

NEWARK AND SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of **Economic Development Committee** held in the Broadcast from Castle House, Great North Road, Newark, Notts NG24 1BY on Wednesday, 24 March 2021 at 6.00 pm.

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

Councillor R Blaney, Councillor L Brailsford, Councillor L Brazier,
Councillor Mrs R Crowe, Councillor Mrs M Dobson, Councillor P Harris,
Councillor N Mison, Councillor N Mitchell, Councillor M Skinner and
Councillor R White

REMOTE MEETING LEGISLATION

The meeting was held remotely, in accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

110 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.

111 DECLARATION OF INTENTION TO RECORD MEETING

The Chairman advised that the proceedings were being recorded by the Council and that the meeting was being livestreamed and broadcast from the Civic Suite, Castle House.

112 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 13 JANUARY 2021

AGREED that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 13 January 2021 were accepted as a correct record.

113 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman stated that despite the ongoing lockdown the Council had continued to support its residents and businesses. A national roadmap to lifting the lockdown had been issued and work was ongoing for the Newark & Sherwood one to begin lifting lockdown; lifting communities; and lifting businesses.

The Chairman advised that significant funding support had been secured, referring specifically to the Newark Towns Fund, the Places to Ride Scheme and the completion of the land deal at Ollerton Hall. He also referred to the new opportunities mentioned in the Chancellor's March 2021 budget, specifically the Community Renewal Fund; the Levelling Up Fund; and the Community Ownership Fund.

The Chairman ended his report by passing his thanks on to the Committee for their continued support and to Officers and all those involved in the ongoing work being undertaken.

114 FORWARD PLAN (APRIL 2021 TO MARCH 2022)

In considering the Forward Plan, Members requested that a number of items be included for future meetings of the Committee.

AGREED (unanimously) that the following items be added to the Economic Development Committee's Forward Plan.

- Local Development Framework
- Newark Towns Fund Update
- Funding Opportunities Update
- Ollerton & Boughton Regeneration
- Parking Standards SPD
- A46 Newark Northern Bypass

(Councillor L. Brailsford joined the meeting at 18:10 hours)

115 VISITOR ECONOMY RECOVERY PLANS FOR 2021

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Tourism which sought to provide Members with an update on plans to support the recovery of the district's visitor economy in 2021.

The report set out how the Covid-19 pandemic had impacted on the economy, specifically referring to tourism and hospitality and the proposals to support them being: relationship building with sector partners/stakeholders; destination development; destination marketing; and visitor insight, knowledge and research.

In considering the report a Member suggested that the areas known as Langford Lowfields and Besthorpe Wildlife Trust be promoted in relation to areas suitable for cycling, both of which were accessible from the Sustrans and the Trent Vale Trail routes. In response the Business Manager advised that the Get Active section was continually being expanded to provide information on walks and cycle trails and consideration would be given to the Member's suggestion.

In bringing the discussion to a close the Chairman referred to the excellent relationship with the Southwell and Sherwood Tourism Groups. He noted that this was not the case for Newark, suggesting that further work needed to be done to engage with them so that the district council could assist in promoting the area.

AGREED (unanimously) that the plans to support the recovery of the district's visitor economy in 2021 and beyond be noted and supported.

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Planning Policy & Infrastructure which sought to update Members on progress towards the production of an Open Space Assessment and Strategy. The report also sought approval for consultation to be undertaken on a draft version of the document.

The report set out that Knight Kavanagh & Page (KKP) had been appointed to undertake an assessment of the existing and future open space needs of communities and to prepare an open space strategy which would be used to set open space standards in new development, determine where Section 106 monies should be spent to improve existing facilities and to inform the direction on the future provision of accessible, high quality, sustainable provision of open spaces in the district. KKP had also investigated potential opportunities for reducing carbon and mitigating the impact of climate change in the district's open spaces.

Paragraph 3.0 of the report provided details of how the open spaces had been identified and what methodology had been used to assess the existing spaces. It was reported that provision standards had been developed which would be used to influence future investment in open space. Four strategic recommendations were listed together with information in relation to identifying anticipated deficiencies in provision and climate change implications.

