

GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 1 SEPTEMBER 2016****I N D E X**

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GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 1 SEPTEMBER 2016

Present:

Councillor Mrs C Smith (Chair)
Councillor J Windle(Vice-Chair)
Councillor S Boyle
" B Rice Councillor R Smith

Also Present

D Swaine – Chief Executive Officer (for Min Nos 237, 238 & 239)
A Westray-Chapman – Assistant Director – Economic Growth (for Min No 237)
J Cosgrove – Economic Development and Growth Manager (for Min No 237)
D Vickers – Digital Media Officer (for Min No 238)
J Foley – Assistant Director – Customer Service and Improvement (for Min No 240)
Karl Apps – Housing Strategy and Growth Manager (for Min No 241)
G Galloway – Assistant Director – Property and Estates (for Min No 244)
S Veerman – Overview and Scrutiny Manager
S Cottam – Governance Officer

234 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C Cupitt and A Powell.

235 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.

236 Minutes of Last Meeting

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of the Growth Scrutiny Committee held on 7 July 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

237 Update on Growth Strategy

The Committee considered an update from Dan Swaine, Chief Executive Officer on the progress against the Action Plan for the Growth Strategy which included the regeneration of major sites.

The Committee were advised of the Year 1 (August 2016) update on the Growth Strategy Action Plan (Unlocking our Growth Potential). The Chief Executive Officer advised that the objectives of the Growth Strategy were:-

- Supporting enterprise, maintaining and growing the business base;
- Enabling housing growth, increasing the supply, quality and range of housing to meet the needs of a growing population and support economic growth;
- Unlocking development potential, unlocking the capacity of major employment sites;

The Chief Executive Officer asked Allison Westray-Chapman, Assistant Director – Economic Growth to outline the key elements of North East Derbyshire's transformational intervention projects. The key points arising from the Action Plan were:-

- Business Growth Hub – there had been good progress on business advice. As of August 2016 six business advisors had been established to work across the Sheffield City Region. The Local Enterprise Partnership Growth Hubs had been promoted and the advisors attended the North East Derbyshire Business network event on the 27 July 2016. Referrals were being made to the LEP Growth Hubs and the Council had now developed a business support package;
- Rural Development Action Plan – BNED LEADER approach – Ten out of the fifteen outline applications currently being developed were from the North East Derbyshire area. One bid had been appraised but had been withdrawn by the applicant due to changing their plans. Three enquiries had been signposted to the North East Derbyshire Business Growth Fund and another to D2N2 support. Drop in sessions in 5 North East Derbyshire locations had been held in March although the purdah period relating to the EU Referendum halted any over promotion;
- Realise Major Housing/Mix Use Regeneration Projects –
 - The Avenue, Wingerworth – the £178m remediation programme was almost complete. The full application for the first phase of housing submitted was for 250 new homes, development was expected to commence early 2017. Development of a marketing strategy was underway with the HCA and Kier to maximise impact. Consideration was being given to incorporate a closed road circuit into the site, and initial feasibility work had been undertaken. Local training and employment negotiations would commence with Kier in September 2016;

- Coalite – the District Council resolved to grant residential permission, subject to a legal agreement in April 2016. An application to D2N2 had been made by the landowner for grant of funding to remediate the employment site and if successful could mean a start on site by October 2016. The latest HS2 proposal raised concerns regarding housing being developed on the North East side of the site. A meeting was being arranged with the HS2 community engagement staff in due course;
 - Former Biwater Site – construction of the first phase of the former Biwater Site, now known as Egstow Park, was underway. A new pub/restaurant had opened at the end of August 2016 with a fast food restaurant and supermarket proposed for the following phase. St Modwen's was also exploring options for a residential element to the site. A sector skills academy operated as part of the public house development to assist local people to secure employment.
- Realising the growth potential of council owned assets – the procurement process was complete to appoint a consultative firm to support the work carried out by the Asset Management Group with a view to maximising land values. The Mill Lane Development Site had been cleared of surface hazards and was in the process of being remediated. Officers were in the process of having a development brief drawn up in relation to the Mill Lane Development Site before taking the site to market. This would result in the remediation of 8 hectares of brown-field and contaminated land. The Committee were advised that member consultation sessions were planned over the next three months to look at general land and any development potential.

