

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 20th November 2019 at 1000 hours.

Members:-

Councillor Jen Wilson in the Chair

Councillors Tricia Clough, David Dixon, Graham Parkin (left during Minute 0451), Tom Munro (left during Minute 0450), Derek Adams, Jim Clifton, Tom Kirkham and Chris Kane.

Officers:-

Dan Swaine (Chief Executive Officer) (to minute 0450), Kath Drury (Information, Engagement & Performance Manager) (to minute 0450), Joanne Wilson (Scrutiny & Elections Officer) and Tom Scott (Governance Officer).

Also in attendance at the meeting was Sajeeda Rose (D2N2 Chief Executive Officer) (for minute number 0448).

0441. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Liz Smyth, Peter Roberts and Mary Dooley.

0442. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business to consider.

0443. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

0444. MINUTES 16th OCTOBER

Moved by Councillor Tom Munro and seconded by Councillor Chris Kane
RESOLVED that the Minutes of a Growth Scrutiny Committee held on 16th October 2019 be approved as a correct record.

0445. 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.

The Scrutiny & Elections Officer circulated an updated version of the List and informed Members that the items originally listed in November 2019 for a Housing

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Repairs Establishment Review and a Payment Card Industry Data Security Update had been removed from the list as these issues had now been addressed. The item in relation to a Roofing Repair Contract had also been moved from the November 2019 Executive meeting to the December 2019 meeting.

Moved by Councillor Tom Munro and seconded by Councillor Chris Kane
RESOLVED that the List of Key Decisions and items to be considered in private document be noted.

0446. CHANGE TO ORDER OF BUSINESS ON AGENDA

The Chair proposed a change to the order of business to that stated on the agenda. Agenda item 7, Corporate Plan Targets would be considered before agenda item 6, D2N2 Briefing.

0447. CORPORATE PLAN TARGETS PERFORMANCE UPDATE – JULY 2019 TO SEPTEMBER 2019 (QUARTER 2 - 2019/20)

Committee considered a report with regard to Corporate Plan Targets Performance Update for Quarter 2 (July to September 2019) presented by the Information, Engagement & Performance Manager.

The report contained outturns for the Corporate Plan 2019-2020 targets which sat beneath the 'unlocking our growth potential' corporate aim as of 30th September 2019. There were 7 targets in total, with 6 on track and 1 on alert.

The Information, Engagement & Performance Manager explained that the target '*G11 - Through a programme of targeted refurbishment bring 10 empty private sector properties back into use per annum*' was on alert because no properties had been brought back into use this quarter. However, 7 properties were currently in the process of being brought back into use and when completed, would create 12 units of accommodation.

A Member referred to the old Co-op in Whitwell which had been purchased by Action Housing to be converted into 5 apartments. Work had now started on the building and it was hoped to complete within 6 months.

Another Member raised concerns around Action Housing's involvement in the work at Whitwell as Action Housing had previously refurbished the Station Hotel in Creswell. He reported how a number of locals had sought assurances from Action Housing about the clientele the refurbished Station Hotel could attract because of its close proximity to a school, and that Action Housing had pledged to vet whoever they rented the apartments to with this concern in mind. However, the Member added that there had been recent reports at the Hotel of drug use, raising serious concerns about how thorough Action Housing's vetting process was.

The Member responded by explaining that he was aware of the issues at the Station Hotel and had organised a meeting between Action Housing and Bolsover District Council officers to raise concerns about Action Housing renting their properties to unsuitable tenants. The Member believed it was worrying that the reports of drug

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use at the Station Hotel had come after that meeting had taken place, and he felt a letter needed to capture these concerns and be sent from the Chair of this Committee to Action Housing.

A Member enquired if the issue with Action Housing was how they vetted potential tenants. The Member informed Committee that in the aforementioned meeting with Action Housing, their officers had stated they carried out vetting processes and had total control over the final decision to let a property. The Member felt that Action Housing outsourcing some areas of work could have led to some properties not being vetted as well as others.

A Member believed the Committee should be informed of exactly what Action Housing's rental vetting processes were, and the specific criteria they used.

