

**RECOMMENDATION FROM GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 20<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2016**

**0718. AN UPDATE ON THE GROWTH STRATEGY**

The Assistant Director – Economic Growth took Members through the first part of the Growth Strategy Action Plan which had been updated with the Authority's activities in relation to its objectives for supporting enterprise in Bolsover District.

The following points were highlighted;

**Business Growth Hub;** Sheffield City Region had now recruited a Growth Hub Manager and four business advisers. A further full time adviser specifically for Bolsover and NEDDC, funded for five years, had also been recruited.

In response to the Tata Steel announcement of potential job losses, the Authority was aware of which businesses in the District would be affected and the type of support they would need. Rotherham College had been allocated £1.5m to respond to the Tata Steel announcement and the Chief Executive's and Partnership Manager would contact Rotherham College to see if there was anything local the Authority could provide to top up their programme.

A D2N2/SCR over lap meeting had taken place to discuss and agree referral protocols following the recent Government announcement to cease the Business Growth Service (Manufacturing Advisory Service & Growth Accelerator). Committee was advised that both LEPs now had more staff to assist with progressing projects and processes.

**Key Account Management;** Engagement to date had supported 7 growth businesses; DC Steel Fabs, Mercol Engineering, Dobbies and TBG Solutions, with specific help provided to companies completing D2N2 Local Growth Fund 3 infrastructure bids, including Bolsover Land/Coalite, Bolsover North (Strata Homes Ltd and Persimmon Homes - £3.82m investment to unlock site) and Penny Hydraulics, Clowne - £249k for new growth and expansion.

**Business Support Package;** Two business breakfast events had been hosted in October 2015 and attended by local businesses. A number of other business networks and property exhibitions had been attended plus Chamber meetings. The Assistant Director – Economic Growth had met with the Manufacturing Advisory Service. D2N2 EAFRD and LEADER launch events hosted. Issued E bulletins business news alerts and supported businesses and responded to enquiries (108 in total).

**Internationalisation Programme;** The Authority was looking at what it could do to promote local businesses and support export.

A Member commented that he had received complaints from businesses based at Brooke Park, Shirebrook, who were frustrated with slow broadband speed there. He felt that the District did not have the broadband coverage that Digital Derbyshire said it had.

The Chief Executive Officer reported that he had spoken with Vodaphone and had requested they look at broadband and mobile services across the District. Good broadband speeds and mobile access formed part of the attractiveness for businesses coming to the area and slow services could hinder business and growth. The Business Executive Group (BEG) had a contact through BT and work had been carried out in Scotland where alternative technology had been looked at. The Chief Executive Officer would expand discussions on broadband and mobile coverage with Vodaphone in the near future. Pleasley Vale Mills would be specifically looked at.

**Accelerate Business Start Ups;** The Assistant Director – Economic Growth referred to a recent positive article in the Sunday Times which had reported that the highest proportion of businesses registering for start ups outside of London was in Bolsover. The Chief Executive Officer added that in 2013/14 there had been an increase of 200 new enterprises in Bolsover District with 175 businesses closing; this showed more businesses were starting up than were finishing. He added that it was important that the Authority was the front door for where business went to for advice.

**Refresh approach to inward investment;** A Member queried if a marketing strategy was in place to encourage businesses to set up/move to the District and he felt that this should be a priority. The Chief Executive Officer replied that a practical development prospectus to attract developers into the District was needed including a list of areas that were ready and land available. Another Member felt that a promotional video of the area could be arranged but broadband and mobile services and the infrastructure of roads into the District needed to be looked at first. The Assistant Director – Economic Growth advised the meeting that draft material in relation to business promotion in the District would be circulated to Members in the near future and added that a Senior Economic Development Officer was being recruited.

A discussion took place regarding the timescale for a Marketing Strategy and Members agreed that this should be completed by 1<sup>st</sup> September 2016.

**Rural Development Action Plan;** Meeting of the BNED LEADER Local Action Group held in December 2015. Appraiser training from the Rural Payments Agency held in December 2015. Business Support and Advice was provided to local businesses on the application process. BNED LEADER Launch Event was held in November 2015 at the Arkwright Centre. To date; 3 Expressions of interest and 7 enquiries had been received in relation to the Growth Fund.

The Assistant Director - Planning and Environmental Health took Members through the second part of the Growth Strategy Action Plan which had been updated with the Authority's activities in relation to enabling housing growth.

**Empty Homes Programme;** The Authority would facilitate the Private Sector Leasing Scheme but would not deliver the scheme which provided funding for 23 properties. With regard to empty properties where enforced sale was the final option, the Empty Properties Officer was working with the Council's Legal section on a procedure which would be taken to Council for approval.