RESOLVED – That the Committee notes the update from the Chief Executive Officer on the progress against the Action Plan on the Growth Strategy.

238 Update on Development Prospectus

The Committee considered an update on the progress of the Development Prospectus from the Chief Executive Officer which included a demonstration of the new website from David Vickers, Digital Media Officer. A Development Prospectus was in the process of being produced to help promote the district to potential developers, the new website was a major part of this. David Vickers, Digital Media Officer gave a demonstration of the micro site to the main Council website which included an interactive map of Council owned land in the District. He advised that this website was more visually appealing with very little text and showed easily what was available in the area. He advised that drone fly overs had taken place over sites to help represent the size of particular sites within the District. It was anticipated that this website would launch in October 2016.

Members of the Committee felt it may be helpful to give a demonstration of the new website to full Council in October 2016 and to showcase the website at a developers forum on 11 October 2016 to gather comments and feedback on the site. The Chair of the Committee was impressed with the overall progress of the new website and thanked the Digital Media Officer for attending the meeting.

RESOLVED – That the Growth Scrutiny Committee notes the update on the progress of the Development Prospectus and the new website.

239 Update on Impact of the Referendum

The Committee were advised that there had been no immediate or apparent impact on the Council's services following the EU Referendum and any significant impact had yet to materialise but this would be monitored as the situation progressed.

The Committee were advised that the plan Members had seen had been put together to mitigate any expected impacts but had not been as necessary as first thought. At this stage it was felt that there was no impact on any infrastructure projects. However, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly were calling for the Government to ensure all LEP EU funding were secured until 2020 and was seeking clarity to this effect. The wider economic impact would not be clear until the Autumn with the longer term impact being unknown for some time.

There was a time lag in official statistics to give an indication on the economy. However, international economic forecasting bodies had warned of some longer term consequences.

RESOLVED – That the Growth Scrutiny Committee notes the update on the impact on the referendum.

240 Growth Performance Indicators

The Committee considered some suggested performance indicators that Growth Scrutiny may find useful. Jane Foley, Assistant Director – Customer Services and Improvement attended the meeting to update members. The Committee were advised that baseline data for 2015 up to March 2016 was now available. The baseline data included a brief summary of each indicator. The Committee were advised that various corporate plan indicators already collected this data elsewhere. Explanations were given for under performing targets and this included a graph to show the averages. The document collected information on indicators for new houses lived in, in the District. This indicator showed that houses were selling in the District. Other indicators looked at NNDR and arrears collected. This had never been a performance indicator previously. There were also indicators on commercial properties and on LEADER funding.

The Committee were advised that a report would go to SAMT on a six monthly basis, and then onto Leadership and also to Growth Scrutiny if required. Members of the Committee thought the information was useful and requested it be brought back to Growth Scrutiny in December 2016 and then 6 monthly.

RESOLVED – That the Growth Scrutiny Committee notes the performance indicators update and requested that they receive this information in future.

(Assistant Director – Customer Services and Improvement)

241 Update on Empty Property Strategy and Action Plan

The Committee considered the progress against the Action Plan for the Empty Property Strategy. Karl Apps, Housing Strategy and Growth Manager attended the meeting to update Members.

The Committee were advised that a newly appointed officer had been in post for five to six weeks to deal with empty properties in the District. This officer would work with landlords within the District to get houses back into circulation. Funding would be offered through the HCA and Action Housing and this would help get properties back up to specification. The Committee were advised that the money would be recouped through renting the property through the Council in the first instance. After the money had been recouped the Property would then be handed back to the landlord. The Empty Properties Officer would visit the properties alongside Environmental Health to assess properties on a case by case basis. The target for getting properties back into circulation was 15 per annum, but this was reliant on officer time and funding.

