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NEWARK AND SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of **Economic Development Committee** held in the Broadcast from the Civic Suite, Castle House, Great North Road, Newark NG24 1BY on Wednesday, 18 November 2020 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 N Mison, Councillor N Mitchell,
Councillor M Skinner and Councillor K Walker

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor Mrs L Dales

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor Mrs M Dobson (Committee Member), Councillor P Harris (Committee Member) and Councillor R White (Committee Member)

REMOTE MEETING LEGISLATION

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

72 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.

73 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.

74 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 9 SEPTEMBER 2020

AGREED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2020 were a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman.

75 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman stated that a great deal had happened since the September meeting of the Committee both in relation to Covid and non-Covid matters. Some of the actions taken placed the Council in a position to recover from the pandemic in a way which would directly address the challenges presented. The Agenda before Committee for consideration was one of the most important in recent times as it sought approval for strategies and the delivery thereof with proposals to set a clear agenda for the future and the important contributions of the Council, along with others, on the ground.

Since the last meeting the Council confirmed that Business Grants supporting the first wave of national lockdown came to a final total of £27,869,105.67. Also support was given to over 800 residents by the HART team. In the community, residents and businesses had to endure Tier 2, Tier 3 and then further national restrictions. The Council worked to ensure that the often confusing messages were clearly reported using media channels, via the parish councils and with the army of ambassadors out in the district talking to businesses and helping them to prepare. The Chairman offered his personal thanks and those of the Committee to those involved.

The Chairman advised that, along with colleagues across the County, the Government had been pushed to have grant support ready for businesses as soon as the restrictions came into force. He noted that, largely due to the work of this Council and Rushcliffe BC, there was a single application form to complete for businesses to access funds from 5 live grant regimes with Newark & Sherwood (N&S) being the first to launch grant support in the County. N&S were the first to pay grant and had now issued funds to 457 businesses, totalling £1,595,546. He noted that Officers had volunteered to work the previous weekend to ensure that the grants were paid.

In relation to the humanitarian response to the national restrictions N&S continued to help those in need, via both the County Council's hub and the HART team with a steady rise in demand for support for food and medicine delivery being experienced.

The Agenda before Committee gave a clear message of intent and direction for what the Council and their partners were seeking to achieve through an Economic Growth & Covid Recovery Strategy and a Visitor Economy Strategy. There was continued progress on: the Newark & Towns Fund Project and the hopefully, soon to be released, news on the former Robin Hood Hotel; the potentially transformation plans for the redevelopment of Ollerton Town Centre, in partnership with Ollerton & Boughton Town Council and the new grant opportunities through the Place to Ride Scheme.

76 FORWARD PLAN - NOVEMBER 2020 TO OCTOBER 2021

The Committee considered the Forward Plan for Economic Development Committee from 1 November 2020 to 31 October 2021.

The Director – Planning & Growth advised that there were a number of reports due to be considered by the Committee in January 2021 many of which would provide the Members with updates on progress. He particularly drew their attention to:

- Phase 2 of the Buttermarket, Newark
- Ollerton & Boughton Neighbourhood Study
- Forest Corner Master Plan

AGREED that the report be noted.

77 ECONOMIC GROWTH STRATEGY

The Committee considered the report and presentation given by the Business Manager – Economic Growth which sought Members’ approval for the adoption of the revised Strategy.

The report set out the background to the review of the 2017 Strategy and that following a workshop held with Members in September 2019 a set of key priorities were identified and evidenced as needed to deliver a prosperous local economy. Subsequent to that workshop there had been significant changes in the local, regional and national economy that required reflection with the objectives and priorities. The effect of the pandemic, nationally and locally, had created challenges that needed addressing over the next 5 years, likewise the opportunities presented through the Government in the form of the Town’s Fund which needed to be considered in the local economic development. It was reported that three areas of work had been undertaken: the visioning work by Members in late 2019; the Town Investment Plan created and supported in July 2020; and the Economic Recovery Plan undertaken in September 2020, all of which aligned with regional and local strategies, including the Regional Economic Recovery Plan and Newark & Sherwood’s Community Plan.

