

NEWARK AND SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of **Economic Development Committee** held in the Civic Suite, Castle House, Great North Road, Newark, Notts NG24 1BY on Wednesday, 28 March 2018 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor D Lloyd (Chairman)
Councillor K Girling (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Mrs R Crowe, Councillor N Mitchell, Councillor P Peacock,
Councillor T Roberts, Councillor T Wendels and Councillor
Mrs Y Woodhead

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor M Cope and Councillor P Duncan

42 DECLARATION OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS AND AS TO THE PARTY WHIP

NOTED: that no Member or Officer declared any interest pursuant to any statutory requirement in any matter discussed or voted upon at the meeting.

43 DECLARATION OF INTENTION TO RECORD MEETING

NOTED: that an audio recording was to be made of the meeting by the Council.

44 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 17 JANUARY 2018

AGREED (unanimously) that the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

45 SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESSES THROUGH SMALL BUSINESS RATE RELIEF

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Economic Growth in relation to how the Council supported small businesses through the Small Business Rate Relief Scheme. The report set out the background to the Scheme and how the awards procedure was operated.

In considering the Scheme, a Member queried whether it was known as to the number of eligible businesses that had not applied for the rate relief adding that he was aware of some businesses who had not applied because they had found the process to difficult. In response the Business Manager advised that the preferred process for receipt of an application was the completion of an online form. The organisation 'Totally Locally' referenced the scheme and all new businesses were provided with information. She added that expert advice was available to assist businesses within the Business Rates Team but at present, it was not actively promoted by the Council.

It was suggested that Officers undertake an analysis of the Council's business rates database in an attempt to ascertain why some businesses had not applied and that contact be made with them to advise them of the scheme and that they would be eligible to apply.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the report be noted;
- (b) Members continue to support the Small Business Rate Relief Scheme as detailed in the report; and
- (c) the Council undertake an analysis of their business rates database to ascertain which eligible businesses had not applied for small business rate relief and contact them to advise them of the scheme accordingly.

46 RUMBLES CATERING PROJECT

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Parks & Amenities which sought the Members' views on the future operation of the cafes at Vicar Water Country Park and Sconce & Devon Park, currently run by Rumbles Catering Project (RCP), which is a registered charity. The report set out the background to the establishment of the charity and provided a history of their operations since that date. Paragraph 3 of the report provided the Members with 4 options as to which course of action they would wish Officers to pursue.

The Chairman of the Committee suggested that Options 2 and 3 be tracked simultaneously so that the level of rent applied to the premises could be checked. Also that a new Business Plan for the Charity be produced within 3 months and that Council Officers use their skills to support the charity in the development of the Business Plan.

A Member noted that the Trustees had been offered advice some 4 years previously on how best to operate the catering project. Also at that time there had been no signs erected at the Vicar Water Site directing visitors to its location. It was also noted that the charity operated at Sutton Lawns which was an area within the Ashfield District with the Member querying as to whether they were operating successfully there. The Member commented that the type of work undertaken by the charity was to be applauded but that if the clientele could be better served by another organisation then that should be pursued. The Business Manager advised that directional and brown tourism signage had recently been installed, adding that the Trustees of the charity had struggled in recent years to run the organisation.

A Member reported that there had been changes to the usual funding streams and as a result had affected the running of the organisation. He acknowledged that if the Council were to revise the supporting role then the charity must also look to do the same. He suggested that Options 2, 3 and 4 all be further explored and that a consideration be given to the level of rents based on the floor-space and footfall between the Clipstone and Newark locations.

The Leader of the Council, attending in his ex-officio capacity, made reference to the figures contained in the report relating to employee costs and turnover. He also commented that there appeared to be little progress in reducing the amount of rent arrears as noted in paragraph 2.10. He acknowledged that the organisation provided

a good service and suggested that the Council request that a Member of the Council attend the Board of Trustees' meetings in an observer capacity. He added that if the organisation did not accept the offer of assistance from the Council then they would have to deal with the subsequent consequences.

