

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 12th June 2019 at 1000 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillor Jen Wilson in the Chair

Councillors Jim Clifton, Tricia Clough, David Dixon, Chris Kane, Tom Kirkham, Tom Munro, Graham Parkin and James Watson

Officers:- Dan Swaine (Joint Chief Executive Officer), Karl Apps (Acting Joint Head of Economic Development), Kath Drury (Information, Engagement and Performance Manager), Sarah Sternberg (Joint Head of Corporate Governance and Monitoring Officer) and Donna Cairns (Senior Governance Officer).

0047. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Derek Adams.

0048. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business to consider.

0049. CHANGE TO THE ORDER OF THE AGENDA

It was proposed that the order of the agenda items be amended to consider the Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2019/20 earlier in the agenda.

RESOLVED that the order of the agenda be amended to that as set out in these minutes.

0050. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

0051. MINUTES – 27TH MARCH 2019

Moved by Councillor Tom Munro and seconded by Councillor Graham Parkin

RESOLVED that the Minutes of a Growth Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 27th March 2019 be approved as a correct record.

GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

0052. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20 (IN PART)

The Joint Head of Corporate Governance and Monitoring Officer outlined to the Committee the suggested topics for Scrutiny Review in 2019/20 which were as follows:

1. Review of the sustainability of the external funding;
2. Review of the impact of internet shopping on town centre occupancy rates;
3. Review of the potential growth opportunities of HS2;
4. Review of Private Rented Sector Housing Stock; and
5. Review of our current spending profile across the District and outcomes achieved.

In relation to external funding sources, the Joint Head of Corporate Governance and Monitoring Officer and the Joint Chief Executive Officer explained the roles and composition of the D2N2 and Sheffield City Region (SCR) Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and the SCR Combined Authority. Local Enterprise Partnerships funds were significant sources of potential funding in relation to growth projects. However, as a Government review of LEPs was being carried out, there was uncertainty in the future and stability of these income sources. There was additional uncertainty in any funding sources from the European Union (EU) due to the departure of the UK from the EU.

The Joint Chief Executive Officer suggested that the Committee invite representatives from the two LEPs to give a presentation on their current work and their growth priorities. It was also suggested that the Committee could request a presentation from the Council's Economic Development Team on sector analysis within the District.

A connection between the review of external funding (Topic 1) and the proposed review of the Council's spending profile across the District (Topic 5) was identified by Members and it was suggested that the two topics be combined to look at both funding sources and where that funding is spent or invested across the District, broken down by ward. Members were advised that information on the breakdown of spend across the District on a ward basis was not currently held and how this information could be compiled would have to be investigated.

It was moved and seconded by Councillor James Watson and seconded by Councillor Tom Kirkham that the review topic for Growth Scrutiny Committee look at a combined review of external funding and the Council's spending profile and that a further discussion take place to determine a new title remit for the review.

Further discussion took place before the vote on this motion was held.

The Chair requested that the Chair and Vice-Chair be included in the discussion regarding the title of the review and that this be brought to the next meeting of the Growth Scrutiny Committee.

Alternative topics for review were discussed by Members including a review of the potential growth opportunities connected to HS2 and a review of Private Sector Rented Housing Stock.

In relation to HS2 the Joint Chief Executive Officer suggested that HS2 could be invited to deliver a presentation to the Committee outlining the positive aspects and benefits to

GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

the District resulting from HS2, and also suggested a presentation from the Staveley Depot Board.

Committee noted that the Council were already actively addressing concerns relating to the negative impact of HS2 and its construction. A 13 page consultation response had been submitted and the Council was preparing for the petitioning stage. This had been ranked as a priority area for review. Members also noted that the HS2 hybrid bill was not due to be presented to Parliament until the summer of 2020 and it was commented that a review on this topic could be carried out next year.

A potential review of the Private Rented Housing Stock was also discussed. It was suggested that this be widened to include the Council's own housing stock and that of housing associations within the District. The Joint Head of Corporate Governance and Monitoring Officer informed Members that the Environmental Health Manager had provided information in relation to work being undertaken in relation to private rented housing.

The Environmental Health service were developing a new private sector enforcement policy and were reviewing options for charging for works carried out in default on private sector properties. A desk-based survey looking at the stock condition of private sector housing was also being carried out. Acting Joint Head of Economic Development informed Members that this survey was being conducted by Derby City Council covering the whole of Derby and Derbyshire. This survey would look at various aspects of housing information, including for example, identifying properties with mould issues leading to respiratory conditions. The Acting Joint Head of Economic Development also informed Members that housing associations maintained stock records and they could be invited to attend the Committee if requested.

Members discussed the review topics that had been suggested and their relative priorities and potential timing for when they could be carried out. It was suggested that although HS2 was a very important subject it may be better to carry out a review on this at a later date and for the Committee to look at funding sources and the spending profile as a first review for the Committee. The proposal for the review on external funding and the council's spending profile across the District was put to the vote and it was:

RESOLVED that the Growth Scrutiny Committee conduct a review of external funding sources and the spending profile across the District (with the title to be determined at the next meeting of the Committee) and with the scoping of this review to also be carried out at the next meeting.

