

GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

AGENDA

Wednesday 18th January 2017 at 1000 hours in the Council Chamber, The Arc, Clowne

Item No.		Page No.(s)
	PART 1 – OPEN ITEMS	
1.	To receive apologies for absence, if any.	
2.	To note any urgent items of business which the Chairman has consented to being considered under the provisions of Section 100(B) 4 (b) of the Local Government Act 1972.	
3.	Members should declare the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and Non Statutory Interest as defined by the Members' Code of Conduct in respect of: a) any business on the agenda b) any urgent additional items to be considered c) any matters arising out of those items and, if appropriate, withdraw from the meeting at the relevant time.	
4.	To approve the minutes of a meeting held on 14 th December 2016.	To Follow
5.	List of Key Decisions & Items to be Considered in Private. <i>(Members should contact the officer whose name appears on the List of Key Decisions for any further information).</i>	3 to 9
6.	One Public Estate - Presentation by Matthew Scarborough, Programme Manager, One Public Estate.	Presentation
7.	Growth Update - Dan Swaine, Chief Executive Officer.	Verbal Update
8.	Growth Scrutiny Work Plan.	10 to 12

GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Growth Scrutiny Committee of the Bolsover District Council held in the Council Chamber, the Arc, Clowne, on Wednesday 14th December 2016 at 1000 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:- Councillors T. Alexander, A. Anderson, G. Buxton, J. Clifton, M. Dixey, S. Statter and B. Watson.

Officers:- B. Mason (Executive Director – Operations) (for Minute No 0540 only), D. Clarke (Assistant Director – Finance, Revenues & Benefits) (for Minute No 0540 only), C. Millington (Scrutiny Officer) and A. Bluff (Democratic Services Officer).

Also in attendance at the meeting was Councillor S.W. Fritchley (Portfolio Holder for Commercial Development and Efficiencies).

Councillor J. Wilson in the Chair

0535. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence received.

0536. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business to consider.

0537. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

0538. MINUTES – 16th NOVEMBER 2016

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

RESOLVED that the minutes of a Growth Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 16th November 2016 be approved as a correct record.

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0539. LIST OF KEY DECISIONS AND ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE

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

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

The Executive Director – Operations and the Assistant Director – Finance, Revenues and Benefits entered the meeting.

0540. THE AUTHORITYS APPROACH TO DEBT MANAGEMENT – UPDATE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - OPERATIONS

The Executive Director – Operations circulated information to the meeting in relation to the Authority's income/debt collection arrangements.

At a Growth Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 19th October 2016, Members had raised concern as to the reasons why large amounts of debt were being written off by the Authority and also a lack of detail as to what the debts related to. The Council's policy and process for the recovery of debt was also queried.

The Executive Director – Operations explained that the Council had a legal duty to collect all monies owed to it in a cost effective fashion and by established good practice. These factors were crucial because if the Council did not comply with its legal obligations, including giving proper legal notice that monies were due, or failed to comply with recognised good practice, then the courts would not allow a debt to be enforced.

There would always be a requirement to write off some debts that were raised and in order to fund these, the Council set aside a 'provision for doubtful debt'. A table in the report showed an example of revenue contribution to the 'Provision' which fluctuated throughout the year but provided a reasonable indicator of the amount of debt which was not recovered.

The actual write off process required that individual amounts under £2,500 were written off by the Chief Financial Officer and any amounts over £2,500 were required under the Council's Constitution to be written off in agreement with Members.

Where companies had ceased to trade there would be no realistic prospect of recovery of monies and therefore no other option than to 'write off' the debt. Where a person or company had been declared bankrupt, a debt was no longer legally recoverable, although the Council would place itself on a list of unsecured creditors in order to receive any dividend due, any return was generally minimal (pence in the £), and the debt would need to be written off.

In the case of debt relating to 'works in default', (where the Council could use its statutory powers to undertake work on houses to make them fit for habitation or to address health and safety issues), a legal charge would be taken on the property so when the house was sold the first call on the funds would be to repay the charge on the property, therefore, the process of actively pursuing such a debt would no longer be

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appropriate. When a decision to sell was made, the solicitors concerned were effectively required to repay the debt which was registered as a charge on the land.

As well as the legal responsibility to collect debt, the effective collection of debt was crucial to the Council's ability to maintain its services to tenants and residents and other local authorities operating in the Council's area.

The Council raised Council Tax which funded County Council, Police, Fire, Parish and District Council Services. A 1% reduction in Council Tax collection would reduce the resources available to local government organisations by in excess of £0.3m.

