

GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Growth Scrutiny Committee of the Bolsover District Council held in Chamber Suites 1 and 2, The Arc, Clowne, on Wednesday 18th November 2015 at 1000 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillors, T. Alexander, A. Anderson, P. Barnes, J.A. Clifton, S.W. Fritchley, P. Smith, S. Statter, B. Watson and J. Wilson.

Officers:-

C. Millington (Scrutiny Officer), K. Drury (Information, Engagement and Performance Manager) and A. Bluff (Governance Officer).

0544. APOLOGY

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor M. Dixey.

0545. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business to consider.

0546. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

0547. MINUTES – 21ST OCTOBER 2015

Moved by Councillor A. Anderson and seconded by Councillor B. Watson

RESOLVED that the Minutes of a meeting held on 21st October 2015 be approved as a correct record.

0548. LIST OF KEY DECISIONS AND ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE

Members considered the list of key decisions and items to be considered in private document.

Moved by Councillor P. Smith and seconded by Councillor B. Watson

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RESOLVED that the List of Key Decisions and Items to be considered in Private document be noted.

0549. CORPORATE PLAN TARGETS PERFORMANCE UPDATE – JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2015 (QUARTER 2 – 2015/16)

Members considered a report which provided a half year update of performance against Corporate Plan targets in relation to Growth.

The Information, Engagement and Performance Manager noted that there were no material updates since the report was published.

G 01 - Through the use of Key Account Management develop a relationship with a minimum of 50 local businesses by March 2019

This target was reported as being on track.

Quarter 2 - Four businesses engaged to date;

- DC Steel Fabs
- Mercol Engineering
- Dobbies and
- TBG Solution

Quarter 1 June 2015 update; Annual Targets for key account management has commenced and three companies have already been supported. Meetings with the DE55.

G 02 - Establish business support programme by engaging with D2N2 (Local Enterprise Partnership for Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire) and SCR (Sheffield City Region) Growth Hub by March 2016

This target was reported as being on track.

Quarter 2 - D2N2 LEP established the Growth Hub Gateway Service, a triage service to direct business enquiries to. Sheffield City Region has appointed a Growth Hub Manager and is expected to launch the Growth Hub in the New Year. Funding has been secured for the period to March 2016 from D2N2/SCR for the delivery of business advisers to deliver general advice (suitable for ambitious businesses) as part of the D2N2/SCR Growth Hub solution for overlap areas. The fund is managed by Chesterfield Borough Council and is subject to Service Level Agreement approval. Key property agents meetings have been completed to discuss commercial portfolios to attract investment.

Quarter 1 June 2015 update; Regular Business E-Bulletins issued. The website provides information and linkages to a range of growth business support packages including D2N2/SCR LEPs. A new `Business Bolsover` brochure is under development which will include information on available business support products.

Development of a Bolsover District business grant scheme; this continues to be developed through CEPT for non-BNED LEADER areas to facilitate economic growth and

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job creation - it is intended to launch the scheme in line with the LEADER funding. Due to issues within Defra over the launch of LEADER, this has been delayed until autumn 2015. In the meantime, the BNED LEADER team is developing the application and guidance forms and publicity information and working with the Legal Department to develop a robust contracting process, which will underpin the monitoring and performance management process for LEADER.

A Member queried when the Business Bolsover brochure would be published and noted that he had also raised this at a Council meeting earlier in the year. The Scrutiny Officer advised the meeting that she had spoken to the Communications Officer who had indicated that the brochure should be produced before Christmas, if not; it would definitely be produced in January 2016.

Councillor Clifton also asked about the Bolsover Grant Scheme. The Scrutiny Officer advised Committee that there would be an update on the LEADER funding as part of the Review of Business Support item on the agenda.

G 03 - Optimise business growth (as measured by gross NNDR) by £2.5m

Quarter 2 - Work on this target had not yet started but Revenues had now agreed how to calculate the figure which would be reported to Members from quarter 3 onwards. The Information, Engagement and Performance Manager advised Committee that in future updates would be sought from Economic Development and Revenues.

Members agreed that they would require the formula on how the target would be measured so that real time growth could be seen against the trend set of previous targets. The Information, Engagement and Performance Manager would query this information outside of the meeting and feedback to Members via the Scrutiny Officer.

It was also noted that a lot of small businesses were exempt from NNDR because they were below the threshold and hopefully this wouldn't change. Members requested that the Executive Director – Operations be invited to a future meeting to explain how this currently worked and to also provide background information.

