

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, 15 January 2020 at 6.00 pm.

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

Councillor R Blaney, Councillor L Brailsford, Councillor Mrs R Crowe, Councillor P Harris, Councillor N Mitchell, Councillor M Skinner, Councillor R White and Councillor Mrs Y Woodhead(Substitute)

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor L Brazier (Committee Member) and Councillor Mrs M Dobson (Committee Member)

44 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.

45 DECLARATION OF INTENTION TO RECORD MEETING

NOTED that the Council would undertake live streaming of the meeting.

46 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 20 NOVEMBER 2019

Minute No. 37 – EV Chargepoints

A Member commented that the Minute did not include reference to the request that had been made for assistance to be given to Edwinstowe and Southwell for the introduction of EV chargepoints.

AGREED that subject to the above amendment, the Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 November 2019 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

47 LOCALISM IN PROCUREMENT - PRESENTATION

The Committee considered the presentation by Amy Myers of Welland Procurement which focused on Localism in Procurement, the premise for which was: spending local authority money within its own economy; benefiting local businesses; protecting local jobs; and growing the local economy. The presentation set out the current position and what more the Council could do, providing alternative options for consideration. The presentation also provided Members with a note of the risks associated with local procurement.

In considering the presentation, Members raised a number of general questions. Specifically as to how local procurement was monitored and the Council's target of reducing their carbon footprint. Members queried whether it was possible to accept a local tender that, whilst not necessarily the lowest in cost, did offer the lowest carbon

footprint than one out of the district. Ms Myers advised that dependent on the size of the tender, there were some EU rules which prevented setting boundaries to only use local companies. That said, weighting different elements was appropriate below OJEU thresholds.

Members expressed some concern that tenders were only advertised by electronic methods, citing that a great deal of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) were disadvantaged. Ms Myers stated that if a tender was below £10k then a written format would be used.

In relation to what safeguards could be put in place to ensure that lower value contracts were not awarded to family or friends of Council employees, Ms Myers advised that this would be a matter for Audit to consider e.g. how monies were being spent, to whom and how frequently. It was also noted that any issues or concerns could be reported through the Council's Whistleblowing Protocol. The Director – Growth & Regeneration advised that Officers were required to adhere to a Code of Conduct and to make a declaration of any friendships or associations with contractors. Members agreed that it would be beneficial to improve the knowledge of available contractors and the services and goods they were able to provide.

A Member queried whether it was possible to sub-divide a contract in lots, noting that procurement with other local authorities may provide opportunities for economy of scale. Ms Myers acknowledged that economies of scale would be more likely with large tenders but the presentation was tailored to local SMEs.

In relation to what Members considered to be local, it was suggested that the contractor should be within the district boundaries. The Director advised that the Council's current definition of local was a business with a NG or LN postcode.

In noting the above, it was stated that SMEs often struggled due to cash flow issues and that a big contractor buying locally would be unlikely to pay for goods or services promptly. Ms Myers stated that this would need to be discussed with the Council's Legal Team with a view to requiring the business awarded the main contract paying by the terms set out by the Council. It was noted, however, that this would not be inserted as a standard clause in any contract awarded.

The Director advised that the Council would benefit from a promotion campaign, advising businesses and suppliers as to how they could be listed on the Council's Contract Register. Further work would be done with local SME's to promote where to view and tender for opportunities.

AGREED that the presentation be noted.

48 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REVENUE BUDGET 2020/21

The Committee considered the joint report of the Director – Growth & Regeneration and the Deputy Chief Executive/Director – Resources in relation to the budget and scales of fees and charges for those areas falling under the remit of the Economic Development Committee for 2020/2021.

The report set out the proposals for recommendation to the Policy & Finance Committee on 20 February 2020 in relation to the base budget for 2020/2021 for inclusion in the overall Council budget and the 2020/2021 fees and charges.

In considering the report Members commented that they welcomed the new posts in the newly created Economic Growth Business Unit. It was suggested that additional budget be made available to enhance campaigns in the district which were designed to attract visitors. Noting the success of the recent Winter/Christmas Campaign it was also suggested that other seasonal campaigns be considered.

In response to the suggestion of an Investment Readiness Workshop the Director – Growth & Regeneration advised that the Business Manager – Economic Growth would be considering this as part of their remit and would report back to Committee in due course, linked to a new Economic Growth Strategy.

AGREED that the following be recommended to the Policy & Finance Committee on 20 February 2020:

- (a) the 2020/2021 base budget (Appendix A) for inclusion in the overall Council budget; and
- (b) to Council on 9 March 2020, the 2020/2021 fees and charges (Appendix D).

49 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK PROGRESS UPDATE

The Committee considered the report of the Business Manager – Planning Policy which sought to update Members on progress towards delivery of the Plan Review in relation to the Allocations and Development Management Policies.

It was reported that work on the Gypsy & Traveller potential additional capacity on existing sites was almost complete. The Options Report could not be finalised at this stage but would be presented to the next meeting. Members were also updated that a new design policy was being prepared to incorporate the principles of Building for Life.

AGREED that:

- (a) progress towards meeting the timetable of the adopted Local Development Scheme be noted; and
- (b) if necessary, an additional meeting of the Economic Development Committee be held to approve the Options Report for public consultation.