The presentation provided details of the priorities to achieve economic growth and the key stakeholders and partners with who the Council would work. Details of why economic growth was required were listed together with the specific goals and how these would be achieved and measured.

In considering the report a Member queried whether it was possible to bring forward the possibility of a new hotel in Newark rather than the planned 2026. The Business Manager advised that there was a phased approach to the actions listed within the strategy and that the action for a hotel was for delivery, meaning that work to secure this would start in 2021. Subject to Newark Towns Funding the Director – Growth & Regeneration was confident of delivery prior to 2026.

In relation to the above comment, a Member queried whether there was sufficient support and resource within the Economic Growth Team to achieve the Action Plan within the strategy. He also commented that he would wish to see the connection between businesses and the Council grow further from that developed during the Pandemic. In response, the Director – Planning & Growth advised that discussions in relation to resources and delivery targets were to be held. There would also be discussions held in relation to wider matters, e.g. key account management, business planning and budget setting for the following year.

AGREED (unanimously) that the Newark & Sherwood Economic Growth Strategy 2021/2026 be adopted.

78 VISITOR ECONOMY STRATEGY

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Tourism which sought Members’ support for the refreshed Visitor Economy Strategy for 2020/2023.

The report set out that the refresh of the Strategy had been interrupted by the Pandemic but that it was now complete. It had taken into account some significant developments, noting these as: the Covid-19 pandemic itself; production of the Destination Management Plans for Newark, Southwell and Sherwood Forest; development of distinct but complementary brands; publication of Nottinghamshire County Council's Visitor Economy Strategy; improved understanding of visitors and their experience; and a reinvigorated district-wide Tourism Action Group. Paragraph 3.0 stated that the Strategy could now be considered more relevant in supporting the districts post Covid-19 economic recovery and outlined the strategic principles by which the Council would support the district's visitor economy to increase its economic impact, fulfil the vision within the Community Plan and to create a greater sense of civic pride.

The Chairman thanked the Members of the Committee who had participated in the development of the Destination Management Plans, referring to the success of the Sherwood Forest and Southwell Plans. He noted that the Newark Plan had not achieved such a successful engagement with partners, something the Business Manager agreed to address.

In considering the report, Members agreed that the Committee and the Council were looking forward and that the refreshed Strategy provided a complete packed to create growth in that sector.

In response to whether the Autumn Staycation Campaign had been successful, the Business Manager stated that this had been paused due to the Pandemic and the restrictions associated with being in Tier 3. He advised that the competition was still open for entries until the end of November, following which he would compile all the data and report back to Committee on the findings.

AGREED (unanimously) that the refreshed NSDC Visitor Economy Strategy for 2020-2023 be noted and supported.

79 NEWARK TOWNS FUND UPDATE

The Committee considered the report presented by the Director – Planning & Growth which sought to update Members on discussions with the Government following the submission of the Newark Town Investment Plan (TIP) on 31 July, which was part of cohort 1. Paragraph 3.0 of the report set out that 7 places within cohort 1 had been announced with negotiations progressing to develop Heads of Terms and Business Cases. Following the Newark TIP submission a number of qualifications had been provided to the Government for assessing the proposals. A decision on this was expected during November 2020. If successful the Council would then be invited to negotiate and agree Heads of Terms with the Government, alongside a timetable to develop Business Cases within the next 12 months for all supported projects. Feedback prior to submission had been that the submission was strong, ambitious, transformative and deliverable.

In considering the report, Members agreed that the TIP showed the breadth of the ambitions and deserved the support of central Government. A Member specifically referred to the whole vision of the Gateway Site noting that this had been an ambition of the Council for a number of years. In supporting the TIP, a Member queried what, if any, alternative plans were in place should the funding levels not match the level the Council wanted. The Director advised that should the funding levels be lower than anticipated, a number of projects would still be delivered but in a phased approach and potentially exploring additional funding sources and/or structures.

In relation to the possible relocation of the Newark Lorry Park, a Member queried as to whether its current popularity was due to its close proximity to the town centre and whether this would wain should it be relocated to the Newark Showground. The Director advised that a period of consultation would be undertaken with drivers to ascertain what would continue to make it attractive to them when relocated. It would also be necessary to look at what would replace the lorry park and what benefits its replacement would bring to the town.

