

BUSINESS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 24 SEPTEMBER 2024

Present:

Councillor Suzy Cornwell (Chair) (in the Chair)
Councillor William Jones (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Lee Hartshorne
Councillor Pam Windley

Councillor Tony Lacey

Also Present:

S Lee	Assistant Director - Regeneration and Programmes and SIRO
A Camus	Economic Development and Regeneration Manager
A Bashir	Improvement Officer
J Hayden	Senior Scrutiny Officer
T Scott	Governance and Scrutiny Officer

BSC Apologies for Absence

14/2

3-24 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C Fletcher, C Gare, S Reed and R Spooner.

BSC Declarations of Interest

15/2

3-24 There were no interests declared at this meeting.

BSC Minutes of Last Meeting

16/2

3-24 **RESOLVED** – That the Minutes of the Business Scrutiny Committee held on 15 July 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

BSC Performance Management

17/2

3-24 The Committee agreed to amend the order of the agenda to swap the order of 'Cabinet Business' and 'Policy Development'.

The Improvement Officer presented a report setting out progress on the strategies underpinning the Council Plan objective 'A great place to work' for the period ending 30 June 2024.

Members were updated on progress under the following objective sub-categories in Appendix 1 of the report:

- 1) Community with a diverse range of commutable employment that match the skills of residents.
- 2) Community with growing commutable employment opportunities.

The data stated two Business Network meetings had been held in June (Dronfield and Clay Cross), so Members asked when the next local Business Network meetings were scheduled to take place. The Improvement Officer agreed to investigate this.

Members discussed the figures with regards to contact/support to businesses and how this differed from previous quarters, as they felt it would be useful to gauge levels and also benchmark across similar demographics. The Chair suggested that some geographical benchmarking of the Strategy could be discussed for inclusion in the later Work Programme agenda item.

RESOLVED – That progress against the Council Plan “A great place to work” objective be noted.

BSC **"How's Business"? Survey**

18/2

3-24

The Economic Development and Regeneration Manager delivered a presentation to Members to inform them of the recent results of the Business Survey recently undertaken. Members were informed that it was the first time a survey of this kind had been undertaken at the Council.

The presentation split the results of the Survey up into a number of areas to show who completed them, including local areas, sectors, employment and their opinions on an array of different aspects.

Members discussed the UK Shared Prosperity Fund being used for schemes like the Shopfront Enhancement Scheme. The Economic Development and Regeneration Manager explained that finding the financial support for some schemes was significantly changed when the UK left the EU.

The Assistant Director of Regeneration and Programmes explained that one of the things that could be done within the Council to assist in the delivery of business help would be the adoption of a cross-departmental Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to share information on businesses, their needs and ongoing interactions with officers/departments.

RESOLVED – That the presentation was noted.

BSC **Policy Development (moved)**

19/2

3-24

The Assistant Director of Regeneration and Programmes delivered a presentation to Members about the current considerations of the Council's Growth Strategy.

The presentation provided details on:

- Purpose of the Strategy
- Policy drivers
- Cross-cutting themes
- Delivery mechanisms
- Strategic sites
- Housing
- Employment and skills

- Supporting businesses
- New technology
- Inward investment
- Town Centre development
- The visitor economy
- Infrastructure and accessibility
- Social Infrastructure

Members asked what “school-based activities” in the presentation referred to. The Assistant Director of Regeneration and Programmes explained that officers were attempting to build links with senior schools.

Members discussed Town Centre Regeneration and footfall in Town Centres. The Economic Regeneration Manager agreed to bring footfall data on Town Centres for consideration at a future Committee meeting.

Members requested for the Senior Scrutiny Officer to invite the Portfolio Holder for Growth & Assets to a future Committee meeting to ask her about some of the aspects of the Growth Strategy.

RESOLVED – That the presentation was noted.

BSC **Cabinet Business (moved)**

20/2

3-24

The Senior Scrutiny Officer presented a digest of Cabinet decisions taken since 29 June 2024. The digest set out key information for each decision.

The Senior Scrutiny Officer also presented Members with the Forward Plan of Executive Decisions for the period 15 August 2024 – 15 September 2024.

Members discussed the issue in the attached Forward Plan about the Planning Policy, and the Committee agreed to add their concerns to the Work Programme (in the later item) about whether or not developers were considering the needs of their communities.

RESOLVED – That the update was noted.

BSC **'Horizon Scanning'**

21/2

3-24

The Senior Scrutiny Officer updated Members on potential significant changes in the Council’s operating environment, including changes to national legislation and regulation.

The Senior Scrutiny Officer informed Members that there was nothing significant to inform them of.

RESOLVED – That the update was noted.

BSC **Work Programme**

22/2

3-24

The Senior Scrutiny Officer presented the draft Work Programme 2024/25 for the Committee to consider.

Members agreed to add a topic to the Work Programme based on the discussions from earlier about whether or not developers were considering the needs of their communities.

The Senior Scrutiny Officer advised that the Assistant Director of Property, Estates and Assets would attend a future meeting to discuss disposal of land for employment use.

The Chair requested that access to public transport be included at the next meeting if feasible, with an invitation to Derbyshire County Council to attend and discuss the current provision and plans for the future. The Chair also asked if the newly elected Mayor of the East Midlands could be invited to the same meeting. The Senior Scrutiny Officer stated she would explore the possibility of this.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That whether or not developers were considering the needs of their communities be added to the Work Programme 2024/25.
- (2) That the Work Programme 2024/25 be approved with this addition.

BSC **Reflection on the Council Plan**

23/2

3-24

The Chair asked Members to reflect on if the work of the Committee at the meeting had added value to the Council Plan objectives.

Members felt the meeting had been very informative and had contributed towards the Council Plan objectives.

BSC **Additional Urgent Items**

24/2

3-24

None.

BSC **Date of Next Meeting**

25/2

3-24

The next meeting of the Business Scrutiny Committee was scheduled to take place on 18 November 2024 at 3.00 pm.