

LOCAL GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Local Growth Scrutiny Committee of the Bolsover District Council held in the Council Chamber, The Arc, Clowne on Tuesday 4th October 2022 at 10:00 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillor Tom Kirkham in the Chair

Councillors Jim Clifton, David Dixon, Janet Tait and Jen Wilson (from Minute No LOC27-22/23).

Officers: Chris Fridlington (Assistant Director of Development & Planning), Natalie Etches (Business Growth Manager), Karen Parker (Policy Officer) (to Minute No. LOC28-22/23, and Joanne Wilson (Scrutiny & Elections Officer).

Also in attendance at the meeting was Councillor Rose Bowler (to Minute No. LOC28-22/23), Councillors, Anne Clarke, Nick Clarke and Patricia Clough (to Minute No LOC32-22/23), and Councillors Duncan McGregor, Clive Moesby, Liz Smyth, and Pam Brown (Assistant Director for Leader's Executive, Partnerships, Governance and Communications), Jim Fieldsend (Assistant Director Monitoring Officer) and Grant Galloway (Executive Director Strategy & Development) (for Minute No. LOC32-22/23 only).

LOC21-22/23

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Derek Adams and Tracey Cannon.

LOC22-22/23

URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business to consider.

LOC23-22/23

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

LOC24-22/23

MINUTES - 1ST AUGUST 2022

Moved by Councillor David Dixon and seconded by Councillor Jim Clifton.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of a Local Growth Scrutiny Committee held on 1st August 2022 be approved as a correct record.

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LOC25-22/23

MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 8TH SEPTEMBER 2022

Moved by Councillor Tom Kirkham and seconded by Councillor David Dixon.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of an Extraordinary Local Growth Scrutiny Committee held on 8th September 2022 be approved as a correct record.

LOC26-22/23

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 Tom Kirkham and seconded by Councillor David Dixon.

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

LOC27-22/23

UPDATE ON BUSINESS GROWTH STRATEGY

The Assistant Director Development & Planning and the Business Growth Manager provided an update to Members on current progress against the Business Growth Strategy.

Key points of discussion included:

2.2 External Funding – various bids had been made recently with officers now awaiting approval of the investment plan for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). The bid to the Cultural Development Fund had been a 2-stage process and if successful with the stage 2 bid, would support the renewal of Shirebrook Market Place.

2.6 The Rural England Prosperity Fund – these monies had been allocated in addition to the UKSPF and would support rural businesses, infrastructure, community infrastructure and could be spent in communities of less than 10k population, so it may not be spent directly in Bolsover and Shirebrook, but instead in Clowne, South Normanton and smaller villages, which would be eligible.

2.11 An internal candidate had been appointed to the Senior Economic Development Officer (Pleasley Vale Mills) role, to lead on the preparation of re/development proposals for the Mills complex.

2.20 It was noted that the Future Skills Hub would be discussed later during in exempt business.

2.27 Planning permission had now been given for the proposed Crematorium so work was now progressing on the detailed designs and procurement of the contractor for delivery.

Following presentation of the report, Members asked a range of questions:

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Q: What progress has there been with Clowne Garden Village?

A: It is still a corporate priority and a key deliverable within the Local Plan and the Council continue to try and deliver on the site. In order to mitigate the known risks with the site as a result of highways requirements, the Council is also now progressing with Growth Plans for Shirebrook and Creswell.

Q: Officers have mentioned the Cultural Development Fund, can Members have sight of the proposals before they are submitted, to ensure local concerns have been considered. Due to known current issues at Pleasley Pit reserve and projects within the Doe Lea/Glapwell area the Fund may be able to support project ideas.

A: There is an officer working group meeting to ensure links to the work of the Arts Officer and Leisure. Members are welcome to get in touch with the Development team.

Q: Will the Rural Fund be similar to the previous ERDF monies?