In presenting the report the Business Manager advised that meetings had been held with some parish and town councils and local district Members to sense check the findings of the assessment. Initial feedback from the parishes had been to question what action they needed to take; how the study could be used by them; and how would the district council assist them in its use.

In considering the report a Member referred to the small villages within the Collingham ward and their wish to update their play areas. She noted the low amount of precept they had to achieve that and requested that assistance be given to them in how this might be achieved.

It was noted by a Member that sports pitch provision was covered by a different strategy. He suggested that when the document was fully consulted on that this be made clear so as to avoid unnecessary responses about the provision of football pitches etc. He also suggested that thought be given to the strategy arising out of the assessment in how the district council could help the larger parish and town councils to address, for example, enhancements or expansion of the open space in their areas. At present the proposed strategy would be a useful tool for the district in planning terms but it required more detail to be of use to the town and parish councils. In response, the Business Manager advised that some of the proposals could relate to possible fundamental or significant changes, however, many more related to the management and maintenance of the open space.

In response to how the document was written and received by the public, the Director – Planning & Growth advised that when the document was circulated for consultation it would be necessary to also issue a 'common sense' narrative to enable the consultee to fully understand its contents. He added that in relation to the

document's intended use, he stated that consideration would need to be given as to how it was funded in the future and also the possibilities of leverage of funding for future development.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) progress toward the development of an Open Space Strategy be noted; and
- (b) consultation be undertaken on the Draft Open Space Assessment and Strategy as set out in Section 4 of the report.

117 NEWARK TOWN INVESTMENT PLAN UPDATE

The Committee considered the report presented by the Director – Planning & Growth which sought to update Members on Newark's application for up to £25m from the Towns Fund Initiative.

The report set out what the next steps would be following the announcement in the March Budget that Newark had been awarded the full £25m as applied for. It provided Members with key information as to the Heads of Terms, Business Case Development and Business Case Assurance. The Director provided Members with a verbal update on the latest position in relation to International Air & Space Training Institute (IASTI), 32 Stodman Street (the former Marks & Spencer building) and the YMCA.

In considering the report the Chairman sought to clarify with Members that future development of the projects would move at pace and likely would not match the meeting schedule of the Committee. Any decisions taken outside the formal committee process would be done so in accordance with current protocols for Urgency Items with appropriate consultation with opposition groups.

A Member referred to issues he had personal knowledge of in relation to the training of adults on the latest technology in the air industry and suggested that this be considered as part of the IASTI offer. The Director advised that the proposal before Members would be further developed in the future and that it would include the training of adults.

In referring to the Heads of Terms, a Member queried as to the reasons for the inclusion of the Police Station Relocation, noting that the Council had assisted with securing the funding for the development of the station. The Director advised that it was one of the projects included in the Town Investment Plan (TIP) application. Following the Police Rationalisation exercise it had been determined that the relocation would lead to a reduction in their office square footage, thereby enabling more front line services to be provided. Their relocation would also enable co-location of Police and the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Teams. It would also result in the site being released, in conjunction with the former Orchard School site, for development in the town centre. The Chairman acknowledged the comments and added that it would lead to a strengthening of relationships between the Council's Senior Leadership Team and that of the Police Authority.

In considering the report the Chairman noted that the Plan was led by local businesses and was not solely led by the Council.

In referring to the table in paragraph 2.3 a Member noted that the projects therein were not listed in a priority order, adding that it would require more than the £25m grant to bring them all to fruition. He further noted that some of the projects would require capital investment by the Council and therefore they should be involved in the prioritisation of the projects. In response the Director advised that they were not in any particular order and updates on the projects would be reported to Committee in the June and September cycles. It was made clear that at this time all projects would be progressed, albeit some such as the YMCA, 32 Stodman Street, and the IASTI at a greater rate than others.

In welcoming the report a Member suggested that better public transport links also form part of future considerations as at present the service between Ollerton and Newark was poor and offered little flexibility for students who wished to attend Newark College.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the confirmation of Newark's ability, subject to Heads of Terms and Business Case Development, to receive up to £25m of capital funding for the range of Town Investment Plan projects detailed in paragraph 2.3 of the report be noted and welcomed;
- (b) the Council entering into Heads of Terms as set out in the appendix to the report be noted and agreed; and
- (c) the progress to date on each of the Town Investment Plan projects be noted.