Members agreed that the Chair should send a letter, in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer, to Action Housing asking about their vetting processes and criteria when choosing tenants for their properties, as well as the concerns raised at this meeting regarding the Station Hotel. The Chair agreed this would capture the discussions and concerns.

A Member enquired what exactly Scrutiny could do to monitor vetting by private landlords. The Chief Executive Officer explained that selective licensing was one option. The Scrutiny & Elections Officer added that a Housing Bill was going through Parliament with landlord accreditation aspects to it.

The Scrutiny & Elections Officer suggested that she could invite the relevant Council officers to the next scheduled Growth Scrutiny Committee meeting, to provide Members with an update on private landlords and how the Council vetted them.

Moved by Councillor Tom Munro and seconded by Councillor Chris Kane
RESOLVED that (1) the report be noted,

(2) in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer, a letter be sent from the Chair of this Committee to Action Housing, to include the following:

“To ask Action Housing for the details of their vetting processes and criteria when they let their properties to tenants, and to relay the concerns expressed by Members about reported and continued drug use at one of their properties at the Station Hotel in Creswell”,

(3) relevant Council officers be invited to the next scheduled Growth Scrutiny Committee meeting, to provide Members with an update on private landlords and the powers available to, and duties of the Council, for regulation of the sector.

(Chair/CEO/Scrutiny & Elections Officer)

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0448. BRIEFING FROM D2N2 LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP

The Chair welcomed the D2N2 Chief Executive Officer to the meeting.

The Chair advised Committee that the D2N2 Chief Executive Officer would deliver a presentation on progress with the D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership between Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

The presentation updated Members on the following areas:

- Our Place (data on the area in relation to other nearby areas)
- D2N2 Update (investment, funds, timetable and strategy)
- Vision 2030 (“By 2030, D2N2 will have a transformed high-value economy, prosperous, healthy and inclusive, and one of the most productive in Europe. The spark in the UK’s growth engine.”)
- Capital Programme (Local Growth Fund)
- LGF Projects (former Coalite site and Seymour Link Road)
- European Structural & Investment Funds (projects for funding via the European Union that meet the D2N2 strategic objectives)
- D2N2 Growth Hub (Hubs are a portal for business support enquiries and a knowledgeable and impartial source for advice. D2N2 Growth Hub has 14 Business Adviser posts)
- D2N2 Enterprise Adviser Network (programme for schools, co-ordinated by the LEPs)
- North Derbyshire Careers Hub (additional support for the North Derbyshire Area to provide more focused support)
- North Derbyshire Manufacturing Zone (D2N2 co-ordinated a joint partnership bid and secured additional funding)

A Member enquired why Bolsover School was not listed in the Enterprise Adviser Network section. The D2N2 Chief Executive Officer explained how every local school was invited to join the network, but not all of them wanted to. The D2N2 Chief Executive Officer invited Members to inform her after the meeting of any schools they wanted D2N2 to liaise with.

A Member referenced the mention of how “over 218 Businesses from Bolsover had accessed support [from the Growth Hub]” and enquired how the outcomes of this support were measured. The D2N2 Chief Executive Officer replied that it was difficult to measure in general terms because the support was bespoke and depended entirely upon what each business asked for. However, every business was tracked to investigate the value of the support given and this information was held by D2N2. The D2N2 Chief Executive Officer advised that she would investigate this information and present it to a future meeting of Committee.

A Member referred to the mentions of the European Union funding the D2N2 ESIF (European Structural & Investment Funds) at £196.5 million for 2014-2020. He asked what Britain’s exit from the European Union would mean for this fund in the long-term, and if the Government would cover it if the fund ended. The D2N2 Chief Executive Officer explained how the Government had not offered any concrete information on a replacement fund, but if the current Government stayed in power, they’d be likely to continue the fund because they’d already committed to it. She

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added that she would consult with Committee when future funds and investment were considered.

The Member enquired how the value for money of D2N2 was measured. The D2N2 Chief Executive Officer replied that the money spent on every project was evaluated in great detail.

The Member referred to the mention of development on the former Coalite site in the presentation and how this would “deliver over 2,000 jobs in its lifetime.” He felt that Bolsover District had a problem with attracting high-skilled job investment, so was concerned that companies would not employ local people. The D2N2 Chief Executive Officer explained how the project would raise skills in the local community and the aspirations of younger people, and the businesses listed in the presentation would bring a range of skill sets.

