

LOCAL GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Local Growth Scrutiny Committee of Bolsover District Council held in the Council Chamber, The Arc, Clowne on Wednesday 20th October 2021 at 10:00 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillor Jen Wilson in the Chair

Councillors Derek Adams, Tracey Cannon, Jim Clifton, Paul Cooper (Vice-Chair) and David Dixon.

Officers: Chris Fridlington (Assistant Director of Development and Planning), Jo Wilson (Scrutiny and Elections Officer) and Tom Scott (Governance Officer).

Also in attendance at the meeting were Councillor Clive Moesby (Portfolio Holder – Finance) and Councillor Liz Smyth (Portfolio Holder - Growth/Economic Development).

The Portfolio Holder - Growth/Economic Development and the Portfolio Holder – Finance left the meeting during Minute No. LOC14-21/22. Councillor Tracey Cannon left the meeting during Minute No. LOC15-21/22.

LOC9-21/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Mary Dooley (Portfolio Holder - Enforcement and Partnerships) and Natalie Etches (Business Growth Manager).

LOC10-21/22 URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

The Chair had no urgent items of business.

LOC11-21/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair declared that for transparency during discussions about Shirebrook Crematorium, she was a member of Shirebrook Town Council.

LOC12-21/22 MINUTES

Moved by Councillor Derek Adams and seconded by Councillor Tracey Cannon.

RESOLVED that the minutes of a meeting of a Local Growth Scrutiny Committee held on 1st September 2021 be approved as a true and correct record.

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LOC13-21/22 LIST OF KEY DECISIONS AND ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE

The Scrutiny and Elections Officer presented the list of Key Decisions to Members. She informed the Committee that an urgent decision regarding Shirebrook Crematorium would be added to the list today.

Moved by Councillor Jen Wilson and seconded by Councillor Tracey Cannon.

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

LOC14-21/22 INTEGRATION OF SOCIAL VALUE IN BDC POLICY AND DELIVERY

The Assistant Director of Development and Planning presented a number of supporting documents relating to the draft review scope on 'Review of Integration of Social Value to BDC Policy and Delivery', which would be considered later in the agenda.

The Assistant Director of Development and Planning explained that for aspects like green energy and wind turbines, the Council needed to find out what other authorities and companies were doing and connect with them.

Councillor David Dixon asked if there were any connective gaps in Bolsover District in terms of state education. The Assistant Director of Development and Planning explained that ideas were being discussed to address this, like sixth form colleges and vocational technical colleges. He added that Nottingham Trent University were preparing a study to identify these gaps.

The Assistant Director of Development and Planning stated that there was a long-term plan to attract businesses to the District, and the new Amazon warehouse and the Coalite site were the beginning. Councillor David Dixon repeated his concern from previous meetings about warehouses being built on the Coalite site, but the Assistant Director of Development and Planning explained that the Council was trying to influence what would be placed there.

Councillor Derek Adams asked if the Government had progressed the Council's Community Renewal Fund bid. The Assistant Director of Development and Planning explained that the Government had put it on hold but might progress it as part of the Autumn Statement.

The Chair asked if anyone checked the water levels in mine shafts. The Assistant Director of Development and Planning explained that mine water studies were being undertaken in Creswell and Whitwell with a view to using the water for energy.

The Assistant Director of Development and Planning explained that officers were producing a 'Social Value Strategy' to define what the Council would consider 'social value'. He added that Members would be consulted with on measures within

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the Strategy to meet targets like carbon reduction.

Councillor Jim Clifton referred to the 'Social Value Index' target in the Action Plan and asked if the 'Review end of September 2021' target date was correct. The Assistant Director of Development and Planning confirmed it was correct and added that if £7,000 was going to be spent subscribing to the portal, then the Social Value Strategy would have to be in place first.

Councillor David Dixon asked if there were any incentives the Council was able to offer to businesses. The Assistant Director of Development and Planning responded that the Planning department attempted to remove barriers and fees.