118 NEWARK BEACON UPDATE

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Asset Facilities & Car Parks which sought to update Members on the progress made at the Newark Beacon. The report provided details of: the business plan; staffing changes; essential works; and the response and effects of Covid-19 together with the performance of: annual rental income; auxiliary income; and occupancy. Information in relation to: business support; digital communications and customer satisfaction were also reported on.

In considering the report Members welcomed the high rating of customer satisfaction during the pandemic. In response to the level of monthly charges for virtual support the Business Manager advised that the costs had been market tested but that he would compare this to other providers.

A Member queried whether any large company(ies) had approached the Beacon with a view to revising their current working practices i.e. moving away from large office buildings into more cost effective smaller accommodation. The Business Manager advised that they had not received any expressions of interest in this regard. He

added that a review of marketing the Beacon was to be undertaken in the forthcoming year and if appropriate, that area of potential business would be targeted.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the report and achievements made to date be noted; and
- (b) a further progress report be presented to Committee in June 2021.

119 PLACES TO RIDE APPLICATION UPDATE

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Tourism which sought to provide Members with an update on the Council’s application for British Cycling grant funding for a new recreational cycling scheme at Thoresby Vale, Edwinstowe.

The report advised that Stage Two of the application had been submitted which had included a more detailed application and business plan. The amount requested had been the maximum of British Cycling grant funding of £150,000. It was also reported that an initial notification from Sport England/British Cycling had been received but at present the Council were unable to make the information public.

AGREED (unanimously) that should funding be confirmed as expected, the Committee recommends to the Policy & Finance Committee that the project be added to the Council’s Capital Programme for delivery.

120 UPDATE ON A46 NEWARK NORTHERN BYPASS CONSULTATION

The Committee considered the report presented by the Director – Planning & Growth which sought to provide Members with an update on the public consultation for the A46 for the Newark Northern Bypass. The report detailed the significance of the Newark Northern Bypass and a copy of the Council’s full response to the consultation was appended to the report. Details of the 3 key matters highlighted to Highways England (HE) were contained in the report and that HE needed to more comprehensively and pro-actively engage with stakeholders and residents. Their attention was also drawn to the need to be cognisant of plans promoted as part of the Newark Town Investment Plan and the need to revisit the scheme design and impacts at the Winthorpe end of the route.

In considering the report a Member advised that he had met with the ‘Think Again’ Group in Winthorpe who had expressed their appreciation for the Council’s detailed response to the consultation. He noted that although the consultation period had ended, notification had been received that people would be onsite in the coming weeks to carry out ground exploration works and that HE had informed the relevant parish council and the Think Again Group of that. He requested that pressure be put on HE to commence the next stage of the consultation process as soon as practicable, noting that the overall project had already slipped to a probable opening by 2027.

In referring to the Think Again Group, another Member reiterated their appreciation of the detail contained in the Council's response to the consultation, adding her thanks for the response and that of Nottinghamshire County Council. She advised that they were an active group of residents who were developing an alternative option to the current one which would be both beneficial to the village and to HE, adding that it would meet the necessary criteria and financial commitments.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the contents of the report and formal NSDC consultation reply be noted; and
- (b) ongoing and regular updates as the project progresses be sought.

121 OLLERTON HALL UPDATE

The Committee considered the report presented by the Director – Planning & Growth which sought to update Members on the disposal of Ollerton Hall. The report set out the background to the work undertaken to reach the point where both an Agreement for Lease and a Lease had been reached between the Council and the preferred developer, Severns (Ollerton) Limited. Details of the approach adopted were detailed in paragraph 2.3 with specific requirements contained within the executed agreements being detailed in paragraphs 2.6 and 2.7 of the report.

All Members welcomed the report and expressed their thanks to all parties involved and looked forward to the Hall being used once more. Local Members also passed on the thanks of Ollerton & Boughton Town Council.

