

## **GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Growth Scrutiny Committee of the Bolsover District Council held in Chamber Suite 2, The Arc, Clowne, on Wednesday 21st October 2015 at 1000 hours.

### **PRESENT:-**

Members:-

Councillor S.W. Fritchley in the Chair

Councillors; T. Alexander, A. Anderson, P. Barnes, J.A. Clifton, M. Dixey, P. Smith, S. Statter, B. Watson and J. Wilson.

Officers; B. Mason (Executive Director – Operations), A. Westray-Chapman (Assistant Director – Economic Growth), J. Fieldsend (Senior Principle Solicitor), C. Millington (Scrutiny Officer) and A. Bluff (Governance Officer).

Also in attendance at the meeting were Councillors; M.J. Dooley, D. McGregor and J.E. Smith (until Minute No. 0465).

Members in attendance in the public gallery were Councillors T. Connerton, B.R. Murray-Carr and J. Ritchie (until Minute No. 0465).

### **0458. APOLOGY**

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor Syrett.

### **0459. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

There were no urgent items of business to consider.

### **0460. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made.

### **0461. MINUTES – 23RD SEPTEMBER 2015**

Moved by Councillor A. Anderson and seconded by Councillor M. Dixey

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of a Growth Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 23rd September 2015 be approved as a true and correct record.

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### **0462. CHANGE TO ORDER OF BUSINESS ON THE AGENDA**

The Chair consented to a change in order of business to that stated on the agenda. Agenda item 9, exempt item of business, Call In of Minute 0310 – Regeneration Strategy for the former Coalite Chemicals Site would be heard before agenda item 7, open item of business, Update regarding Corporate Plan Target; Support 200 young people to raise their aspirations and provide them with relevant employability skills by December 2015 (open item of business).

### **0463. THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

Moved by Councillor J.A. Clifton and seconded by Councillor A. Anderson

**RESOLVED** that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the stated Paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act and it is not in the public interest for that to be revealed.

### **0464. CALL IN OF MINUTE 0310 – REGENERATION STRATEGY FOR THE FORMER COALITE CHEMICALS SITE EXEMPT PARAGRAPHS 1, 3 AND 5**

The Chair explained that Minute No. 0310 of the Executive meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2015, 'Regeneration Strategy for the former Coalite Chemical Site', had been 'Called In' by Councillors D. McGregor and J.E. Smith, who were Members of the Customer Service and Transformation Scrutiny Committee.

It was noted that no reason for the Call In had been provided at the time the item was called in.

Councillor McGregor gave a detailed explanation to the meeting regarding his concerns relating to the recommendations made at Executive on 7<sup>th</sup> September and that he and Councillor Smith had called in the item due to the lack of a Business Plan. He also added that he requested Growth Scrutiny Committee to request the Executive to rethink their position on spending £50k.

The Chair then gave an opportunity for the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Plan, HR and Leisure and officers to comment.

The Assistant Director – Economic Growth circulated information to the meeting, which had been taken from the Council's Growth Strategy and referred Members to the section that set out that the former Coalite site was a priority site for the Council.

The Assistant Director – Economic Growth stated that she had taken a proactive approach as requested and had identified key actions and funding mechanisms to bring forward development for the former Coalite site as set out in the Growth Strategy and that she had carried this out in line with agreed policy. Further, to achieve the objective for the site, she had held meetings with the site owners and some of these meetings

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had been attended by Members from both Bolsover and North East Derbyshire District Councils and the Joint Chief Executive Officer.

The Assistant Director – Economic Growth then gave details to the meeting of the approach she had undertaken.

The Executive Director – Operations noted that recommendation (1) of Minute 0310, *that Executive agree to allocate up to £50,000 from the Transformation Reserve to fund this Council's contribution for external legal and financial advice and support necessary to explore the options currently identified for the development of the Coalite site*, was to enable a robust business plan to be brought to Members. Details of any monies spent from the £50k would be reported to Members.

Councillor McGregor queried if there were any guarantee from the site owners in relation to the amount of money identified as needed to progress the scheme. The Assistant Director – Economic Growth replied that the site owners had identified the gap in the monies required for the full cost of the scheme in a presentation they had given to a meeting. The allocation of £50,000 was to include the cost of expert financial advice in relation to the site owner's figures concerning the cost of remediation.

The Executive Director – Operations added that external specialist advice would provide the necessary support on the risk of the scheme, address any issues on the legal framework and consider the reasonableness of any proposals.

A lengthy discussion took place.

The Chair then asked if Members of the Committee had any questions.

Councillor Clifton raised concern that the Executive minute stated that *"A discussion took place which clarified that this report was seeking only to progress feasibility work and that a further report on the outcome of that work would be brought to the Executive to allow full consideration of the detailed Regeneration Strategy for the site"*.

Nevertheless, the Executive had agreed to *"approve an 'in principle' application to BIS, with North East Derbyshire DC, through D2N2, for a recoverable loan, which would be utilised to fund the remediation work necessary for the development of the site"*.

A further discussion took place.