Councillor James Watson left the meeting at this point.

0053. 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 as published on the 24th May 2019.

GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Councillor Tom Munro declared, in the interest of transparency, that as the Ward Member he had been approached in relation to the extension to a Council property at Bakestone Moore, Whitwell.

Moved by Councillor Tom Munro and seconded by Councillor Jen Wilson

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

0054. GROWTH REPORT UPDATE – OCTOBER 2018 – MARCH 2019 (IN PART)

Committee considered a report to inform Members of progress against the Council's Growth Strategy noting achievements and any areas of concern.

The report contained a half year summary from lead officers on each of the Council's established three strategic priorities to unlock our growth potential:

- **Supporting Enterprise:** Maintaining and growing the business base
- **Enabling Housing Growth:** increasing the supply and quality and range of housing to meet the needs of a growing population and support economic growth.
- **Unlocking development potential:** unlocking the capacity of major employment sites

Attached to the report was a breakdown of the performance indicators and a summary of key achievements.

Two performance indicators were marked as 'exception' with a full explanation provided in the Appendix to the report.

In relation to the delivery of 100 new Council properties by March 2019, Members were advised that although this target had not been reached within the Corporate Plan period it was expected to be achieved by the Autumn of 2019. This would be as a result of the completion of new units at Recreation Close, Clowne and The Paddock, Bolsover under the B@Home scheme.

In relation to the target to bring back into use 15 empty properties per year, Members were advised that to date 5 empty properties had been brought forward which had resulted in 15 units of housing being created. This was due to one of these units being converted into 11 apartments.

The report also provided information on the percentage of residents in the District claiming Jobseekers Allowance. A new statistic had also been included for out-of-work claimants which incorporated Universal Credit as well as Jobseekers Allowance. These statistics were compiled by the National Office of Statistics at a district level and could not be broken down by ward.

A graph showing comparative trends for house prices across the Bolsover District, the East Midlands Region and England was also provided.

GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Members requested where possible for Ward breakdowns to be provided on the measures recorded locally such as new housing numbers. It was discussed that Members could access planning permissions data for new housing broken down by ward or parish from the Planning Department.

It was also suggested that additional measures could be included in the future such as trends in the average wage for the District and, where possible, measurements of the skills and education levels across the District. The Joint Chief Executive Officer confirmed that officers would review the performance indicators and measures to ensure that they were still relevant and would add additional measures, wherever possible, at Members' request to facilitate monitoring of growth within the District.

Moved by Councillor Tom Munro and seconded by Councillor Tom Kirkham

RESOLVED that progress against the Growth Strategy and performance indicators be noted.

0055. CORPORATE PLAN TARGETS PERFORMANCE UPDATE JANUARY 2019 – MARCH 2019 (QUARTER 4 2018/19)

Committee considered the Quarter 4 (January – March 2019) performance outturn for the Corporate Plan targets which sat under the 'Unlocking our growth potential' corporate aim as at the 31st March 2019. Members were advised that this was the last monitoring report for the Corporate Plan 2015-2019 and that transitional arrangements for 2019/20 had been agreed previously which would monitor a number of agreed performance indicators, whilst the new Corporate Plan was being developed.

Out of 14 targets, 7 had been achieved this quarter, 5 had been achieved previously and 2 targets had failed to be achieved by their intended deadline of March 2019.

The Information, Engagement and Performance Manager advised the Committee in regard to target G09 - *Deliver a minimum of 100 new Council properties by March 2019*, 88 properties had been completed to date and the target was likely to be achieved upon completion of the Recreation Close, Clowne and the Paddock, Bolsover sites. However, this would be after the end of the target date.

With regard to target G11 – *Through a programme of targeted refurbishment bring 15 empty private sector properties back into use per annum*, 5 empty properties had been brought back into use which resulted in the creation of 15 units of housing. This was achieved due to one property being split into 11 apartments.

Moved by Councillor Tom Munro and seconded by Councillor Jen Wilson

RESOLVED that progress against the Corporate Plan 2015-2019 targets be noted.

The Information, Engagement and Performance Manager left the meeting at this point.

GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

0056. GROWTH REPORT UPDATE OCTOBER 2018 TO MARCH 2019 (CONTINUED)

The Joint Chief Executive Officer gave a presentation to Committee which outlined the financial position of the Council and gave an update on the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and Devolution Agenda, and an update on the achievements on various growth projects.

Members were informed of the future deficits faced by the Council during the future years of the Medium Term Financial Plan, as a context to the financial challenge faced and the need to secure sustainable income through growth.

The uncertainty in relation to business rates income was highlighted, as a Government review was underway. A previous business rates pilot had been successful for the Council in receiving additional income and the Council had also secured funding through a Derbyshire wide growth fund set up as a result of the increased business rates retention across the county.