The Vice-Chairman of the Committee suggested that rather than the development of a Business Plan, a robust Recovery Plan be developed within the next 3 months, after which the Council would review it and offer assistance if considered necessary. When the plan was finalised it would be necessary for the Charity to adhere to it. The Vice-Chairman acknowledged that the RCP was run by Trustees of a Charity but that they must help and support their employees.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) Officers pursue Options 2 and 3 listed in paragraph 3.1 of the report and that these be run simultaneously;
- (b) a Recovery Plan be developed and submitted to the Council for consideration within the next 3 months;
- (c) the Board of Trustees be approached with a view to the relevant Ward Member(s) attending their meetings in an observer capacity; and
- (d) a full review of the Rumbles Catering Project be undertaken after a period of 18 months (September 2020).

47 DRAFT NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Planning Policy in relation to the Draft National Planning Policy Framework together with other planning reforms. The report also sought delegated authority for a response to be prepared following detailed discussion and endorsement with the relevant Committee Members and the Local Development Framework Task Group. The report set out the background leading to the current round of consultations on planning documents and the proposed way in which the Council's response was to be formulated.

The Leader of the Council commented that he welcomed the comments contained within the consultation in relation to viability and that it also appeared the issues of abnormal costs and the securing of Section 106 monies was to be addressed.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the report be noted; and
- (b) delegated authority be given to the Business Manager – Growth & Regeneration to formulate and submit a response following consultation with the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Opposition Spokesperson of the committee and the Local Development Framework Task Group.

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Economic Growth in relation to the proposed support package for tourism within the district. The proposals for the development of the aforementioned support package were listed in paragraph 3.0 of the report.

The Chairman commented that the job title for the newly created role, as detailed in paragraph 3.2 of the report, needed to be given some consideration in order to ensure that applicants with the appropriate skill set were targeted, adding that the role was to promote the visitor offer across the whole of the district and not just for Newark.

In response to queries about the draft Destination Management Plans (DMPs) for both Sherwood and Southwell, the Business Manager advised that the Sherwood DMP covered a wider area than Sherwood Forest and that an improved definition could be inserted in order to clarify the geographical area. She acknowledged that the existing Newark DMP and the draft Southwell DMP did look similar but it was anticipated that the consultation on the draft Southwell DMP would result in a more specific document for the area.

A Member commented that after reading the draft Sherwood DMP it appeared to be Edwinstowe centric and suggested that the brief be re-visited in order to widen the current focus.

Members agreed that it would have been beneficial if more work had been carried out on the 2 draft DMPs prior to them being issued for consultation. Comment was also made as to why the same development process that had been undertaken to formulate the Newark DMP had not been followed for the Sherwood and Southwell DMPs. Concern was raised that because of the change in process it may not be possible to knit the 3 DMPs together to provide a cohesive plan for the district. Members further agreed that the proposed new recruit needed to be in place as quickly as possible in order to combine a district wide offer.

The Business Manager advised that under the Tourism Strategy the DMPs were divided and the proposed consultation was to give stakeholders the documents as a starting point so that they could add or delete information as appropriate.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the additional research identified in paragraph 3.3 be supported including the budget implication;
- (b) the new Place Marketing Manager role be supported, including the budget implication; and
- (c) the Committee supports undertaking consultation to inform the development of Destination Management Plans for Sherwood and Southwell, to include engaging the previous DMP consultant to assist in uniformity.

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Economic Growth in relation to providing Members with a more detailed budget proposal relating to actions surrounding the youth indicator issues identified in the Social Mobility Commission report published in November 2017. The report set out the proposals already agreed by the Committee and the ongoing work undertaken by the Economic Growth Team in supporting the Economic Development Strategy.

In considering the report a Member commented that although the priority was to target individuals within the 18-24 age range it would also be beneficial to engage with older primary school age children through to those in secondary school education adding that appropriate training was required for young people and that by doing so would grow a strong economy.

In response to queries about partnership working and the necessary skills to work in the construction industry, the Business Manager advised that there was a Employability and Skills Group to signpost individuals on how to achieve the necessary skills to work in construction. She added that there was already engagement with primary schools who were invited to job fairs in the district and that the Department for Work and Pensions worked with third party organisations e.g. the Dukeries in Ollerton.

The Leader of the Council welcomed the report, noting that there was disparity between the Council and its neighbours in terms of social mobility. He requested that in relation to the costings to deliver an intensive partnership programme, as detailed in paragraphs 3.6 and 5.0 of the report, an additional report be presented to the Policy & Finance Committee on 5 April 2018 for consideration.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the collaborative work being undertaken by NSDC relating to issues highlighted in the Social Mobility Index be endorsed;
- (b) the budget proposal of a maximum of £60k to undertake activities in partnership with DWP and Third Sector partners in order to support individuals in the 18-24 age range into work, training or further support as appropriate, be supported; and
- (c) a report in relation to the establishment of a budget from general fund underspend be supported and presented to the Policy & Finance Committee on 5 April 2018 for consideration.