Councillor Barnes left the meeting at this point.

Moved by Councillor J.A. Clifton and seconded by Councillor P. Smith

**RESOLVED** that (1) the matter be referred back to the Executive for reconsideration because recommendation 6.3 in minute 0310 of the Executive Minutes exceeded what was necessary at that time, i.e., to progress feasibility work,

(2) Scrutiny Committee request that no decision, either in principle or otherwise, for an application to BIS with North East Derbyshire District Council, through D2N2 for a recoverable loan, which would be utilised to fund the remediation work necessary for the development of the site, be made until the conclusion of the feasibility report.

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### 0465. OPEN ITEMS

### 0466. LIST OF KEY DECISIONS AND ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE

Members noted the current List of Key Decisions and Items to be Considered in Private document.

Moved by Councillor J. Wilson and seconded by Councillor P. Smith

**RESOLVED** that the list of Key Decisions and Items to be Considered in Private document be noted.

### 0467. FEEDBACK FROM MEMBERS ATTENDING THE SITE VISIT TO PLEASLEY VALE ON 15<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2015

Scrutiny Committee Members who had attended a site visit to Pleasley Vale Mills on 15<sup>th</sup> October, provided feedback to the meeting.

Pleasley Vale had been the location for industry since at least 1797 and up until 1987 the Mills were still in operation. The Council bought the mill buildings in 1992.

Members highlighted the following;

- Members could see the issues regarding Pleasley Vale in relation to its location and the fact that it was also in a conservation area,
- Pleasley Vale was a unique site,
- Concern had been raised by some tenants regarding Broadband access at Pleasley Vale due to its location, (need high speed broadband),
- A Member felt that the Council needed to promote change in the marketing strategy for the site,
- A lot of people do not know that the site existed,
- Members noted that the site was at 75% capacity over the three Mills,
- A Member felt the site was the perfect place to be advertised in Derbyshire Life magazine, but it was bland with whitewashed walls and needed some new life putting into it.
- A Member felt that Growth Scrutiny Committee could provide a steer to help officers in promoting the site,
- Was there a business strategy for the site?
- Ask officers what future role the Council will have in the site,
- The site could be used for business meetings, for example, the breakfast briefings with Derek Mapp, instead of having them at local hotels etc,
- A Member felt the site currently occupied by Leisure was under utilised by them.
- Invite the Assistant Director – Property and Estates and the Commercial Property and Developments Manager to a future meeting of the Committee

Councillor P. Smith left the meeting at this point.

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### **0468. UPDATE REGARDING CORPORATE PLAN TARGET; SUPPORT 200 YOUNG PEOPLE TO RAISE THEIR ASPIRATIONS AND PROVIDE THEM WITH RELEVANT EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS BY DECEMBER 2015**

Members had previously queried the target date of December 2015 for Corporate Plan target, 'Support 200 young people to raise their aspirations and provide them with relevant employability skills by December 2015', which was approved in July 2015 and whether this target was achievable given the timescale.

At the last meeting, the Scrutiny Officer had informed Committee of the response received from the Chief Executive's and Partnership Manager in relation to the query raised by Members. Members had been dissatisfied with the response and requested that the target be reviewed in line with the Corporate Plan timescales and a revised, more challenging target be submitted for Members approval.

The Scrutiny Officer read out the response, which had been provided to the Assistant Director - Customer Service & Improvement, from the Partnership Team as follows;

*The target was 'left over' from the previous plan and as such was associated with the original targets set by the Partnership not the Council.*

*Going forward the target will be evaluated as at the end of December 2015 and reported. I have just heard though that we have received further funding (this wasn't the case when we wrote the Plan) for this project, so a stretch target will be produced from Jan 2016 for approximately 2 years (end of funding) with a fresh numerical target. This will enable us to celebrate the success in the 2016 Annual Review but allow for continued monitoring.*

Members noted the response.

Moved by Councillor B. Watson and seconded by Councillor J.A. Clifton  
**RESOLVED** that the response from the Partnership Team regarding the Target be noted.

### **0469. UPDATE ON THE SCRUTINY REVIEW OF BUSINESS SUPPORT**

The Scrutiny Officer circulated information to the meeting in relation to the recommendations made in the Action Plan for the Committee's Review on Business Support.

It was noted that the target date of 30<sup>th</sup> September for 'resources to be made available so that the business support pages of the Council's website could be redesigned to offer a dedicated web presence for Business Support', had been met.

With regard to recommendation 2 that, '*the e-bulletin provided by the Economic Development team, be re-launched with the Business Bolsover branding as a quarterly newsletter*', was on track and an update would be provided at the next meeting.

Moved and seconded

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**RESOLVED** that the update be noted.

### **0470. WORK PLAN 2015-2016**

Members considered their 2015-2016 Work Plan programme.

The Scrutiny Officer noted that the Work Plan would need updating to reflect the Assistant Director – Property and Estates being invited to the next meeting of the Committee in relation to the Pleasley Vale Mills site as discussed earlier in the meeting.

The formal part of the Committee ended at 1210 hours.