Following the outturn of the 2018/19 final accounts, the Council had approximately £6m of unallocated reserves with a further £2m of committed reserves. The Council worked with its treasury management advisors to look at investment possibilities to maximise the return within acceptable risk parameters, including for example property investments to secure the best value of return for the Council. It was up to Members to determine what they wished to utilise the reserves for in future budgets.

The Joint Chief Executive Officer discussed the regional issues in relation to the LEPs and devolution, based on the unique geography of the Bolsover District with the north of the district having close ties to Sheffield and the south of the district having closet ties to Derby and/or Nottingham. The history of the Sheffield City Region, D2N2 and North Midlands Devolution bids and deals was outlined, as well as the current position with regards to Bolsover District Council as a non-constituent Member of the Sheffield City Region Combined Authority and LEP and a full Member of the D2N2 LEP.

Moving forward the Government had announced a review of LEPs in 2018 and had asked the existing LEPs to propose solutions to addressing the overlap of LEP areas.

Bolsover District Council had met with the other Council Leaders who were in the area of overlap between the Sheffield City Region and the D2N2 region and had put together a proposal to limit the Sheffield City Region LEP to reflect the South Yorkshire boundary and the non-constituent authorities remain in the D2N2 LEP. This would have resolved the overlapping LEP geography.

The Councils in the overlap area, in its proposal, had sought assurances of capacity funding for both LEPs being secured and that they would both work together for meaningful collaboration. The Councils in the overlap area also sought assurances that the LEPs would ensure the governance arrangements reflected the role that District Councils play including at the Board and Sub Groups.

Members were informed of the development at the former Sherwood Lodge site with a new Morrison's store being planned. It was noted that lessons had been learnt from issues with the site following the sale of Sherwood Lodge included the need to develop

GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

contingency plans when dealing with supermarket chains to ensure that any issues with the site would be addressed were it not to be developed as planned.

A bid had been submitted to the Future High Street Fund for Bolsover Town to link the town centre, the Morrisons development and Bolsover Castle to improve the overall town centre offer and connectivity.

The work at the former Coalite site to decontaminate the site was also outlined, including the potential development opportunities including the creation of 2500 jobs on the site. The Joint Chief Executive Officer suggested that the Committee carry out a site visit once further clearance works had been completed.

The funding that had been secured through the business rates pilot was discussed, including securing funding for a Coalite Innovation Park enabling study, South Normanton Market Place feasibility study, Creswell Station Business Centre and Shirebrook shop fronts. A total of £44k had been secured under this scheme. An additional £345k capital funding had been received to match the £140k funding for Shirebrook shopfronts.

Members were also informed of the achievements made by the Joint Venture Company set up by the Council, Dragonfly Ltd, which was developing housing sites in locations with marginal viability including Meadow Lane, Park Avenue, Oxcroft Lane and Mill Lane.

The building of new Council homes through the B@home scheme was highlighted as a recent achievement with 91 properties having been completed and with further phases already planned. The contract for this project would be up for review in October.

The redevelopment of Bolsover Model Village was also highlighted as an achievement with recognition that the site was a valuable heritage asset.

The impact of the HS2 route following the confirmation of the scheme was further discussed in relation to the impact of the route and construction zones on the access to sites, and the amount of roads and routes that would be impacted through the significant number and length of viaducts and crossings of the HS2 line. Junctions 29 and 30 of the M1 were to be reconfigured which would also have a major impact on the District.

Members discussed footpaths, cycle-paths and bridleways that were being developed in the District and their accessibility for different users, such as horse-riders and wheel-chair users. The Acting Joint Head of Economic Development informed Members of a Derbyshire County Council led project called Visit, Sleep, Cycle and Repeat. This project that was looking at connecting cycle paths and routes with accommodation and local visitor attractions. This was also looking at sites within the Bolsover District to develop additional accommodation such as camping pods.

Committee discussed the Pleasley Vale Outdoor Activity Centre recreational opportunities, as well as the commercial and industrial units and the valuable nature of the site as a heritage asset as well as income generation. It was noted that significant improvement had been carried out over recent years including improved security, and it was noted that in recent years the facility had generated a surplus.

GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

A query was raised in relation to the Sports Direct site at Shirebrook and its future. The Joint Chief Executive Officer informed Members that he would be meeting with the Sports Direct Management to establish further information.

Moved by Councillor Tom Munro and seconded by Councillor Tom Kirkham.

RESOLVED that the presentation be noted.

0057. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20 (CONTINUED)

The Joint Head of Corporate Governance and Monitoring Officer outlined to Members the Committee Work Programme that had been drafted for the year and advised Members that the Scrutiny and Elections Officer was looking to schedule an extra meeting in January 2020 to ensure that review work would be carried out in the most efficient manner. Members were advised that meetings may be cancelled where there is no formal business however, informal meetings may continue in order for the review work to be progressed.

Moved by Councillor Tom Munro and seconded by Councillor Tricia Clough

RESOLVED that Members note the report and the programme attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

The meeting concluded at 1155 hours.