The only income available to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) was effectively tenants' rents. If the Council failed to collect 1% of tenants' rents then the cost to the HRA was in excess of £0.2m. That loss of income was reflected in a reduction in services to tenants.

Whilst it was important to maximise the level of income that was collected, it was equally important to minimise the cost of collecting income, which was a back office service.

The Council processed in excess of 700,000 transactions each year; Council Tax from 33,000 households, rents from 5,000 Council Homes, NNDR from 2,400 properties and over 10,000 sundry debtors (sundry debtors were charges for anything other than Council Tax, NNDR and rents), for example, bulky refuse collection, pest control and other miscellaneous services.

The majority of the Council's residents paid their bills on time. On average 60% had currently opted to pay by direct debit which provided the greatest certainty of securing payment for the Council.

The Council had a strong commitment to customer service and asked on all bills that any individual who was struggling to pay should contact the Council directly where an appropriate arrangement would be made. The Council also advised residents of contact details for both the Citizens Advice Bureau and National Debtline and as Members were aware, the Authority provided financial support to a range of advice agencies which helped fund this type of work.

Recovery staff were also trained and experienced in dealing with vulnerable or disadvantaged residents to ensure that they were appropriately treated.

Two flowcharts attached as appendices to the report set out the recovery process for the various kinds of debts, a third flowchart set out the recovery process for council tax and NNDR.

If a bill still remained unpaid, the Council would move to secure a court order requiring payment. The court order would be necessary to allow the Council to take any further enforcement action which could include referral of the debt to a collection agency (who had to operate in line with a strict code of conduct; payment by deductions from earnings or benefits or by passing the account over to an enforcement agent (commonly known as bailiffs). The Council only used licensed bailiffs who were required to operate within the context of stringent legal procedures. Obtaining a court order generally cost in the region of £60 and would be added to the bill to be paid for by the debtor.

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Throughout the process, the Council was still available and willing to discuss appropriate terms for repayment.

The Council's collection rate for debt raised was very good and in line with other Derbyshire authorities. The collection rate for Council Tax and NNDR was monitored through the quarterly performance meetings and also on a monthly basis across Derbyshire through the Derbyshire Financial Officers Association.

Due to the amount of money collected by the Authority and given the contentious nature of the service, there would inevitably be occasion where the Council got it wrong, or a complaint was received. These were, however, relatively few and suggested that the Council got the service broadly right.

An exercise was undertaken by the Customer Service and Improvement Team in 2015/16 to monitor the quality of telephone calls with external customers across all revenues and benefits services. The quality monitoring results were very good and complimentary of the service provided by the team. A follow on exercise had also been undertaken during November 2016 and an initial review of the results appeared to be very much in line with those from the previous exercise.

Members thanked the Executive Director – Operations and the Assistant Director – Finance, Revenues and Benefits for providing the detailed information.

A Member requested that future 'write off' reports include more detail as to what the debts related to.

The Executive Director – Operations and the Assistant Director – Finance, Revenues and Benefits left the meeting.

The Committee discussed the information received and accepted the reasons for irrecoverable arrears in 2016 mainly due to bankruptcy, liquidation and ceased trading of businesses, and collection rates for the last financial year were 97% of Council Tax collected and 98.5% of NNDR the Committee did not need to request any further information.

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

RESOLVED that the information relating to the Authority's income and debt collection arrangements be noted.

(Executive Director – Operations/Scrutiny Officer)

0541. GROWTH SCRUTINY WORK PLAN 2016/17

Committee considered their Work Plan for 2016/17.

The Chief Executive Officer would be providing a quarterly Growth update to the Committee at the January meeting.

Members requested that the Chief Executive Officer provide the Committee with information on progress for a Director of Growth, Coalite, Joint Venture, 'One Public Estate' and the reasons for the delay in the launch of the new Council website which

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was due to go live at the end of 2016. A question was raised on the business plan for the new Leisure facilities at the Arc.

A Member of the Committee had previously raised concerns regarding publicity material regarding the Council's business offer. Members commented that they were uninspired by the publicity materials which had been picked up from the main reception at the Arc and these business leaflets were not a good use of the Council's resources.

It was agreed that these issues be reinstated in the Committee's Work Plan.

Councillor Fritchley informed the meeting that Shirebrook Town Council were holding an event in Shirebrook Town Centre on 24th January 2017 from 4.30pm to 6pm. The event would include a 10 minute promotional video of Shirebrook from a business perspective. All Members of Growth Scrutiny Committee were welcome to attend the event. He added that there was also a new Shirebrook Town Council website if Members were interested in taking a look.

The Chair wished everyone a happy Christmas and New Year.

The meeting concluded at 1055 hours.