The Chairman referred to the proposal to repurpose the upper floors of the former Marks & Spencer site into residential accommodation. He noted that this change would lead the way with landlords of other businesses doing the same. It also had a cost benefit for ongoing revenue as having residential accommodation above a commercial premise would result in a reduction in business rates.

The Chairman expressed his disappointment with the way in which the matter had been reported on national media stating that the town should not be disadvantaged due to the fact that their MP was a Minister. He added that the whole of the district would feel the benefit of the improvements in Newark and that the plans were ambitious, deliverable and should be supported without delay.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the ongoing negotiations with Government to secure a capital contribution from the Towns Fund of up to £25m be noted;
- (b) the ongoing progress of the Newark Town Investment Plan projects listed in Section 2.0 of the report be noted;
- (c) Policy & Finance Committee be recommended:
 - (i) to allocate the appropriate budget to secure the demolition and secure holding of the existing Cattle Market site;
 - (ii) to allocate the appropriate budget to undertake feasibility works on the relocation of the Cattle Market and Newark Lorry Park to Newark Showground or other identified site(s); and
 - (iii) to allocate the appropriate budget to undertake feasibility work on developing the existing Cattle Market and Newark Lorry Park site to accommodate the Newark Town Investment Plan aspirations.

Councillor R.V. Blaney left the meeting following the above Item.

80 OLLERTON TOWN CENTRE

The Committee considered the report presented by the Director – Planning & Growth which sought to provide Members with an update on discussions regarding Ollerton Town Centre. The report also sought support for additional feasibility work jointly with Ollerton & Boughton Town Council (OBTC) and the Forest Shopping Centre (FSC).

The report set out some of the ongoing activities being undertaken by the district council and its partners across Ollerton and the wider area. Alongside and aligned to those activities had been the previous work on the proposed Public Sector Hub, a One Public Estate (OPE) project which had been shelved in late-2018 due to difficulties with the alignment of capital funding and commitments across the key partners. Following subsequent meetings it was clear that there remained a commitment from some partners to revisit how best to deliver and host linked and wrap-around services in Ollerton Town Centre. The report provided Members with details as to the reasons that the district council felt well placed to lead on the feasibility development and to bring forward the proposals, which were listed in paragraph 3.0 of the report.

In presenting the report the Director thanked all the local ward Members and OBTC for their continued support and work on the project.

One of the local Members stated that he was very supportive of the project, noting the challenges faced to deliver the OPE, adding that it could be of great benefit to the high street. In closing the debate, the Chairman thanked the local Member for his support and the part he had played in securing the engagement of OBTC and FSC in working on the project.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the contents of the report be noted; and
- (b) the outcome of the feasibility study be presented to a future meeting of the Committee, alongside proposals for wider consultation and engagement with partners.

81 PLACES TO RIDE APPLICATION

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Tourism which sought to update Members on the application for British Cycle grant funding for a new recreational cycling scheme at Thoresby Vale, Edwinstowe, working in partnership with Harworth Group PLC.

Details of the Stage One submission were provided in paragraph 2.0 of the report with the submission being appended to the report. Having reviewed the submission, British Cycling notified the Council in October 2020 that they were being invited to proceed to the second stage as they believed the scheme had the potential to help them achieve the objectives and aspirations of the Places to Ride programme. It was, however, noted that progression to stage two did not guarantee grant funding.

Paragraph 3.0 of the report set out the proposals, noting that the estimated cost of the scheme being £695,000. Grant funding from British Cycling was being sought for £150,000 (22%) and if successful, the remaining cost would be met by the Harworth Group PLC. It was reported that British Cycling anticipated announcing their decision in January 2021 with delivery of the scheme by March 2022.

Members agreed that the report demonstrated one of the innovative ideas the Council were developing to encourage people into the district.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the progression beyond the stage one funding requirements be noted; and
- (b) the progression of a stage two application, in conjunction with Harworth Group PLC and local stakeholders, be supported.