A Member noted that earlier meetings had briefly discussed possible receipts from the development being reinvested in the Ollerton area and requested that further consideration be given to that issue now the project had progressed. The Director advised that there was no intention to change the previously agreed resolution that any capital receipt received (minus fees) would be made available for future projects.

AGREED (unanimously) that the report be noted.

122 NEW FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The Committee considered the report presented by the Director – Planning & Growth which sought to updated Members on new revenue and capital funding opportunities which had been announced in the March 2021 Budget. It was reported that in addition to the announcement about the Newark Towns Fund other measures had also been announced which offered key opportunities for communities within and beyond the district. Those opportunities were noted as: the Community Renewal Fund; the Levelling Up Fund; and the Community Ownership Fund with the Director providing Members with an outline of potential projects within each.

In considering the report a Member noted and welcomed the possible opportunities for securing funding for projects in areas outside of Newark town. In noting the work undertaken by Officers to develop the bid for the Newark Towns Fund and the

ongoing efforts to progress the projects, he queried whether there were sufficient resources within the Council to develop bids for the aforementioned opportunities. In response the Director advised that discussions had already been held with professional Officers within the Council and that a report would be taken to the Policy & Finance Committee for consideration to secure additional resource. He added that the funds presented an opportunity for the Sherwood area of the district and that the Council would be able to demonstrate that they could deliver a successful project(s).

A Member sought clarity in relation to whether Levelling Up Fund proposals could be submitted by multiple local authorities should their MP's constituency cross district boundaries, either wholly or in part. He also referred to the 'shovel ready' projects, noting that the Southern Link Road (SLR) was such a project, adding that it sat alongside the A46 Newark Northern Bypass development and would help to mitigate against the impact of traffic disruption during the construction period should the SLR be completed before the A46 upgrade commenced. The Director advised that in terms of the SLR; Homes England; Highways England; the LEP; NCC, NSDC and a developer were all working towards unlocking the levelling up fund. In relation to the number of proposals permissible per constituency, the Director stated that the Council would be permitted to submit 2 proposals: 1 for Newark and 1 for Sherwood. He added that he would also wish to see a proposal submitted by Nottinghamshire County Council for a transport project(s).

A Member queried whether any information was available about a recently announced fund entitled 'The Ready to Reopen' fund and that an allocation of £108,000 had been given to the Council. The Chairman confirmed that the fund was in addition to those referred to in the report.

AGREED (unanimously) that the funding opportunities presented by the programs detailed in the report be noted.

123 MINUTE OF DECISION - EV CHARGE POINTS CAPITAL BUDGET SET-UP

The Committee considered the Urgency Item – Minute of Decision presented by the Parking Services Manager which sought to update Members on the work undertaken to secure Government funding for additional electric vehicle charging points to the existing ones within the district, noting that this scheme was for an On-Street Residents Charge Point Scheme.

It was minuted that installation of residents charge points would provide them with the option to purchase an electric vehicle and charge it overnight, close to their home address. It was also minuted that in the coming years visitors with electric vehicles would look at places to visit where they could charge their vehicles and that Newark & Sherwood would appear on a network map.

Details of the costs and grants received to provide the charge points were detailed in the Minute of Decision.

In considering the Minute of Decision a Member stated that given the short range of some electric vehicles, drivers may plan their routes to visit particular places where they knew they could charge their vehicles.

A Member suggested that when the next stage of installations were available, consideration be given to making a provision on Lovers Lane. She also queried whether local residents were aware of the charging points on Appletongate. The Parking Services Manager advised that work would be undertaken with the Council's Communication Team to promote the provision with both locals and tourists.

A Member raised the issue of the different charging connections and whether any pressure could be brought to bear on the providers to use a common connection. The Parking Services Manager advised that regular contact was held with BP Chargemaster and that he would pass the comments on. He added that electric vehicles were still relatively new and that he anticipated that work would be undertaken to developing a common charge connection.

AGREED (unanimously) that the Minute of Decision be noted.

124 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

AGREED (by 14 votes for and 1 vote against) 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.

125 PLACES TO RIDE UPDATE - EXEMPT APPENDIX

AGREED that the Exempt Appendix to Agenda Item No. 11 – Places to Ride Application Update be noted.

Meeting closed at 8.00 pm.

Chairman