The Arc
High Street
Clowne
Derbyshire
S43 4JY

Key Decisions & Items to be Considered in Private

To be made under the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

Published on: 3rd January 2017

INTRODUCTION

The list attached sets out decisions that are termed as “Key Decisions” at least 28 calendar days before they are due to be taken by the Executive or an officer under delegated powers.

Preparation of the list helps Executive to programme its work. The purpose of the list is to give notice and provide an opportunity for consultation on the issues to be discussed. The list is updated each month with the period of the list being rolled forward by one month and republished. The list is available for public inspection at The Arc, High Street, Clowne, S43 4JY. Copies of the list can be obtained from Sarah Sternberg, Assistant Director – Governance & Monitoring Officer at this address or by email to sarah.sternberg@bolsover.gov.uk.

The list can also be accessed from the Council’s website at www.bolsover.gov.uk. The Executive is allowed to make urgent decisions which do not appear in the list, however, a notice will be published at The Arc and on the Council’s website explaining the reasons for the urgent decisions. Please note that the decision dates are indicative and are subject to change.

The names of Executive members are as follows:

Councillor A.M. Syrett - Leader
Councillor M. Dooley – Deputy Leader
Councillor T. Connerton
Councillor S.W. Fritchley
Councillor B.R. Murray-Carr
Councillor K. Reid
Councillor M.J. Ritchie

The Executive agenda and reports are available for inspection by the public five clear days prior to the meeting of the Executive. The papers can be seen at The Arc at the above address. The papers are also available on the Council’s website referred to above. Background papers are listed on each report submitted to the Executive and members of the public are entitled to see these documents unless they contain exempt or confidential information. The report also contains the name and telephone number of a contact officer.

Meetings of the Executive are open to the public and usually take place in the Chamber Suites at The Arc. Occasionally there are items included on the agenda which are exempt and for those items the public will be asked to leave the meeting. This list shows where this is intended and the reason why the reports are exempt or confidential. Members of the public may make representations to the Assistant Director – Governance, Solicitor to the Council & Monitoring Officer about any particular item being considered in exempt.

The list does not detail all decisions which have to be taken by the Executive, only “Key Decisions”. In these Rules a “Key Decision” means an executive decision, which is likely:

- (1) to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council’s budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
- (2) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the District.

In determining the meaning of “significant” the Council must have regard to any guidance for the time being issued by the Secretary of State. The Council has decided that income or expenditure of £50,000 or more is significant.

The dates for meetings of Executive in 2016/17 are as follows:

2017 3 January
30 January
27 February
27 March
24 April
22 May

The Council hereby gives notice of its intention to make the following Key Decisions and/or decisions to be considered in private:

<i>Matter in respect of which a decision will be taken</i>	<i>Decision-maker</i>	<i>Date of Decision</i>	<i>Documents to be considered</i>	<i>Contact Officer</i>	<i>Is this decision a Key Decision?</i>	<i>Is this decision to be heard in public or private session</i>
CCTV To consider future options for CCTV in the District	Executive	January/February 2017	Report of Councillor J. Ritchie – Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Safety	Assistant Director – Community Safety and Head of Housing (BDC)	Yes – involves savings or expenditure of £50,000 or more.	Public
Medium Term Financial Plan	Executive	January/February 2017	Report of Councillor A Syrett - Leader of the Council, Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth	Executive Director - Operations	Yes – involves savings or expenditure of £50,000 or more.	Public
Bolsover Safe and Warm Scheme To approve contractors to upgrade district Heating Systems.	Executive	December / January 2017	Report of Councillor J. Ritchie – Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Safety	Assistant Director – Community Safety and Head of Housing (BDC)	Yes – involves savings or expenditure of £50,000 or more.	Private – relates to the Council's financial or business affairs
Irrecoverable Arrears over £2,500 To approve write-off of irrecoverable arrears	Executive	December/January 2017	Report of Councillor K. Reid – Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services	Executive Director - Operations	Yes – involves savings or expenditure of £50,000 or more.	Private – relates to the Council's financial or business affairs

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Development Proposal Investment opportunity for the Council aimed at delivering new homes across the District	Executive	January/February 2017	Report of Councillor A Syrett - Leader of the Council, Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth	Assistant Director – Property and Estates	Yes – involves savings or expenditure of £50,000 or more.	Private – relates to the Council's financial or business affairs
Funding Proposal To consider the opportunity to provide commercial loans to fund development	Executive	January/February 2017	Report of Councillor A Syrett - Leader of the Council, Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth	Assistant Director – Property and Estates	Yes – involves savings or expenditure of £50,000 or more.	Private – relates to the Council's financial or business affairs
Chesterfield and District Crematorium Delivery Options To look at delivery options	Executive	January 2017	Report of Councillor B Murray-Carr - Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing	Report of Joint Crematorium Committee	Yes – involves savings or expenditure of £50,000 or more.	Private – relates to the Council's financial or business affairs