The Committee were advised that the Empty Property Action Plan was being dealt with pro-actively.

RESOLVED – That the progress against the Action Plan for the Empty Properties Strategy be noted.

Councillor J Windle and Councillor B Rice left the meeting at this point.

242 Scrutiny Review

The Growth Scrutiny Committee discussed the potential Scrutiny Review topic for this year.

Various suggestions had already been discussed including the Developer's Prospectus. The Committee were advised that Chesterfield Borough Council employed 'Champions' who had good knowledge of the area and could promote this to outside businesses coming into the area. However, as the prospectus had been progressed the Committee discussed the suggestion on how other Authorities gained funding from international countries such as China and whether this might be a suitable topic.

The Overview and Scrutiny Manager advised the Committee that a scoping meeting would be held to consider this further. The Overview and Scrutiny Manager, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee and the Lead Officer for this service would be present.

RESOLVED – That a scoping meeting be held between the Overview and Scrutiny Manager, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the meeting and the Lead Officer for the Service to discuss the suggestion raised by the Committee as a potential review topic.

(Overview & Scrutiny Manager/Members)

243 Local Plan Update

At the request of the Chair of the Committee this item was deferred to another meeting or to request that Helen Fairfax, Planning Policy Manager prepare a briefing note for the Members of the Growth Scrutiny Committee.

(Overview and Scrutiny Manager/Planning Policy Manager)

244 Action Plan from Lead Officer on Vacant Land Scrutiny Review

The Growth Scrutiny Committee considered the Lead Officer's response to the Action Plan on the Vacant Land Scrutiny Review. The Overview and Scrutiny Manager advised the Committee that a report had been to Cabinet and all the action points on the plan were approved.

The Assistant Director – Property and Estate advised that he had met with the relevant Cabinet Member to discuss the Vacant Land Action Plan. The District had been split into seven areas which would aid in the collection of information of all the land owners in the District. It was advised that all the data was needed for all sites to be able to inform Members correctly.

The Assistant Director – Property and Estates advised that the Asset Management Strategy was published on line. A request had also been made to publish the Disposal and Acquisition Policy on the intranet and internet. The Minutes of future meetings of the Asset Management Group would be published on the Members' extranet for information.

Vacant sites had been identified and were detailed on the Council's Asset Register and members had been consulted with regards to their respective wards relating to assets on the Asset Management Database.

The Asset Management Group had considered an updated audit of the garage sites. Rykneld Homes had undertaken a full audit of the Council's garage sites in Spring 2012. Following this audit a number of sites had been cleared to reduce maintenance costs and reduce the risk from structures in poor condition. One site had been developed for affordable housing, with another currently being progressed. An annual programme of reviewing garage sites was in place and regular reports were provided to the Asset Management Group. An update of the 2012 audit would be completed for the Asset Management Group to consider in October 2016.

As part of the Action Plan, the Asset Management Group had also reviewed its membership.

The Committee were advised that work on the Accommodation Strategy had commenced. A full review of the delivery of the Local Plan had been considered by Cabinet on 8 June 2016 and this included the timeframe for the delivery and the resourcing of the plan. The Committee were advised that a review of the Disposal and Acquisitions Policy had commenced. A review of the Property and Estates Service Plan and the Asset Management Plan had already taken place in December 2015.

Members of the Committee raised concerns regarding the closure of Garage sites. The Assistant Director – Property and Estates advised that Garage sites was a standard item on the Asset Management Group meeting for discussion.

RESOLVED – That the Lead Officer's response to the Action Plan on the Vacant Land Scrutiny Review be noted.

245 List of Key Decisions Issue No 50

The Committee considered Issue No 50 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 50 be noted.

246 Work Programme

The Committee considered its work programme for 2016/17 which set out the items which the Committee would consider over the forthcoming year.

RESOLVED – That the Growth Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme for 2016/17 be noted.

247 Additional Urgent Items

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

248 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Growth Scrutiny Committee would take place on Thursday 6 October 2016 at 2.00 pm in Chamber 1.