

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, 21 November 2018 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor K Girling (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs P Rainbow (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor R Blaney, Councillor Mrs R Crowe, Councillor J Lee,
Councillor N Mitchell, Councillor P Peacock, Councillor T Roberts,
Councillor F Taylor, Councillor T Wendels and Councillor
Mrs Y Woodhead

30 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.

31 DECLARATION OF INTENTION TO RECORD MEETING

NOTED that the Council would undertake an audio recording of the meeting.

32 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED (unanimously) that the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

33 FORWARD PLAN (NOVEMBER 2018 TO OCTOBER 2019)

The Committee considered the Forward Plan of some of the items that would be submitted to the Economic Development Committee over the course of the next twelve months. They wished for the following items to be added:

- National Civil War Centre – Progress Report
- Christmas Car Parking Concession for 2019

Members queried as to the reason for the delay in the Sherwood, Southwell and District DMPs being presented to Committee. They were advised that due to ill health the external consultant had been unable to finalise the plans in time for consideration at the November meeting.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the Forward Plan be noted; and
- (b) the following 2 items be added to the Forward Plan:
 - (i) progress report on the National Civil War Centre; and
 - (ii) Christmas Car Parking Concession for 2019

34 COACH FRIENDLY STATUS

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Economic Growth relating to accreditation as a Coach Friendly Town, specifically relating to Newark.

The report set out that the recently established Newark Management Group (NMG) had discussed the concept of accreditation for Coach Friendly Status and that subsequent research into that had been undertaken. Paragraph 2.3 of the report set out the criteria for applying for the status and it was noted that the only aspect where Newark was not up to the required standard was in terms of road signage for coach parking and drop off point(s). From discussions with coach tour operators they considered that: central drop off and pick up points close to toilets and refreshments; cost of group tours of attractions; and coach parking facilities were the three crucial factors in making their decision on what towns they would visit. The Business Manager advised that she had discussed the possibility of applying for the status with the Confederation of Passenger Transport (UK) without the road signage but was waiting for them to respond.

In considering the report Members commented that the estimated cost to erect the signage was expensive at £30k and queried whether it could be done for less. It was also noted that much of the signage in and around Newark was in need of replacement and/or repair and queried whether it was timely to undertake a full review of signage in the district.

AGREED (with 9 votes for and 1 abstention) that:

- (a) the Council do not pursue Coach Friendly Status at the present time due to the cost implications and the feedback from Coach Tour Operators, however, on further discussion with the CPT (Confederation of Passenger Transport – UK) if it is possible to proceed without the signage investment, it is recommended that the application be pursued as there will then be no additional cost; and
- (b) the Council ensure that all appropriate measures be carried out, without restrictive costs, to promote what facilities are available in the town to Coach Tour Operators.

35 CHRISTMAS RETAIL PROMOTION CAMPAIGN

The Committee considered the report presented by the Tourism (Place) Marketing Manager which provided information relating to the current Christmas Retail Promotion Campaign – ‘Newark Wonderland’.

The report set out the reason for the retail promotion campaign and that the idea had arisen from discussions held by the Newark Management Group (NMG) at its meeting held in September 2018. The objectives of the campaign were listed at paragraph 2.4 with the specific proposals and timeline reported in paragraph 3.0.

In considering the report the Chairman advised that funding for the Campaign was to be deducted from additional income received from an increase in car parking revenue.

A Member of the Committee referred to paragraph 2.3 of the report in which it referred to compensation sought from Severn Trent Water (STW) which had not been forthcoming. The Member stated that when discussions had first been held about the required works the Council had been given the impression that the whole town would receive compensation and not just the roads that were directly affected. STW were again closing roads to carry out further works and this was being exacerbated by other utility companies undertaking works at the same time. He cited that a road near to The Wharf where works were taking place had been 3 days without any contractors being in attendance. He stated that STW should be informed that their continued works was badly affecting the town and that contact be made with the other utility companies to see when their works would be complete.

A Member of the Committee commented that the timeline for the Campaign had already commenced and that it appeared that the decision to award the funding had already been taken. In response, the Tourism (Place) Marketing Manager advised that due to the seasonal nature of the campaign contact had already been made with local businesses to 'warm them up' and that, to-date, expenditure had been minimal. The Member queried when the decision had been taken that the Campaign was needed. The Chairman advised that due to the disruption caused by STW's works the Campaign was considered necessary. A Member noted the mechanism to allocate the funding, adding that it would have been more appropriate for it to have been a decision made by Committee.