**Realise Major Housing / Mixed Use Regeneration Projects;** There would be changes to HCA funding and where it would be focused. No advice was currently available regarding new funding programmes but it was likely that the focus would shift to new starter homes and shared equity homes.

With regard to Bolsover North and Bolsover East, a positive approach was being taken and good relationships with developers had been made to get the best possible schemes.

Bolsover North; Outline application for approximately 950 dwellings had been submitted by Persimmon and Strata Homes targeting March 2016 Planning Committee with a presentation to Council on the proposed scheme in February 2016.

Brookvale; Outline application for up to 750 dwellings had been approved, including a Section 106 agreement. Reserved matters consent issued in November 2015; currently discharging conditions to allow start of the housing; site preparation works already started.

Bolsover East; Outline application for 360 dwellings had been approved on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2014. No house builder/developer to take forward approval at the moment.

Clowne; a number of houses approved for the Van Dyke site.

**Council homes building programme;** Woodhead's had been appointed as development partner. An initial three schemes had been identified and would be submitted to Planning. Land availability was a major barrier and work with consultancy services was being undertaken to identify next 'tranche' of sites.

**Facilitate a House Building Programme;** The Housing and Economic Development Strategy 2015-2020 had been completed. Grant funding from the HCA was obtained to bring empty residential and commercial properties back into use to be let at an affordable rent. Government funding programmes had been publicised to developers to stimulate growth, for example, the Builders Finance Fund. Applications for Builders Finance Fund had been submitted for two sites in the District and were currently awaiting a decision.

**Relationship Management with Land Owners and Developers;** A revitalised Developer Forum on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2016 was to be relaunched around September /October. Work was being undertaken to set up a new database for planning applications to enable better monitoring of major housing and employment applications and monthly meetings were being held within the Growth Directorate to review the current status of approvals and to identify any actions required. Owner and agent details were now listed to enable easier contact and central storing of data.

**Realise the Growth Potential of Council Owned Assets;** Both Leaders from the Joint Alliance were taking a proactive approach with Developers regarding opportunities/ challenges etc.

Members were then updated on the third part of the Growth Strategy, Unlocking Development Potential: unlocking the capacity of major employment sites;

**M1 Growth Corridor;** The M1 was a key asset in the District but would need sustainability. Work was being led by Planning Policy who had completed the Economic Development Needs Assessment to inform the Local Plan evidence base to identify future employment land allocations. The County Council had been commissioned to undertake viability work on developing further the East to West link to Shirebrook. This would be available to assist the Council in determining a preferred option for the new Local Plan. Proposals for investigating strategic site development at Junction 28-30 would be considered through the Local Plan site allocation process.

#### **Priority Site Interventions;**

Former Coalite Site: D2N2 Local Growth Fund 3 bid submitted for infrastructure funding for remediation. Enterprise Zone bid also submitted, however, was unsuccessful. Planning application for Employment (B2 and B8 uses) approved by BDC LPA, Sept 2015. An officer was seconded for two-days each week (from November 2015) to work with NEDDC LPA to progress the residential planning application.

The Assistant Director – Economic Growth noted that much had happened on the Markham Vale Site; the Seymore Link Road was currently under construction and was expected to be complete by October 2016 - this was a positive story as the Seymore Link would open up another 33 hectares of land. A German logistics company had been contracted to commence trading in November 2016 with around 50 jobs. The Great Bear (Green Giant Plot) was also under construction to be completed by September 2016 with recruitment of circa 20 -100 in year one. KFC had also opened in December 2015, creating 40-50 jobs and discussions were ongoing to secure a hotel operator which would be highly appropriate for the site.

Regeneration Frameworks – Consultants had been appointed to deliver four frameworks which would focus on the four main town centres; Bolsover, Clowne, Shirebrook and South Normanton. A District wide Stakeholder event would be held on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2016 and also Place Shaper events.

The Economic Development and Housing Strategy would support and underpin activity.

A University presence would also be desirable in the District and the Authority was in talks with Sheffield Hallam University for higher level apprenticeships.

**Relationship Management with Landowners and Developers;** Further enhancement of the key account management system was underway and a Developer Forum meeting was scheduled for March 2016.

**Realise the Growth Potential of Council Owned Assets;** Procurement complete to appoint a consultancy firm to support the work carried out by the Asset Management Group with a view to maximising land values. Procurement complete in relation to appointing a developer to deliver council housing on council owned land. A Business Executive Group had been set up to tap into business advice and support from industry leaders.

Members thanked the Chief Executive, the Assistant Director – Economic Growth and the Assistant Director - Planning and Environmental Health for a detailed update.

Moved by Councillor B. Watson and seconded by Councillor A. Anderson  
**RESOLVED** that (1) the updates be received,

2) the Council's Marketing Strategy and promotional materials be completed by 1<sup>st</sup> September 2016.

(Chief Executive Officer)