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BUSINESS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 8 SEPTEMBER 2025

Present:

Councillor Suzy Cornwell (Chair) (in the Chair)
Councillor Richard Welton (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Lee Hartshorne
Councillor Tony Lacey

Councillor William Jones

Also Present:

D Thompson	Assistant Director of Planning
C Mills	Assistant Director of Leisure
S Lee	Assistant Director of Regeneration and Programmes
K Drury	Information & Improvement Manager
S-J Roome	Business Improvement Co-ordinator
T Burdett	Programmes Manager and Interim Economic Development & Regeneration Manager
J Hayden	Senior Scrutiny Officer
T Scott	Governance and Scrutiny Officer

BSC Apologies for Absence

12/2

5-26 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Emmens, C Gare, M Fletcher and P Windley.

BSC Declarations of Interest

13/2

5-26 There were no declarations of interest.

BSC Minutes of Last Meeting

14/2

5-26 Members requested that in the 'East Midlands Chamber Economic Survey Results' item on the minutes, the sentence "Members heard that the presentation put forward majority positive results" be amended to reflect that no commentary was available.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Business Scrutiny Committee held on 28 July 2025 were approved and signed by the Chair with one amendment.

BSC Performance Management

15/2

5-26 The Information & Improvement Manager 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 2025.

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 Chair asked when the Council would receive funding from the Shared Prosperity Fund. The Assistant Director of Regeneration and Programmes explained that the funding had been received.

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

BSC 16/2 5-26 High Streets - attracting businesses and footfall

The Assistant Director of Regeneration and Programmes and the Programmes Manager gave a presentation with an overview on how we could be making our high streets more attractive to businesses as well as increasing visitors/footfall.

The presentation included specific information on:

- Town Centre Footfall Data
- Vacancy Rate by Location Type
- Types of Shop in Each Area
- Supporting Business Environments
- Attracting Footfall and Visitors

The Committee discussed the issues some businesses were facing when converting heritage buildings, as well as Heritage Officers and Heritage resources at the Council. The Assistant Director of Planning stated that Heritage resource was a priority for the Planning department, and acknowledged that more proactive work was required within this area.

There was also discussion around connectivity and road infrastructure, and that more consideration needs to be given around this topic as there were some major issues. However, Members did note that it was great that the Council were able to offer free parking in our Town Centres.

RESOLVED - That the presentation was noted.

BSC 17/2 5-26 Council Assets - Leisure Centres - how do we attract visitors/footfall

The Assistant Director of Leisure and the Business Improvement Co-ordinator delivered a presentation on how the Council was making Leisure Centres more attractive in an effort to increase visitors and footfall.

Members were also presented with the Leisure Marketing Plan 2025-26, which had been developed by the Leisure, Communications and Design departments to support the Council's Leisure business plan and service plans.

The presentation included specific information on:

- Leisure planning and strategy
- Key Targets
- Performance monitoring
- Facility Improvements
- Decarbonisation
- Participation at each facility
- Benchmarking & Partnerships

The Chair asked if the leisure facilities were profitable. The Assistant Director of Leisure responded that two of the Centres did return a profit, but at this stage he was unable to commit on the position at Clay Cross, although the predicted forecast was looking positive.

Members enquired as to how do we take our footfall and help urban regeneration within the District. The Committee were informed that all the Centres do regular feedback forms and take comments into account. The Centres are also open 15 hours a day so quite often Centre Users will then venture into the Town Centre after visiting a Centre, and vice versa. But the Leisure Centres are regularly changing their offering to meet demands and the changing environment, as well as frequently reviewing facilities to make better use of the buildings.

Members asked whether the car parks at Killamarsh Active would be improved to provide additional spaces. The Assistant Director of Leisure confirmed that parking capacity at Killamarsh had already been expanded, and further parking provision had been added at Eckington and Clay Cross Active to accommodate growing demand at the facilities.

RESOLVED - That the presentation was noted.

BSC Local Plan Update

18/2

5-26

Committee received a presentation updating them on the new Local Plan for North East Derbyshire. The presentation gave an overview of the ongoing work around the creation of a new Local Plan. This included the establishment of an evidence base, the first round of the call for sites process and the consultations that had taken place. The presentation also included the priorities for the next few months and detailed the timeline for further consultation.

Committee also received an overview of the issues pertinent to Business Scrutiny Committee. These included mixed use sites, large sites submitted via the call for sites process (including south of Markham Vale and North of Doe Lea) and the need to investigate small scale employment opportunities, including how to support and regenerate town centres.

Members discussed the issues created in the District because of the traffic and congestion on the A61 caused by the connection to the A617 and the M1. The Assistant Director of Planning explained that a number of residents had raised this during the Local Plan consultation, and Derbyshire County Council as Highway Authority have been consulted on all of the sites that have been submitted through the call for sites process, and will need to endorse the modelling evidence that looks at the highway capacity implications of growth in

the District and forms a key part of the Local Plan evidence base.

RESOLVED - That the presentation was noted.

BSC **Cabinet Business**

19/2

5-26 The Senior Scrutiny Officer presented Members with the Forward Plan of Executive Decisions for the period up to 15 September 2025.

RESOLVED – That the update was noted.

BSC **Policy Development**

20/2

5-26 The Senior Scrutiny Officer informed the Committee that there were no major policies for Members to consider.

RESOLVED – That the update was noted.

BSC **Horizon Scanning**

21/2

5-26 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 explained that Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) remained on the radar, as did EMCCA's Growth Plan.

RESOLVED – That the update was noted.

BSC **Work Programme**

22/2

5-26 The Senior Scrutiny Officer presented the draft Work Programme 2025/26 for the Committee to consider.

The Senior Scrutiny Officer informed Members that Scott Knowles (Chief Executive of East Midlands Chamber) would be attending the Committee meeting on 10 November 2025.

Members discussed ensuring Digital Connectivity remains on the Work Programme but there may also be a need to look at Heritage Buildings and the difficulties businesses face when trying to convert buildings.

RESOLVED – That the Work Programme 2025/26 be approved.

BSC **Reflection on the Council Plan**

23/2

5-26 The Chair expressed her views and felt that this had been a positive meeting and a lot of discussion had taken place.

BSC **Additional Urgent Items**

24/2

5-26 None.

BSC **Date of Next Meeting**

25/2

5-26 The next meeting of the Business Scrutiny Committee was scheduled to take place on 10 November at 3.00 pm.