G 04 - Support 200 young people to raise their aspirations and provide them with relevant employability skills by December 2015

This target was reported as being on track.

Quarter 2 - There were a number of initiatives contributing towards this overall target. To date, 279 young people had been supported to raise their aspirations. This was broken down as follows: -

- Raising Aspirations (169);
- Talent Match (57);
- Ambition (37)
- Traineeship/Apprenticeship Programme (16)

The Information, Engagement and Performance Manager noted that Committee had queried performance indicator G04 at a previous Scrutiny meeting and advised Members that additional funding had been received and a new 'stretch' target would be set in January 2016. A Member queried if Committee could be involved in setting the target.

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The Engagement and Performance Manager replied that she would request an officer from CEPT to attend a future meeting to talk to Members about this. She added that information could already be available and she would also check if there was a document in relation to raising aspirations.

G 05 - Through the Bolsover North East Derbyshire LEADER Approach collectively support the creation of 65 sustainable jobs in the combined programme area by December 2020

This target was reported as being on track.

Quarter 1 and 2; The funding agreement for €1,713,000 was only received from the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) on 14th September 2015, therefore delaying the national launch of the programme to 14th October 2015 and by extension, the launch of BNED LEADER approach (the original intention was a March 2015 start). A number of RPA training sessions had been attended by the appropriate staff working on BNED LEADER, including the new Monitoring & Support Officer who commenced in June 2015 (and has been supporting the establishment of the administrative processes). Although the scheme has not formally commenced, 39 businesses (13 from the BDC area), had noted their interest in the funding and initial discussions help with the delivery team to see whether it would be appropriate to submit an application when the fund goes 'live.' A formal launch of the BNED LEADER Programme will be held in November 2015.

G 06 - Undertake statutory public consultation on the Local Plan (Strategic Policies and Site Allocations) in line with the adopted Local Development Scheme timetable by July 2017 (target date 31st July 2017) and;

G 07 - Submit Local Plan (Strategic Policies and Site Allocations) for examination by the Planning Inspectorate by November 2017 (target date 30th November 2017);

These targets were reported as being on track.

Quarter 2; currently on target to commence consultation on the emerging Local Plan in October/November 2015. It had been agreed to amend the focus of consultation to consult on the options available as opposed to a Preferred Option. This change could be accommodated without impacting the overall timescale for Plan production.

A Member noted that the Local Plan event held at South Normanton had not been publicised due to short notice, so feedback on the Local Plan from South Normanton would probably be sparse.

G 08 - Process all major planning applications 10% better than the minimum for special measures per annum;

This target was reported as being on track.

As at 30th September 2015, 70% of major planning applications were achieved in time. The fall in percentage had resulted in part from some developers not agreeing further extensions of time towards the end of the process. Work would continue to secure these agreements to get the best decision on the first application rather than require a resubmission. (Target 2015/16: 60%, National Target 50%).

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G 09 - Deliver a minimum of 100 new Council properties by March 2019;

This target was reported as being on track.

Quarter 2; Woodheads had been appointed as development partner. Tranche 1 sites have been agreed. First site, Rogers Avenue, Creswell, has been granted planning permission with start on site date of November 2015. Possible Tranche 2 sites identified and feasibility work being commissioned.

G 10 - Enable the development of at least 1,000 new residential properties within the District by March 2019;

This target was reported as being on track.

Quarter 2; Figures for completions are collected annually so this would be reported following the end of the financial year. A recent exercise with the SCR LEP and HCA for the devolution bid showed 3,458 new housing units planned by 2019. Not all these would come to fruition due to market forces but the Council would be working with SCR and D2N2 and HCA to enable their development. Large sites include, Brookvale in Shirebrook for 1,100 new homes – the first phase would be taking place by March 2016. The b@home initiative aims to build at least 110 new council homes by 2019. Phase 1 sites have been identified with Rogers Avenue planned for November 2015 start. Phase 2 has identified possible sites. Bolsover North has plans for 950 new houses.

Members raised questions in relation to the 1,100 new homes figure for Shirebrook and if any of the new build properties would be built for disabled persons. The Information, Engagement and Performance Manager replied that she would raise these queries with Planning Officers and inform Members of the responses.

G 11 - Through a programme of targeted refurbishment bring 15 empty private sector properties back into use per annum;

This target was reported as being on track.

Quarter 2; nine units of affordable accommodation brought back into use through refurbishing empty commercial properties in Clowne. Joint initiative with Action Housing via Empty Properties Round 2 funding. The Empty Properties Officer was working closely with Action Housing and HCA to secure additional HCA CME funding for additional properties in the District.