A: Essentially yes the two funding streams are very similar. The Rural England Prosperity Fund is designed to replace the previous LEADER monies. For ease the amount awarded is added on to the UKSPF allocation. It was noted however, that the Rural Fund monies would not be available until April 23. The first part of the UKSPF monies should be available in October 22, with rural monies available from April 23. The Council would receive a capital pot to support businesses. The monies wouldn't be available to populations of over 10k but surrounding communities would be eligible. The Tourism Officer was currently organising two consultation events due to take place on the 17th and 27th October. The Investment Plan would be submitted by officers around mid-November with businesses expected to provide an element of match funding to the grants requested. The funding would run as a grant pot rather than a commissioning process. Businesses were being encouraged to get in touch now so that the Council were aware of possible investments and could ensure the best source of funding was being accessed.

Q: Would the Rural Fund support infrastructure development within the villages?

A: Further detail was awaited on the criteria for the fund.

Q: Members have previously had officers coming out to meetings in the more rural areas but this seemed to have stopped. Where will the consultation events mentioned take place, will it be accessible for the villages?

A: Aware that previously officers from the Partnerships team have carried out more specific engagement work. Officers from Development will consider more rural locations for events, the key is having a venue large enough to accommodate attendees. Any guidance on rural venues would be greatly received.

Q: Would a new start business be eligible for the Rural Fund monies or just established businesses?

A: It is likely that new start businesses would be better directed to specific funding streams aimed at Start-ups.

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Q: Within the report at point 2.35 the wording appears incomplete. Could the officer clarify the details re the development at Horizon 29?

A: The officer clarified that there is one plot being built out for Peak Pharmacies, and the other is progressing but under a non-disclosure agreement with the agent, so the Council have no other information at this time.

(Assistant Director of Development & Planning/ Business Growth Manager)

Councillor Jen Wilson in the Chair

LOC28-22/23

REVIEW OF BOLSOVER TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION FRAMEWORK

The Assistant Director of Development and Planning and the Business Growth Manager presented a review of Bolsover Town Centre Framework, acknowledging the Committee's original review plan to take each town area in turn.

Officers noted that when completing the recent Levelling Up Bid the Framework could not be relied upon due to the age of the document, and additional work had been commissioned to develop the proposals in the Bid.

As agreed at the previous meeting, officers had produced a scorecard analysing progress against the various elements of the Framework. On reflection the Framework document hadn't guided development and many elements remained undelivered, as the document had been aspirational in nature requiring additional buy-in from Town and Parish Councils to engage in development plans themselves. Where funding had not been in place, many ideas had been difficult to deliver.

It was noted that the previous Regeneration Frameworks to some extent also sat outside a wider strategy for development and there was not a bank of costed projects ready to put forward to support the area.

Officers confirmed that Consultation had recently taken place prior to the Bids being submitted and this showed that there was lots of interest from residents and business owners in redevelopment of the town centre.

During the Q and A session, Members raised a number of concerns in relation to the strategic housing developments taking place and their impact on the locality.

Q: Are there plans in place to widen the highway near to the new developments commencing off Welbeck Road, as a recent journey taken had shown that the road could not accommodate extra traffic.

A: The Assistant Director of Development & Planning noted that there was lots of detail in the Local Plan in relation to required highways improvements but that this required a lead from DCC Highways. An original plan had been to develop a road through the old Sherwood Lodge site as part of its redevelopment in order to try and improve traffic flow. Members were asked to consider to what extent they wanted to reduce traffic within the centre potentially via a Park & Ride option.

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Q: People within the locality are particularly struggling with transport provision which was impacting access to the secondary school for young people and elderly accessing medical appointments. There was a significant lack of taxi companies locally which compounded the issue.

A: While the Local Plan and the Framework talk about active travel options, highways infrastructure has always been outside of the Framework. While the Council is aware of DCC Improvement Plan and officers are working with County particularly on bus service improvements and the concept of direct response travel via a mini-bus service. Officers are also looking at options for active travel services in Bolsover, Shirebrook and Clowne via bikes/scooters etc.

Q: There is currently a real concern that Bolsover is being overdeveloped through the sites for Bolsover North and Keepmoat without sufficient infrastructure being added. There are serious sewage problems where the network clearly cannot cope and raw sewage is coming back up into houses, with both companies serving the area refusing to take responsibility. In addition, on the Keepmoat development where houses have been developed with longer private driveways these are already disintegrating and only the main road through the estate is adopted.

