

## **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 27<sup>th</sup> June 2018 at 1000 hours.

### **PRESENT:-**

Members:-

Councillor J. Wilson in the Chair

Councillors T. Alexander, A. Anderson, P. Barnes, G. Buxton, T. Connerton, M. Dixey, K. Reid and D.S. Watson.

Officers:- K. Drury (Information Engagement & Performance Manager), J. Wilson (Scrutiny and Elections Officer) and A. Bluff (Governance Officer).

### **0104. APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor S. Statter.

### **0105. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

There were no urgent items of business to consider.

### **0106. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made.

### **0107. MINUTES – 30<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2018**

Moved by Councillor A. Anderson and seconded by Councillor T. Alexander

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of a Growth Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2018 be approved as a correct record.

### **0108. LIST OF KEY DECISIONS AND ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE**

Committee considered the List of Key Decisions and Items to be considered in private document.

Moved by Councillor J. Wilson and seconded by Councillor K. Reid.

**RESOLVED** that the List of Key Decisions and items to be considered in private document be noted.

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### 0109. GROWTH STRATEGY UPDATE

Committee considered a report which provided a summary on growth in the District for quarters 3 and 4 (October 2017 to March 2018).

Fifteen Performance Indicators (PIs) were showing good progress, however, a total of 6 PIs were at 'exception'. With regard to these 6 PIs, the following points were highlighted;

#### Optimise business growth measured by gross NNDR;

This target was £2.5m by March 2019. Good progress had been made in the first two years of the Corporate Plan and the outturn for 2017/18 was £1,183,429

#### Percentage of NNDR arrears collected;

The debit for previous years had actually increased during the year by £1.3million due to retrospective changes to rateable values. Therefore, although the actual arrears outstanding at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 had only reduced by 40.4%, the total collected for previous years was £1.7m. A new appeals process now meant that businesses could only submit appeals going back to April 2017.

#### Level of income generated through letting property owned by the Council but not occupied by the Council and not including Housing, The Tangent and Pleasley Vale;

For G156 the rental income was £101,195.47 against a budget of £108,247. This was due to a six month period of vacant office space at the Arc as a result of 'Spoilt for Choice' vacating in June 2017. The office space had been taken up by Derbyshire Community Health Service in January 2018. This equated to £4,686.75 per quarter.

#### Financial performance for The Tangent in line or exceeding budget forecast;

Electricity expenditure was slightly over forecast at £1,940 (over) as a result of building works and high level of occupancy. Water bills were not accrued so the invoice for the period October 2016 to March 2017 was paid out of the current financial year. Water Plus / Severn Trent had changed the billing period from 6 monthly to quarterly, which meant a full financial year of charges were due for the current financial year, in effect 18 months of bills were paid in the one financial year (£3,396.15 over budget).

Due to ongoing disputes with British Telecom (BT) for broadband and telephone charges from previous financial years (15/16 and 16/17), an accrual had been allowed for circa £5,000, however, due to the length of time for the dispute and the final settled invoice, the cost exceeded this accrual (£4,804.79 over budget).

#### Value of Business Growth Fund grants awarded

15.6 jobs had been created to date and positions filled. This equated to £5,768 per job outcome (which compared very favourably with EU LEADER benchmarks of £25,000 per job outcome). The Economic Development Team had been working with businesses to stimulate further interest in the fund and a number of pipeline applications were expected in the first period of 2018/19.

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### Number of BNED LEADER grants awarded (scheme total) and

### Value of BNED LEADER grants awarded

Although 65 jobs had been the target at the beginning of the LEADER programme, (which coincided with the production of the Council's Corporate Plan), the Rural Payments Agency had noted that due to the economic climate, the Council could informally work to the job creation rate used by Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), which was £25,000 per job. Against the approximate £1.1m grant available, the Delivery Plan was revised in 2016/17 to create 40 jobs (although more would be aimed for). This target was still in place.

Following the recruitment of two officers, the Council was working to mitigate delays by offering regular drop in sessions and one-to-one support meetings with applicants. These were held in the two council offices or local business premises. All NNDR-registered businesses had been contacted including local farm businesses to again promote the fund to eligible organisations. Within a short time, the turnover speed from Expression of Interest to Full Application had increased and the drop-out rate had reduced significantly. It was expected that as the team settled into their new roles and way of working, there would be a considerable increase in approved projects in the next quarterly reporting period.

A Member queried why the figure of €108,606 appeared in euros in the report. It was noted that this was an error and should have been in English pounds (£108,606).

Committee also considered two graphs which were attached to the report in relation to Jobseekers Allowance Percentage Trend (BDC and Derbyshire) and Bolsover District Average House Prices (2007 to April 2018). With regard to Job Seekers Allowance, there were slight decreases in the age range of 18-24 years for both Bolsover and Derbyshire. Bolsover had decreased by 1.2% in 2016/17 to 1.1% in 2017/18 and for Derbyshire it had reduced from 0.9% to 0.8%. All Bolsover residents aged 16-64 years had remained the same at 1% claiming Job Seekers Allowance. It was noted that house prices had increased by £6,800 between 2016/17 and 2017/18.

Moved by Councillor J. Wilson and seconded by Councillor K. Reid  
**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

The Information Engagement & Performance Manager left the meeting.

### **0110. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19**

Committee considered their Work Programme for 2018/19.

A Member raised concern that Committee now required an update on the Regeneration Frameworks and this needed including in the Work Plan.

The formal meeting concluded at 1035 hours and Members then met as a working party to continue their review work. The working party concluded at 1135 hours.