G 12 - Achieve an increase of £850,000 in additional New Homes Bonus from the Government by March 2019.

This target was reported as being on track.

Quarter 2; New Homes Bonus allocation for 2016/17 - £257,091.80 - Instalments over 6 years - £1,542,550.80 (NB: these figures are provisional as they are calculated using last year's average national council tax bands. Allocations would be confirmed when the new national council tax bands were confirmed in the New Year.

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G 13 - Work with partners to deliver an average of 20 units of affordable homes each year.

This target was reported as being on track.

Quarter 2; nine affordable units brought back into use through HCA AHP (Affordable Housing Provision) – empty properties funding in quarter 1 and quarter 2.

G 14 - Identify with partners key actions and funding mechanisms to bring forward priority employment sites at Markham Vale, Shirebrook and former Coalite site by March 2016.

This target was reported as being on track.

Quarter 2; Former Coalite site: EZ application submitted to D2N2/SCR LEPs and is awaiting DCLG approval. Planning approval for Employment (B2 and B8 uses) has been granted, Sept 2015. Markham Vale: Seymore North link road is under construction and expected to be completed by summer 2016. Regenerations Frameworks procurement tenders submitted 5/10/15 for consultancy to deliver the frameworks for the District, lead by an enabler Tom Lonsdale.

Quarter 1; Former Coalite site: Regular dialogue with Marcol and D2N2/SCR LEPs. Shirebrook: Regeneration Framework being prepared to provide comprehensive plan for the town centre and wider surrounding area. A consultant 'enabler' commenced in July 2015. Markham Vale: Derbyshire County Council leading the site and advised it is progressing at good pace.

A Member felt that the Council should look at building its own houses to create income. Another Member noted that other councils were looking into this, for example, Durham Council. He added that commercial buildings were also a good source of income.

A discussion took place and it was agreed that this was an area for research and there were also a number of other options that could be looked at.

Moved by Councillor B. Watson and seconded by Councillor J.A. Clifton

RESOLVED that the half year update of performance against Corporate Plan targets in relation to Growth be noted.

0550. WORK PLAN

Members considered their Work Plan for 2015/16.

The Scrutiny Officer noted that the Work Plan would be updated in relation to information presented by the Engagement and Performance Manager as above.

Moved by Councillor B. Watson and seconded by Councillor J.A. Clifton

RESOLVED that the Work Plan be noted.

(Scrutiny Officer)

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0551. REVIEW OF BUSINESS SUPPORT – UPDATE ON RECOMMENDATIONS

The Scrutiny Officer advised Members that the Economic Development & Investment Manager had given her apologies as she was unable to attend the meeting.

The Scrutiny Officer provided a verbal update to the meeting regarding the recommendations made to Executive in relation to the Committee's Scrutiny Review on Review of Business Support.

With regard to recommendation 01 – That resources be made available so that the business support pages of the Bolsover District Council website can be redesigned to offer a dedicated web presence for Business Support, the Communications, Marketing and design Manager was looking at revamping the whole of BDC's and NEDDC's websites with the Growth Corporate Aim as the key feature. It was anticipated that this work would be completed in Autumn 2016.

Recommendation 03 – Should the £1.4 million LEADER funding be approved, the Council will need to investigate a complimentary package of support for the excluded areas, predominantly Shirebrook and South Normanton. The Committee was advised that the LEADER funding was approved and Executive had agreed to a sum of money being set aside for Shirebrook and South Normanton applications which were excluded from the LEADER process.

Members raised concern that a representative had not attended the meeting in place of the Economic Development & Investment Manager or that a written report was not provided. Members requested that a substitute always be requested in place of an officer when they were unavailable or unable to attend. Concern was also raised at the length of time it would take to revamp the Council's website, especially as business support was a key priority - Members felt the target date should be March / April 2016.

It was agreed that the Chair write to the Chief Executive Officer outlining Members concerns.

Moved by Councillor B. Watson and seconded by Councillor J. Wilson

RESOLVED that the Chair write to the Chief Executive Officer outlining Members concerns.

(Chair of Growth Scrutiny Committee)

0552. SCOPING DOCUMENT – DEVELOPMENT OF SHERWOOD LODGE SITE, BOLSOVER

It was agreed that the scoping document for the Scrutiny Review of Development of Sherwood Lodge site be deferred as this was now an agenda item on a Special Executive meeting to be held after the Growth Scrutiny Committee meeting had taken place.

The meeting concluded at 1110 hours.