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Fleet Vehicle Replacements To receive tenders	Executive	October 2016 – January 2017	Report of Councillor T Connerton - Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services	Assistant Director - Streetscene	Yes – involves expenditure of £50,000 or more.	Public
Letting of Contracts for Various S106 Funded Recreation Schemes To receive tenders	Executive	January 2017	Report of Councillor M. Dooley – Deputy Leader, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Plan, HR and Leisure	Assistant Director - Leisure	Yes – involves expenditure of £50,000 or more.	Public
Mobile Telephony Contract To accept a tender for the provision of mobile telephony and call costs following completion of a procurement exercise	Executive	January 2017	Report of Councillor T. Connerton – Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services	ICT Manager	Yes – involves savings or expenditure of £50,000 or more.	Public
Public Art contract- Gleeson Development- Doe Lea To receive tenders	Executive	March 2017	Report of Councillor M. Dooley – Deputy Leader, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Plan, HR and Leisure	Assistant Director - Leisure	Yes – involves expenditure of £50,000 or more.	Public

<i>Matter in respect of which a decision will be taken</i>	<i>Decision-maker</i>	<i>Date of Decision</i>	<i>Documents to be considered</i>	<i>Contact Officer</i>	<i>Is this decision a Key Decision?</i>	<i>Is this decision to be heard in public or private session</i>
Joint Venture Report To provide Members with an update	Executive	January 2017	Report of Councillor A Syrett - Leader of the Council, Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth	Assistant Director – Property and Estates	Yes – involves savings or expenditure of £50,000 or more.	Private – relates to the Council's financial or business affairs

Growth Scrutiny Committee**Work Programme – 2016-17**

Date of Meeting	Items	Lead Officer	Notes
25th May 2016, 10.00 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quarter 4 – Performance Monitoring• Asset Backed Joint Venture Company• Joint Venture/Housing• Scrutiny reviews 2016/17 – selection and scoping exercise.	<p>Jane Foley, Assistant Director of Customer Service and Improvement</p> <p>Grant Galloway, Assistant Director, Property and Estates</p> <p>Grant Galloway, Assistant Director, Property and Estates and Peter Campbell, Assistant Director of Community Safety and Housing.</p> <p>Claire Millington, Scrutiny Officer.</p>	
29th June 2016, 2.00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Growth Update• Growth Performance Indicators	<p>Dan Swaine, Chief Executive Officer</p> <p>Dan Swaine, Chief Executive Officer</p>	

27th July 2016, 10.00 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarter 1 – Performance Monitoring • Empty Properties Scheme Update • Demonstration of the new Business web pages 	<p>Allison Westray-Chapman, Assistant Director – Economic Growth</p> <p>Scott Chambers – Communications, Marketing and Design Manager.</p>	
23rd August 2016 10.00am Special Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation on 100% Business Rates retention. 	<p>Bryan Mason – Director of Operations</p> <p>Dawn Clarke – JAD, Finance and Revenues & Benefits.</p>	
21st September 2016, 10.00 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth Strategy – progress update against the actions/targets within the Strategy • Town Centre Regeneration Plans. 	<p>Allison Westray-Chapman, Assistant Director – Economic Growth.</p> <p>Allison Westray-Chapman, Assistant Director – Economic Growth.</p>	
19th October 2016, 10.00 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth Update 	Dan Swaine, Chief Executive Officer	
16th November 2016, 10.00 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarter 2 – Performance Monitoring • Growth Performance Indicators 	Kath Drury, Information, Engagement and Performance Manager.	

14th December 2016, 10.00 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Authority's approach to debt recovery. 	Bryan Mason, Director of Resources	
18th January 2017, 10.00 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One Public Estate Presentation • Growth Update 	Matthew Scarborough, Programme Manager, One Public Estate. Dan Swaine, Chief Executive Officer	
15th February 2017, 10.00 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarter 3 – Performance Monitoring 		
15th March 2017, 10.00 am			
19th April 2017, 2.00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth Update 	Dan Swaine, Chief Executive Officer	
17th May 2017, 10.00 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarter 4 – Performance Monitoring • Growth Performance Indicators 	Kath Drury, Information, Engagement and Performance Manager.	

Growth Scrutiny Committee Membership –

Councillors: - T. Alexander, A. Anderson, P. Barnes, J. Clifton, G. Buxton, M. Dixey, S. Fritchley, S. Statter, B. Watson & J Wilson