Councillor Liz Smyth (Portfolio Holder - Growth/Economic Development) informed the Committee that she had attended a D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership meeting last week, where a 'shop front' was discussed which could put the Council in front of foreign businesses.

Councillor Clive Moesby (Portfolio Holder – Finance) spoke about lowering rent being an idea to attract businesses, but warned that if the Council lowered rent then the shortfall would have to be met in another area.

Councillor Jim Clifton referred to 'Pleasley Vale' in the Action Plan and asked why the target date of March 2024 had been crossed out. The Assistant Director of Development and Planning explained that the target date was unclear because officers would have to wait for the results of a hydro modelling and mapping study.

Councillor David Dixon stated there were mentions of 'September 2021' as a target date in the Action Plan (which had now passed) and asked when an updated version would be available. The Scrutiny and Elections Officer explained that the November 2021 version of the Growth Strategy and Action Plan would be considered by the Committee on 8th December 2021.

Councillor Jim Clifton referred to 'Garage Sites' on the Action Plan and asked for more information on the sites. The Assistant Director of Development and Planning stated he would ask officers for more information on the Garage Sites.

The Scrutiny and Elections Officer asked Members if they were happy with the design of the Action Plan. They all agreed it was positive but Councillor David Dixon stated he would like to see it expanded to include progress going forward.

The Scrutiny and Elections Officer explained that the Committee would revisit the draft review scope on 'Review of Integration of Social Value to BDC Policy and Delivery' later in the agenda, so Members could use the discussions in this item to consider how to move forward with the review later. She added that because of the wide scope of the review covering a number of Scrutiny Committee remits, Members from other Scrutiny Committees could be invited to Local Growth Scrutiny Committee to discuss the review.

N.B. Councillor Clive Moesby and Councillor Liz Smyth left the meeting at this point.

RESOLVED that the verbal update on 'Review of Integration of Social Value to BDC Policy and Delivery' be noted.

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LOC15-21/22 UPDATE ON IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON LOCAL ECONOMY

The Assistant Director of Development and Planning gave a verbal update to the Committee regarding the impact of COVID-19 on the local economy.

The Assistant Director of Development and Planning stated that shops and Town Centres had generally been resilient, but events was the area that had struggled during the pandemic.

The Assistant Director of Development and Planning explained that the number of people in the District claiming jobseeker's allowance was beginning to recover, but 500 local businesses listed with Companies House had now gone.

N.B. Councillor Tracey Cannon left the meeting at this point.

Councillor David Dixon asked if the Committee could see the difference in figures for 'vacancies' and 'people employed'. Councillor Derek Adams asked if the Committee could see which 500 businesses quoted earlier had gone out of business. The Assistant Director of Development and Planning stated he would include this in the update in December 2021.

Councillor David Dixon asked if there was information on District employment demographics. The Assistant Director of Development and Planning agreed to circulate this (and all data on the District held by Partnerships) before the start of the potential review.

RESOLVED that the verbal update be noted.

LOC16-21/22 WORK PROGRAMME 2021/22

N. B. The Assistant Director of Development and Planning left the meeting at this point.

The Scrutiny and Elections Officer presented the Work Programme 2021/22 to the Committee. She explained that the draft review scope for 'Review of Integration of Social Value to BDC Policy and Delivery' was attached as Appendix 2.

Councillor Jim Clifton felt that the review should not start until the Committee had received the data on the District held by Partnerships.

The Scrutiny and Elections Officer asked the Committee if they would prefer virtual or face-to-face meetings to undertake future informal work. Members unanimously felt future informal meetings should be undertaken face-to-face.

Moved by Councillor David Dixon and seconded by Councillor Derek Adams.

RESOLVED that:

(i) Members approve the Programme attached at Appendix 1.

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(ii) Members approve the review scope attached at Appendix 2.

(Scrutiny and Elections Officer)

The meeting concluded at 12:17 hours.