Another Member referred to the quoted 2,000 jobs for the former Coalite site, and asked how many of these would be lower-skilled jobs. The D2N2 Chief Executive Officer informed Members that the market would dictate this but added that she didn't believe the aspiration in Bolsover District would be lower skills.

The Chief Executive Officer provided further details on the former Coalite site project. He explained that £35,000 was received from the Business Rates Fund to carry out an Enable study of the area which studies the impact of where someone lives on their health and physical activity.

A Member referred to the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) and enquired if it included aspects particular to Bolsover District. The D2N2 Chief Executive Officer explained that the LIS was more about broad outcomes rather than specific projects.

The Member referred to the D2N2 Chief Executive Officer calling some areas within D2N2 ‘anchor points’, and enquired if Bolsover District could become one, since it was well connected and the ‘Digital Infrastructure’ part in the presentation could bring the District’s technology (if it was going to be an anchor point) up to speed. The D2N2 Chief Executive Officer agreed to explore this possibility with her colleagues.

The Member enquired if transport in and out of Bolsover District and Clowne Garden Village/Bolsover North could be improved as part of the projects. The D2N2 Chief Executive Officer explained that travel was a matter for travel authorities, although D2N2 had invested in travel. The Scrutiny & Elections Officer added that Members should lobby travel authorities for desired improvements.

The Member further enquired if cities benefitted the most from D2N2, rather than places like Bolsover District. The D2N2 Chief Executive Officer assured Members that D2N2 looked at measures and data down to local District level, for example, the Hub in North East Derbyshire was put there because D2N2 knew about the employment issues in the area. The Chief Executive Officer added that there were sometimes difficulties in being a District Council within a two tier system, especially when District Councils had little say in highway and travel arrangements. However, the Council was doing a piece of work where it would identify roads that needed improvement in Bolsover District and inform Derbyshire County Council of them.

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A Member referred to the schools mentioned in the 'D2N2 Enterprise Adviser Network' part of the presentation, and enquired why it was only happening at secondary schools. The D2N2 Chief Executive Officer explained that the network was not funded to work with other types of schools.

A Member sought assurances that D2N2 was properly audited and accountable. The D2N2 Chief Executive Officer assured Members that D2N2 took transparency and accountability very seriously, and were accountable to Derbyshire County Council and its scrutiny committees. It was noted that there was to be a specific committee solely for the scrutiny of the LEP, which all District and Borough councils would be invited to have a seat on.

A Member enquired what D2N2's flood prevention provisions were. The D2N2 Chief Executive Officer explained that D2N2 spent money on a number of flood related projects, such as the biggest flood defence project in the UK in Derby.

The Chair thanked the D2N2 Chief Executive Officer for attending the meeting.

Moved by Councillor Jen Wilson and seconded by Councillor Tricia Clough
RESOLVED that (1) the presentation be noted,

(2) Members inform the D2N2 Chief Executive Officer of any schools they wished D2N2 to liaise with,

(3) the D2N2 Chief Executive Officer investigates every business (over 218) that was tracked by D2N2 to measure the value of the support given, and presents the information to a future meeting of Committee.

(Chair/Scrutiny & Elections Officer)

The D2N2 Chief Executive Officer left the meeting.

0449. GROWTH REPORT UPDATE – APRIL 2019 TO SEPTEMBER 2019

The Information, Engagement & Performance Manager presented a report which provided half year performance outturns for the Growth Strategy during the period April 2019 to September 2019.

The Information, Engagement & Performance Manager explained that 4 performance indicators were at 'exception' with a full explanation provided within the appendix attached to the report.

A Member referred to the pages in the appendix regarding 'earnings by place of residence', 'average house prices' and 'adult skill levels in Bolsover', and felt it was a sad indictment of where Bolsover District was at the moment.

A Member referred to the 2 indicators in the appendix for the Tangent Business Hub on Brook Park and Pleasley Vale Mills, which were both quoted as being over budget for the April 2019 to September 2019 period, and requested that Committee be sent in-depth detail on the budgets of both for the period. The Information, Engagement & Performance Manager agreed to provide this.