In noting that the whole of Newark had been affected by the works, a Member queried as to whether there was a reason why the car parks had seen an increase in usage and how the businesses on the periphery of the town centre would benefit from the Campaign. Members were advised that the works had resulted in the displacement of residents who made use of parking. It had also affected workers in the town and commuters who used on-street parking. All those affected had been forced to use car parks as an alternative. It was also reported that some of the businesses affected had been able to demonstrate to STW a drop in their trade during the period when the works were taking place.

In relation to the peripheral businesses the Chairman advised that when it had become apparent that STW would not award compensation the Council had convened a meeting with all businesses affected to offer to assist them. The Campaign was generic and was to assist the whole of Newark.

In relation to the Campaign's objectives, the Chairman queried why the areas had been chosen that were listed in paragraph 2.4(i) and not the areas of: Mansfield; Doncaster; Worksop; Retford and Ashfield. He also queried what websites the Campaign would be promoted on, adding that he had searched 'What's on in Newark' and the only result had been about the Christmas Light Switch-On which was an annual event.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the delivery of the Campaign and its objectives be noted; and
- (b) the funding of the Campaign as set out in Section 5 of the report be supported.

36 BUSINESS SUPPORT UPDATE

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Economic Growth which sought to update Members on the current and planned activity relating to Business Support.

The report set out the key priorities of the Economic Development Strategy and that further support was required for businesses in the District. The report also provided local information regarding business figures and what enquiries had been received to the Economic Growth Team between April 2016 and June 2018. Paragraph 2.5 of the report set out the business events and programmes that had been undertaken with the proposals being listed at paragraph 3.0.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the contents of the report; and
- (b) the Investment Readiness Programme commencing in November 2018 be supported.

37 PROGRESS UPDATE ON EDWINSTOWE CRAFT CENTRE

The Committee considered the report presented by the Deputy Asset Manager – Estates which sought to update Members on the current Capital Scheme approved by the Policy & Finance Committee on 5 April 2018 with a total capital expenditure proposed of £250k. The report gave a brief history of the Centre with the proposals listed in paragraph 3.0.

In considering the report Members welcomed the proposals and the timetable for the project's completion, adding that they would wish to see it progress without delay.

AGREED (unanimously) that the report be noted with a further update report being presented to Committee in January 2019.

Councillor F. Taylor entered the meeting at this point.

38 EMPLOYABILITY AND SKILLS UPDATE

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Economic Growth which provided Members with information and recommendations regarding activity undertaken relating to employment and skills which were supported through Newark & Sherwood District Council. Paragraph 3.0 of the report set out a number of proposals for future activities to further enhance the Council's ambition of linking employers and schools and raising aspirations of young people in the district.

In considering the report a Member of the Committee advised that the Magnus Academy was striving to improve the examination results as listed in paragraph 3.2 of the report. They were impressing upon their students that education was important for their future career prospects. He added that he pleased to see that schools were once again beginning to offer careers advice to their students.

The Vice-Chairman commented that she was fully supportive of the engagement with Year 7 and 8 students and queried whether it was possible to more widely promote the work that the Council undertook with schools.

A Member of the Committee welcomed the report and the activities listed therein. He advised that he was involved with Code Clubs in the Ollerton area but was concerned that schools only taught basic ICT skills to GCSE level rather than computer science/programming. The Business Manager advised that she had long campaigned for a change to the curriculum to resolve the issue.

A further Member of the Committee welcomed the report and congratulated Officers on the work undertaken during the previous 12 months. He noted that the latest Social Mobility report was soon to be published and anticipating the Council's placement to be low again, queried whether information and evidence was available and ready to publish as to what works had been undertaken since the last report was published. The Business Manager advised that the information and evidence had been collated and would be made available when necessary.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the activities undertaken in relation to Employment and Skills be noted; and
- (b) regular update reports be presented to Committee for consideration.

39 URGENCY ITEM - CHRISTMAS CAR PARKING CONCESSION

The Committee considered the Urgency Item in relation to additional Christmas car parking concessions in Newark for 2018. The Opposition Spokesperson sought clarity on the correct procedure for Urgency Items, querying whether he should have been consulted. The Chairman confirmed that he should have been consulted and would raise the matter with the relevant Officers.

NOTED the Urgency Item in relation to Additional Christmas Car Park Concessions in Newark 2018.

40 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

That, under section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 3 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

41 NEWARK BEACON BUSINESS CENTRE - BUSINESS PLAN

The Committee considered the exempt report presented by the Business Manager – Planning Policy which set before Members a high level Business Plan setting out the long term aims of the Council in managing the centre following its transfer to District Council ‘in-house’ management on 1 October 2018.

(Summary provided in accordance with 100C(2) of the Local Government Act 1972)

Meeting closed at 7.14 pm.

Chairman