A: The water companies serving the area have a statutory duty to ensure that the sewage network can cope with additional housing as it is approved. Homeowners should ideally be contacting the builders in relation to specific issues, and the water companies directly where there are service issues. The amount of bedrock within this area of the District does cause an issue with surface water drainage which often goes in to the main drainage adding pressure to the local system.

Comment: The housing currently coming forward appears very limited in terms of affordable housing provision. This was a serious concern given rising living costs. Why do the developments coming forward not have more affordable options?

Comment: Bolsover is classed as a market town but people are not shopping in the town. Traffic through the centre of town is too vast especially if there are issues on the motorway. Additional crossing points are needed in the Market Place car park to ensure pedestrian safety. It is starting to feel more like a dormitory town, rather than a main local centre.

Q: Even as a non-local Ward Member, very concerned about the quality of the developments coming forward and the Council needs to intervene where developers are not addressing poor quality construction.

A: The Planning department can only intervene to a certain extent i.e. Building Control should not sign off work that does not meet the required standard, and does not meet the requirements of the planning permission granted. All roads should be completed to a base level to ensure usability before final finish. In some cases there is also a reliance on the homeowners challenging developers as part of their negotiations. They also have the NHBC cover that comes with all new build properties.

Q: There is a big issue with pedestrianised areas throughout the centre. Old Bolsover Town Council (OBTC) had money for specific bollards but DCC Highways wouldn't let OBTC move forward with installation. The town is supposed to be a conservation area

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but when works are being completed DCC Highways are allowing basic tarmac to be put down rather than replace the paving/highways design agreed.

A: Yes this is an issue re Highways and they are currently under-resourced. We have similar issues where we are trying to get cycle tracks put in due to the revenue costs to DCC once they are in place. We have the capital available for the tracks but they won't take on the projects due to the maintenance element.

Q: Could we have a growth statement for each area highlighting opportunities and risks? If this was in table format it would be easier to monitor and amend as required.

Q: As a Ward Member I'm aware that DCC often go against conservation rules for their own work but enforce them when it comes to local businesses completing work. How do we get them to cooperate?

A: The Town Council can still do their work around, access, traffic flow, highways surfaces and toilet provision etc. It just needs to be co-ordinated, OBTC will still be able to progress certain projects if the Levelling Up Fund bid doesn't move forward. The Tourism Officer is looking at toilet provision needs within the centre so this can be addressed.

Q: What about youth provision?

A: This has been taken in to consideration when producing the Delivery Plan for the Shared Prosperity Fund. Once the Plan has been approved then work will be commissioned and this includes youth diversionary activities.

Comment: The Policy Officer noted that in relation to the discussion on public toilet provision, there were situations when the key for facilities in the Contact Centre was not always easily available if there was a queue at reception. This needed to be raised with the Customer Service Manager.

Comment: A Ward Councillor noted how OBTC had been hoping to install automatic bollards to improve safety within certain areas of the centre, but again this required DCC permission. It was noted that access had been safer prior to the area being pedestrianised due to how pavements had been situated.

Comment: A Ward Councillor felt any revised document needed to make reference to current issues including Food Banks, Warm Banks, and accessibility via public transport.

Moved by Councillor David Dixon and seconded by Councillor Janet Tait

RESOLVED that (1) the contents of the report be noted,

(2) The findings of this report be compared with the forthcoming reviews of the remaining Regeneration Frameworks to inform next steps,

(3) An additional meeting be convened once the outcome of the UKSPF and Levelling Up Fund Bids is known as this will determine what a replacement plan for Bolsover should contain.

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(Assistant Director of Development & Planning/ Business Growth Manager/ Scrutiny & Elections Officer)

Councillor Rose Bowler and the Policy Officer left the meeting.

LOC29-22/23 REVIEW OF INTEGRATION OF SOCIAL VALUE TO BDC POLICY AND DELIVERY – EXECUTIVE RESPONSE

The Scrutiny & Elections Officer updated Members on the outcome of submitting the recent scrutiny review to Executive. Executive had agreed to approve all recommendations of the review and as such the review would now move in to its monitoring phase.