Moved by Councillor Tom Munro and seconded by Councillor Chris Kane

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RESOLVED that (1) the report be noted,

(2) the Information, Engagement & Performance Manager provides the requested budget detail.

(Information, Engagement & Performance Manager)

0450. DEVELOPMENT OF NEW PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK TO SUPPORT THE VISION FOR 2019-2023

The Information, Engagement & Performance Manager circulated a draft version of the 2019/2023 vision produced by the Leader of the Council.

The key concepts and ideas in the vision were:

- A flexible and adaptable approach, reflected by a vision for 2019 – 2023 instead of a Corporate Plan;
- Invest in staff, services and our District;
- Become a dynamic, self-sufficient and flexible Council that delivers excellent services;
- Adapting to local aspirations and acting as the economic and environmental driver for Bolsover District;
- Deliver the services promised and not hide behind legislation;
- Use the Transformation Programme to look at how the Council provides services and if they can be better managed;
- A dedicated team of officers whose sole aim is income generation
- Become more business friendly;
- Increase the number of visitors who travel to see Bolsover District's tourist attractions;
- Diversifying services and working collaboratively to build upon the Council's excellent partnership working;
- Protect the quality of life for residents and businesses from environmental changes.

The Information, Engagement & Performance Manager explained how the Leader would consult with Scrutiny Committees in February 2020 on the details of a performance framework that would measure the targets supporting the vision. She stressed the importance of keeping Scrutiny fully informed if performance management changed as a result of the vision and the framework, and explained that the framework in support of the vision would allow Members to monitor the aims and priorities, and Scrutiny Committees would be able to choose how the framework operated.

A Member raised concern with regard to 'income generation' in the vision ("A dedicated team of officers whose sole aim is income generation"), and felt that a whole team of officers should not just have one single aim when there were other issues they could address at the same time, like poverty or vulnerable people.

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A Member stressed the importance of making sure projects were ready to progress as soon as funding was awarded, and he felt there was not a place for this in the vision.

Councillor Tom Munro left the meeting.

A Member felt that because the funding landscape was constantly changing, new targets should reflect this. The Information, Engagement & Performance Manager explained that the framework would reflect this, and the Leader of the Council was very keen to involve Scrutiny in the development and monitoring of the performance framework and vision.

Moved by Councillor Jen Wilson and seconded by Councillor Tricia Clough.

RESOLVED that the new Performance Framework to support the vision for 2019-2023 be noted.

The Chief Executive Officer and the Information, Engagement & Performance Manager left the meeting.

0451. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20

Committee considered their Work Programme for 2019/20.

The Scrutiny & Elections Officer reminded Members that a provisional meeting had been arranged for 22nd January 2020. Members agreed that this be a formal extraordinary meeting of Committee, to give Members the opportunity to receive information on the various issues raised at this meeting (private landlords, tenants and Action Housing).

A Member raised concerns that reports and presentations were being sent to Members on the day of the meeting with little notice. The Scrutiny & Elections Officer apologised for the late delivery of the presentation notes for this meeting, and assured Members that she circulated documents as soon as she received them. With this in mind, she assured Members she would re-emphasise to officers the need to comply with the standard timescales for Committee paperwork.

Councillor Graham Parkin left the meeting.

A Member suggested that as well as discussing the private rental sector at the 22nd January 2020 meeting, the Scrutiny & Elections Officer could research what other authorities did about the issue and present this to the meeting. The Scrutiny & Elections Officer agreed to discuss the issue with relevant officers, and investigate the Derbyshire Forum and also research the powers local authorities had in dealing with private landlords.

Moved by Councillor Jen Wilson and seconded by Councillor Tricia Clough.

RESOLVED that (1) the Work Programme 2019/20 be noted,

(2) the provisional scheduled meeting for 22nd January 2020 be a formal meeting of Committee,

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(3) the Scrutiny & Elections Officer investigates the issue of regulation of private landlords by liaising with Council officers and the Derbyshire Forum and by researching the powers local authorities had in dealing with private landlords.

(Scrutiny & Elections Officer)

The formal meeting concluded at 1217 hours and Members then met as a working party to continue their review work. The working party concluded at 1230 hours.