50 REFURBISHMENT OF SHERWOOD FOREST ART & CRAFT CENTRE AND ASSOCIATED BUILDING

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Economic Growth which sought to provide Members with information about the opportunity to invest capital for the refurbishment of the Sherwood Forest Art & Craft Centre (SFACC). The proposals, set out in paragraph 3.0 of the report, detailed that a total capital expenditure of £250k would be required.

Members agreed that the proposed refurbishment of the SFACC was required adding that the renovation of the former toilet block would be an ideal location to sign-post visitors across the district and that this could form part of the DMP for Sherwood.

Members commented that they would welcome a post project review report 6 months after completion of the refurbishment in order to ascertain whether the Council's expectations in undertaking the project had been met.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the proposal to invest £250,000 for the refurbishment of the Sherwood Forest Art & Craft Centre and associated building be approved;
- (b) Policy & Finance Committee be recommended to approve the capital expenditure; and
- (c) a post project review report be presented to the Economic Development Committee 6 months after completion of the refurbishment works in order to ascertain whether the Council's expectations in undertaking the project had been met.

51 OLLERTON OUTREACH SERVICE

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Economic Growth which sought to provide Members with information and recommendations regarding the Ollerton service that had been in operation for 4 years and was based in Ollerton & Boughton Town Hall. The report set out the outcomes of the service giving details of the take up of the Outreach Support; statistical information for the previous 12 month period; success stories; and a review of the work undertaken in 2017 together with the aims for 2018.

Members agreed that the provision of the service was of benefit to the residents of Ollerton & Boughton who had previously had to travel to Mansfield to access such information and services. The local Member queried whether it would be possible to expand the service provision to allow individuals to 'sign-on' rather than having to travel to Mansfield as was currently the case. The Business Manager advised that the DWP would have many challenges and issues to overcome in order to provide such a service with the Chairman adding that work was ongoing in an attempt to achieve that goal.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the continuation of the service be supported; and
- (b) the aims identified for 2018 as report in paragraph 3.4.2 of the report be supported.

52 PROCUREMENT UPDATE

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Economic Growth which sought to update Members on the proportion of Council spending with local businesses and the steps taken to use procurement to support local skills, jobs and apprenticeships, especially with regards to works contract. The report detailed the current Contract Procedure Rules and how these operated in practice. Paragraph 3.0 of the report provided Members with the proposals to promote the Rules and reinforce to Business Managers the importance of procuring locally.

In considering the report, a Member noted that often when awarding a large contract a requirement was that the contractor employed an apprentice. However, if the contract was for less than 12 months, the apprentice was often 'let go' prior to them completing their apprenticeship. The Business Manager advised that there were local labour agreements with those that had been awarded larger contracts. However, she could not guarantee that this had not happened but there had been some very welcomed success stories of the apprenticeship programme.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the delivery of a further workshop for Business Managers within the Council relating to local procurement but supported; and
- (b) the delivery of appropriate information sessions for businesses regarding local procurements be supported.

53 THE BEACON INNOVATION CENTRE, NEWARK

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Economic Growth which sought to provide Members with an update on the current situation regarding the contract and future operational arrangements for the Beacon Innovation Centre. The report provided details as to the current management arrangements at the Centre with the proposals being report in paragraph 3.0.

In considering the report and the proposals contained therein, Members queried how the Business Case had been advanced and what were the likely options for Members to consider. The Deputy Chief Executive/Director – Resources advised that the Council's Commercial Team were working on the development of Business Case and it was likely that the draft would be ready in 2 weeks. The options for consideration by the Committee would be provided in more detail at their next scheduled meeting and could possibly include: potential for NSDC to deliver the service themselves at Newark or across all 3 sites (Newark, Bassetlaw & Mansfield).

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the six month contract on the existing Terms & Conditions as the existing contact for the Beacon Innovation Centre be endorsed;
- (b) the approach to reviewing the future managements of the Beacon Innovation Centre as set out in paragraph 3.2 of the report be approved; and

- (c) a further report, including a business case, be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.

Meeting closed at 7.45 pm.

Chairman