RESOLVED that (1) Members note Executive's Response to the Review of Integration of Social Value to BDC Policy and Delivery,

(2) Members make its report and findings public, in accordance with Part 4.5.17(4) of the Constitution,

(3) Officers monitor progress on the recommendations and report in six and twelve months' time highlighting exceptions to delivery, in accordance with Part 3.6(1) of the Constitution.

(Scrutiny & Elections Officer)

LOC30-22/23 WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23

Committee considered their proposed work programme for 2022/23. It was noted that a number of proposed items were impacted by external factors which may affect the opportunity to receive those reports as planned.

Moved by Councillor Jen Wilson and seconded by Councillor Tom Kirkham.

RESOLVED that the Work Programme 2022/23 be approved and noted, with proposed agenda items rescheduled where required.

(Scrutiny & Elections Officer)

LOC31-22/23 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

Moved by Councillor David Dixon and seconded by Councillor Janet Tait

RESOLVED that under Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the stated Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act and it is not in the public interest for that to be revealed. [The category of exempt information is stated after each Minute].

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LOC32-22/23

CALL-IN OF DECISION EX41-22/23 - FUTURE SKILLS HUB EXEMPT PARAGRAPH 3

The Scrutiny & Elections Officer outlined the Call-In process and proceedings to take place.

The decision by Executive had been called in by Scrutiny Members, Councillors Tom Kirkham, Tricia Clough and Derek Adams.

Councillor Tom Kirkham questioned why Proposal 1 had been chosen as the preferred site for the Future Skills Hub. He stated that in his opinion, Proposal 2 was the better option and that the officer's report indicated that this site would have a bigger impact. He requested more clarity of the decision made by Executive.

Councillor Tom Kirkham read out a message from Councillor Derek Adams, a signatory of the Notice of Call-In Request, commenting on the need to create a relationship with providers (as per Proposal 2) that were willing to develop post-16 education provision within the District.

Councillor Tricia Clough, a signatory of the Notice of Call-In Request, requested further clarity and commented that the larger premises in Proposal 2 could offer more educational and funding opportunities. She felt that the Council should remain cautious and that care would need to be taken to ensure that partnership links were made with those offering the best outcomes. She welcomed the opportunities being made available in relation to the training on offer which could be accommodated at the site in Proposal 2. She asked that the Executive reconsider its decision.

Scrutiny Members heard evidence from the Executive Director of Strategy & Development, the Assistant Director of Development & Planning and the Portfolio Holder for Growth/Economic Development.

Members raised further questions to which the Executive Director for Strategy & Development, the Assistant Director of Development & Planning and the Portfolio Holder – Growth/Economic Development, replied.

The signatories again summarised what they considered the positives and negatives were of the two proposals and why they consequently felt the decision should be reconsidered by Executive.

Scrutiny Members concluded that based on the evidence presented there was sufficient evidence that Executive should reconsider their decision as the proposal chosen did not offer the range of outcomes desired.

Moved by Councillor Jim Clifton and seconded by Councillor David Dixon

RESOLVED that the matter be referred back to Executive for reconsideration, as based on the issues raised in the Call-In, the evidence presented and Member considerations, the Scrutiny Committee finds:

- there was lack of clarity in the original report with the reasoning for the decision unclear;

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- the option chosen provided more limited outcomes, most notably the lack of Post-16 provision, and did not meet the wider objectives of Vision Bolsover;
- there was lack of consultation and wider oversight with Members outside of Executive, with the opportunity for pre-decision scrutiny not taken;
- that Proposal 2 within the original report is considered to be the better option offering greater opportunity to achieve key objectives within both Vision Bolsover and the Business Growth Strategy and would urge Executive to reconsider and amend their decision accordingly

(Executive Director of Strategy & Development/ Assistant Director of Development & Planning)

The formal part of the meeting concluded at 1255 hours and Members then met as a working party to continue their review work. The Informal meeting closed at 1258 hours.