50 SOCIAL MOBILITY PROJECT PROPOSAL

The Committee considered the report of the Director – Growth & Regeneration which sought to update Members on the proposed continuation of financial support for Social Mobility Projects in Newark & Sherwood as reported to the June 2019 Committee.

Following a workshop held in September 2019 it was decided that a new Economic Growth Strategy was required. This had been delayed due to the pending appointment of the new Economic Growth Business Unit. Notwithstanding this it was considered that momentum on this specific issue should not be lost. Details of the proposals were set out in paragraph 3 of the report and included: developing employability skills (in partnership with Deere Apprenticeships); Newark & Nottinghamshire Agricultural Society Schools Project; and Cognitive Behaviour Training. Details of the costings to deliver the above were detailed in paragraph 3.6 of the report.

In considering the report Members queried whether schools other than those noted in the report had been approached. The Business Manager – Planning Policy advised that the schools had been chosen as it was thought they were located where the money would be best spent. Members suggested that it would be beneficial to use those schools as a hub and consider taking pupils from other schools. Members agreed that the proposals to work with schools were to be welcomed.

Whilst acknowledging the Council's ambition of working with businesses in the west of the district, Members noted that additional work and assistance with the Sherwood Business Club was required in order for them to be able to engage and build relationships in the surrounding area.

AGREED that:

- (a) the proposed approach to social mobility set out in Section 3 of the report be approved; and
- (b) the Economic Development Committee recommends to the Policy & Finance Committee that an additional £13k be included in the 2020/2021 Revenue Budget for Employment and Skills to support the proposed approach to social mobility.

51 COUNCIL POLICY FOR MANAGEMENT OF OPEN SPACE

The Committee considered the report of the Director – Growth & Regeneration which sought to update Members on options for securing the long-term management and maintenance of new open space provided as part of new (predominately housing) development proposals.

The Director briefed Members on the discussions held at the Open Space Working Group which had been established at the November meeting of the Committee and advised that the issue was one that required a national focus. He recommended that representations be made for a discussion to be held at Ministerial level, whilst noting that it was unlikely to result in a ban of such agreements, but could result in the legislation of fees and charges.

In considering the report, Members agreed that a letter be written to the relevant Government Minister and that further work be undertaken by the Council's Legal Team on the implications of becoming a ManCo with respect to the need to be a freehold interest on a property.

AGREED that:

- (a) the Director – Growth & Regeneration forward a letter to the relevant Government Minister requesting that the issues surrounding Management Organisations be reviewed as a matter of urgency; and
- (b) clarity be sought from the Council’s Legal Business Unit on the implications for the Council should they become a Management Company, specifically in relation to becoming a third party influence on the title deeds of a householder.

52 CHRISTMAS CAMPAIGN EVALUATION

The Committee considered the report of the Business Manager – Tourism which sought to provide Members with an update on the District-wide Christmas Campaign delivered in December 2019. The report set out the objectives and proposals of the campaign and the positive results thereof.

In considering the report, Members agreed that the campaign had been of great benefit to the district and queried what more could be done to further encourage visitors to the area.

In discussing future promotions, it was noted that the Explorers’ Road (the A1) was primarily aimed at the German market but that the recent uptake from the travel industry had been from the USA and Canada. The Explorers’ Road was particularly attractive to tourists who did not want to just visit London but wanted to explore more of the United Kingdom.

In relation to businesses and attractions being included on the Council’s promotional websites it was noted that they must be of a certain standard but should they meet that criteria then inclusion was free of charge. It was also noted that work was now ongoing with boosting the quantity and quality of traffic on Face Book.

AGREED that:

- (a) the report and success of the Christmas 2019 Campaign be noted; and
- (b) a further report be presented to a future meeting of the Committee on the performance of the three Destination Management Plans/Groups.

53 NEWARK TOWN UPDATE

The Committee considered the report of the Director – Growth & Regeneration which sought to provide Members with proposals for the production of a ‘Newark ‘Regeneration Strategy’ and opportunities relating to the ‘Towns Fund’ and ‘Heritage Action Zone’ (HAZ).

The report set out the background to the opportunities relating to investment and initiatives in Newark and provided specific detailed information about the Future High Streets Fund; High Street Heritage Action Zone; and the Towns Fund, together with the proposed next steps listed at paragraph 2.10 of the report.

In relation to the Towns Fund Members queried how the views of the public would be sought and recorded. It was noted that in order to access funds and develop a Town Investment Plan a Town Deal Board must be formulated. This would be made up of a largely prescribed attendance list. The Chairman and Director advised that the Board would capture the views of the public and that a consultation and social media campaign would also provide feedback.

AGREED that:

- (a) the report be noted; and
- (b) the proposed production (and associated timetable) of the Newark Town Regeneration Strategy and Town Investment Plan, the progress and details for which will be presented to future meeting of the committee, be noted.

54 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN

AGREED that the following items be added to the Economic Development Committee's Forward Plan:

Environmental Services Projects Update
Planning Enforcement Plan Draft
Local Development Framework Update
Destination Management Groups Update

Meeting closed at 7.45 pm.

Chairman