

## **GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 22 FEBRUARY 2021**

#### **Present:**

Councillor Anthony Hutchinson (Chair)

Councillor Nigel Barker  
Councillor John Funnell  
Councillor Diana Ruff

Councillor Suzy Cornwell  
Councillor Lee Hartshorne  
Councillor Nick Whitehead

#### **Also Present:**

S Lee	Strategic Partnership Co-ordinator
D Stanton	Governance Officer
S Veerman	Overview and Scrutiny Manager
A Bond	Governance Officer

#### **GSC/50 Apologies for Absence** **/20-21**

An apology for absence had been received from Councillor M Roe.

#### **GSC/51 Declarations of Interest** **/20-21**

Members are requested to declare the existence and nature of any disclosable pecuniary interest and/or other interest, 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.

#### **GSC/52 Minutes of Last Meeting** **/20-21**

**RESOLVED** – That the Minutes of the Growth Scrutiny Committee held on 18 January 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### **GSC/53 Scrutiny Review** **/20-21**

The Overview and Scrutiny Manager reminded Members that this involved triangulating all the evidence the Committee had heard in connection with the Committee's Scrutiny Review into Tourism – Business and Non-Business.

Members noted that there were a number of documents attached in the agenda pack to remind the Committee what they had heard, including the minutes of each of those meetings. The Committee was asked to provide their thoughts and conclusions based on the evidence, and a report would be presented to Cabinet with the Committee's recommendations.

Members discussed the various aspects of the Scrutiny Review and considered what was working well and any potential areas for improvement.. There was a consensus that the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth and Officers had

worked hard to produce the NED Visitor Economy Strategy, and that it was a good document. The Committee also welcomed the appointment of a dedicated Tourism Officer.

The Committee considered a number of questions that they wished to see answered arising from the review they had undertaken.

- Had the District's weaknesses been mitigated?
- Was the Authority doing the right thing for business?
- Was the Council's engagement with stakeholders effective?
- Was the Council using the right performance indicators?
- How was the Council going to improve the District's connectivity?
- How was the Authority going to deliver the Strategy?

The Committee discussed the evidence they had heard, including the Visitor Economy Strategy and made a number of comments and suggestions for the officers to reflect on both with regards to the Strategy and the Scrutiny Review report that would be submitted to Cabinet. This also included a discussion on effective monitoring of the delivery of the Strategy and the Scrutiny Review recommendations if accepted.

Members discussed working in partnership with surrounding local authorities and parish councils to improve connectivity and support for attractions that cut across the region. The Committee also considered the potential for the holding of annual or regular events that could attract visitors. It was suggested that Parish Councils could take a lead in their areas which some support provided by the District Council. A discussion was also held on the area's features and attractions and it was highlighted that the Council needed to create a clear identity and brand for the District.

The Committee discussed the importance of routes like the five pits trail, and that they would like to see more of it mentioned in the Strategy. Members agreed that maintenance of the route was crucial to ensure it remained a popular attraction, and as such would like to see it regularly patrolled by rangers. There was a consensus that this could prevent fly-tipping as well as keep it clean and tidy.

**GSC/54**    **Exclusion of the Public**  
**/20-21**

RESOLVED – That the public be excluded from the meeting during the discussion of the following item of business to avoid the disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3, Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006). [The category of exempt information is stated after each item].

**GSC/55**    **Partnership Activities in Support of Growth**  
**/20-21**

The Strategic Partnership Co-ordinator was present at the meeting to inform the Committee of the contribution made by the NEDDC Partnership Strategy Team in support of Growth.

The Committee heard about a number of programmes and initiatives including the 2014-2020 BNED LEADER programme, Covid-19 Business Grants, NED Business Growth Fund, and indirect growth activity. The team had been playing a significant role in the administration of the Government's discretionary COVID 19 business support grants during the past year. The Strategic Partnership Co-ordinator explained how the process worked, the benefits it could provide, and some of the challenges involved with its roll out. He also answered a number of questions from members on the various initiatives within the report.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

(Paragraph 3)

**GSC/56** **Forward Plan of Executive Decisions**  
**/20-21**

AGREED – That the Forward Plan of Executive Decisions be noted.

**GSC/57** **Work Programme**  
**/20-21**

AGREED – That the Work Plan be noted.

**GSC/58** **Additional Urgent Items**  
**/20-21**

There were no additional urgent items discussed at this meeting of the Growth scrutiny Committee.

**GSC/59** **Date of Next Meeting**  
**/20-21**

The next meeting of the Growth Scrutiny Committee would take place on Monday, 26 April 2021 at 1.00 pm.