

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 31st October 2018 at 1000 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillor J. Wilson in the Chair

Councillors T. Alexander, A. Anderson, P. Barnes, G. Buxton, T. Connerton and K. Reid.

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

Also in attendance at the meeting was Councillor A.M. Syrett (Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Overall Policy and Strategic Planning) and L. Robinson (Governance).

0405. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors M. Dixey, S. Statter and D.S. Watson.

0406. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business to consider.

0407. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

0408. MINUTES – 3rd OCTOBER 2018

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

RESOLVED that the Minutes of a Growth Scrutiny Committee held on 3rd October 2018 be approved as a correct record.

0409. 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.

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Members noted that 'Property Investment Strategy' was included on the List of Key Decisions. The Portfolio Holder for Overall Policy and Strategic Planning explained to Committee that this was in relation to a report regarding the approach to be taken on a Property Investment Strategy and was not an actual Strategy document itself.

Moved by Councillor A. Anderson and seconded by Councillor T. Alexander
RESOLVED that the List of Key Decisions and Items to be considered in private document be noted.

0410. CORPORATE PLAN TARGETS PERFORMANCE UPDATE; QUARTER 2 – JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2018

Committee considered a report which provided performance outturns for the period July 2018 to September 2018 in relation to Corporate Plan Targets under the Committee's remit of 'unlocking our growth potential'.

14 targets sat under the Committee's remit. 5 targets had been achieved (4 previously and 1 this quarter), 8 targets were on track and 1 target had been flagged as an alert.

With regard to target G11 a query had been raised at the Scrutiny pre meeting by the Chair and Vice Chair and a response was circulated to the meeting as follows;

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

Members feel that the last sentence merely re-emphasises previous confusion with how this target is being reported. We appreciate that the nature of the properties being acquired (large empty properties) is resulting in the number of properties being brought in to use, exceeding the target. However, the progress updates feature little mention of smaller properties being tackled which would increase the number of empties being addressed (which is the purpose of the target). There appears to be a disproportionate emphasis on tackling larger properties because of the potential conversion rate.

Officer response;

For the corporate plan period to date, 20 empty properties have been brought back into use. This consists of 17 single properties and 3 buildings.

Empty single buildings are often progressed down the enforcement route by the Empty Property Officer. This can take more time with a lot of effort happening behind the scenes.

The team's approach is to take forward any opportunity which presents itself.

The team works with its delivery partner Action Housing to help bring empty properties back into economic use.

We also continue to work with Private Rented Landlords, Empty Property owners and investors to bring forward empty properties back into economic use. We

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recently held an event with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) for Landlords and potential Landlords on Universal Credit including its implications and we are planning the next Landlord forum in June 2019.

A Member noted that the Government had announced it would reduce business rate charges for small businesses and queried what the impact of the Budget would be on Corporate Plan Target G03 - *Optimise business growth (as measured by gross NNDR) by £2.5m by March 2019*. The Portfolio Holder for Overall Policy and Strategic Planning, noted that the Government had stated that it would stand by any losses in business rate income to local authorities.

Moved by Councillor A. Anderson and seconded by Councillor K. Reid
RESOLVED that the report be noted.

The Portfolio Holder for Overall Policy and Strategic Planning and the Information Engagement & Performance Manager left the meeting.

0411. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19

Committee considered their Work Programme for 2018/19.

A Member noted that Committee needed to monitor progress with the Property Investment Strategy and also required an update on the refreshed Growth Strategy.

Another Member raised that no feedback had ever been received from a workshop held with all Members regarding Transformation. The Scrutiny and Elections Officer agreed to source some information with regard to this.

Moved by Councillor J. Wilson and seconded by Councillor K. Reid
RESOLVED that the work Programme be updated.

The meeting concluded at 1030 hours.