny Committee held on 16 June 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

202 Scrutiny Review

The Committee considered the Project Plan and Timetable for the chosen Scrutiny review "Vacant Land". Members were also asked to consider what questions they would like to put to stakeholders in the interviews. It was important to ascertain in the interviews how the Council managed its land assets and ensure a proper procedure was in place to deal with this.

The Committee considered information relating to the Local Plan and were advised that Members could request progress reports for sites in the District.

The Committee felt it would be beneficial to include garage sites within the review as some of the garage sites in the District had a number of issues. It was agreed that the garage sites be included in the Project Plan.

RESOLVED – That the Project Plan and Timetable for the Scrutiny Review into Vacant Land be agreed subject to the amendment on garage sites.

203 Change of Order of Agenda Items

It was agreed with the Chair that agenda item no 7 be considered before agenda item no's 5 and 6.

204 Working with Town and Parish Council Action Plan

The Committee considered Cabinet's response to the Scrutiny Review of Working with Town and Parish Councils. Cabinet endorsed the proposed actions set out in the Action Plan to address all the recommendations arising from the Review. The Overview and Scrutiny Manager advised Members that a lot of positives had come from the review:-

- Joint training with DALC had taken place;
- Meeting diaries had been sent out to all parish clerks;
- The latest District and Parish Liaison Group had good attendance and seemed very well received;
- Session in the pipeline regarding Section 106 monies.

The Committee would continue to monitor the progress of the Action Plan in six months time.

RESOLVED – That the Committee notes Cabinet's response to the Scrutiny Review of the Working with Town and Parish Councils.

205 Regeneration

The Committee considered a presentation on the progress of major development sites within the District. Allison Westray-Chapman attended the meeting to update Members.

The Assistant Director – Economic Growth gave an introduction to Members of what the Economic Development Team does within the organisation. The Team worked closely with the Planning Department in assessing the District's need for housing going forward and also looked after business development, town centre regeneration, employment and skills and urban design.

The Ambition Programme was a North East Derbyshire managed project on behalf of five authorities which was funded by the Sheffield City Region for a two year period, which commenced in March 2015.

The Assistant Director – Economic Growth went on to advise Members of the major developments in the District.

The Avenue

There was good progress on site and currently it had five workstreams. The Assistant Director – Economic Growth chaired a group that was looking at cycle ways, horse trails and signage on the site. Martyn Handley, Economic Development Project Officer was in the process of working on a Cycling Strategy and would align this with the Local Plan.

Additional funding would be tapped into to cover exemplar aspects of the site. The site would include an infrastructure and workstreams for education and business.

It was advised the Kier would be on site early 2016 and would be building the first 217 homes.

The Committee were advised that a bid for funding had been put in with Sheffield City Region for £7m to open up the South of the development area, this would bring forward the build of the South access road to the site.

A video of the site would be available on the website in due course which would promote the site to prospective businesses.

Coalite Site

This site was similar to the Avenue, but half was in the North East District and half in Bolsover District. The site was currently in private sector ownership, the contamination of the site was mainly on the Bolsover District side.

The owner of the site did have the option to get the land remediated through a government scheme, but chose not to. North East Derbyshire and Bolsover were working closely with the developer 'Marcol' to get a Strategy in place for the site.

Callywhite Lane

This site was found to be challenging due to train lines, a river and roads that ran through it. To solve these issues, could add at least £10m onto the costs for the site. The Economic Development Team would need to put together a package to suit the site.

Biwater Site

The site had planning permission for 1,000 homes from the previous owners. The Council were currently in talks with 'St Modwen', who were a very reputable developer. The Biwater site was seen as the gateway to Clay Cross but was not currently at the specification expected by the Council, so discussions were continuing.

The Committee were advised that consultations would take place in September 2015 regarding the Killamarsh/Dronfield Regeneration Frameworks.

OPUN had been commissioned to give the Council the opportunity to talk with residents and stakeholders on what they would like to see in the towns.

RESOLVED – That the presentation on the progress of the major development sites within the District be noted.

206 Update on Tourism Service and the Scrutiny Review of Tourism Action Plan

The Committee considered an update on the Tourism and the Action Plan from the Scrutiny Review of Tourism. Allison Westray-Chapman, Assistant Director – Economic Growth attended the meeting to update Members.

The Assistant Director – Economic Growth advised the Committee that the key officer for Tourism had now left the authority. The position was not replaced as the Council felt an officer dedicated to Tourism was no longer what was needed.

A new strategy had been adopted in October 2014 in which Tourism had now been incorporated. Since the review many things had changed and moved on and it was not possible to complete all the recommendations in the Action Plan. Members agreed that in this instance the Action Plan could be signed off.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the update on Tourism be noted.
- (2) That the Committee agreed to sign off the Action Plan.

(Overview and Scrutiny Manager)

207 Extract from Standards Committee

The Committee were advised of the recent report of Professor Alexis Jay OBE into sexual exploitation in Rotherham, which described how vulnerable children had repeatedly been failed by the Council. The Secretary of State appointed Louise Casey to carry out a statutory best value inspection of Rotherham Council.

The report highlighted failures in relation to high standards of conduct and governance arrangements, in particular:-

- A pervading culture of bullying, sexism and misplaced political correctness;
- A failure by Members to hold officers to account through Scrutiny and to represent the interests of the local people;
- Serious weaknesses in the Council's Taxi Licensing procedures.

Whilst North East Derbyshire showed no signs of the sorts of issues identified in Rotherham the report highlighted lessons from which all Councils could learn.

The Standards Committee recommended that all the Scrutiny Committees examined their remits to ensure robustness through the Council concerning Safeguarding.

The Overview and Scrutiny Manager advised the Committee that this issue was specifically in the remit of the Communities Scrutiny Committee, although all Scrutinies had a role to play. It was noted that the Communities Scrutiny Committee would be looking into this issue in more depth and had decided to undertake a review into Safeguarding arrangements within the Council. A previous review had been undertaken in 2012 but in light of the report further work would be done.

RESOLVED – That the Committee note the recommendation from Standards Committee regarding safeguarding children.

208 List of Key Decisions – Issue No 36

The Committee considered the List of Key Decisions, Issue No 36, which set out the major decisions being taken over the next few months.

RESOLVED – That the List of Key Decisions, Issue no 36, be noted.

209 Work Programme

The Committee considered its Work Programme for 2015/16, which set out the items that the Committee would consider over the forthcoming year.

RESOLVED – That the Growth Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme for 2015/16 be noted.

210 Additional Urgent Items

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

211 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Growth Scrutiny Committee would be held on Tuesday, 22 September 2015 at 10.00 am in Chamber 1.