82 NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSET CRITERIA

The Committee considered the report presented by the Senior Conservation Officer which sought Members' approval to publish a draft Criteria for Non-Designated Heritage Assets. The report set out that the creation of a local heritage list would allow local councils and communities to identify and celebrate historic buildings, archaeological sites and designed landscapes that enriched and enlivened their area. It was reported that such a list sat within a broader framework for identifying and protecting buildings and areas of heritage or townscape interest. Inclusion on such a list delivered a sound, consistent and accountable way of identifying local heritage assets to the benefit of good strategic planning for the area and would benefit owners and developers wishing to fully understand local development opportunities and constraints. Paragraph 2.7 of the report detailed how the draft criteria would work and listed the common overarching themes. Details of the consultation, the next steps and the proposals to undertake these were also provided for Members consideration.

In considering the report a Member queried whether such a list would assist with planning enforcement. The Senior Conservation Officer advised that there was a graduated approach between designated and non-designated assets. He added that there was a balanced judgement in reaching a view on a property and that the list would provide clarity as to what was considered to be important.

In response to when the previously agreed Conservation Area Review would be undertaken, the Senior Conservation Officer advised that it would be brought to Committee early in 2021. There had been a delay in commencing the consultation due to the Pandemic but it was hoped this would commence shortly.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the publication of the draft Non-Designated Heritage Asset Criteria be approved; and

- (b) delegated authority be given to the Conservation Team to carry out a public consultation.

83 NEWARK HERITAGE ACTION ZONE PROGRAMME DESIGN

The Committee considered the report presented by the Director – Planning & Growth which sought to update Members on the Newark High Street Heritage Action Zone (HAZ), which included the update on the Programme Design for 2020-2024. The report set out the background to the HAZ and the delays to work commencing on the proposals and updates due to the Pandemic. Details of the Newark Conservation Area were provided and that the most significant concentration of heritage at risk properties, combined with vacancy and other key high street problems had been identified during work undertaken with Historic England. Paragraph 3.2 of the report detailed that the initial bid had sought funding of £250,000 which was to be match funded by the Council and the private sector. However, this had now risen to £275,000, primarily to cover the cost of a full-time HAZ Officer, which was an essential requirement of the fund and matches the commitment to delivering the project outcomes. Also included for Members' consideration were details of Parts 1 and 2 of the HAZ, The Projects and the Cultural Program respectively.

In considering the report it was noted that the proposals were focussed on Newark but that information gathered could be used for the benefit of other areas in the district. The Director added that plans could be developed and put in place to use the data insight work.

In response to a query about match funding, the Director advised that in order for the public monies to be released, the private sector funding must be confirmed for an identified scheme.

It was noted that conversations had already been held with businesses in the town who were supportive of the proposals and that the HAZ Officer would make every effort to encourage participation.

AGREED (unanimously) that the report be noted.

84 OLLERTON HALL UPDATE

The Committee considered the report presented by the Director – Planning & Growth which sought to update Members on the negotiations with the 'preferred bidder' for Ollerton Hall. The report provided Members with the actions taken so far to secure the preferred bidder and what the necessary next steps were to finalising the legal terms.

In considering the report the Members agreed that they welcomed the work undertaken towards the redevelopment of Ollerton Hall.

AGREED (unanimously) that the report be noted.

85 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REVENUE & CAPITAL FORECAST OUTTURN REPORT TO 31 MARCH 2021 AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2020

The Committee considered the report presented by the Director – Resources/Deputy Chief Executive which sought to provide Members with a comparison between the Revised Budgets for the period ending 31 March 2021 with the Projected Outturn Forecast for the period. The figures were based on six months’ performance information on the Council’s revenue and capital budgets. Attached to the report as an appendix was a report to be presented to the Policy & Finance Committee which detailed the forecasted financial position to 31 March 2021 of the Council as at 30 September 2020. Paragraph 2.3 reported that the Economic Development Committee had an unfavourable variance of £0.737m, details of which were contained within Appendix A to the Policy & Finance report.

In considering the report Members queried as to the level of variance noted. The Director advised that the figures given were a range of possible unfavourable variance and that the Council was waiting for funding from the loss of income from the Government due to the Pandemic and the pool of return.

AGREED (unanimously) that the report be noted.

86 URGENCY ITEM - MINUTE OF DECISION

AGREED (unanimously) that the Urgency Item – Minute of Decision in relation to the DEFRA Tree Consultation be noted.

87 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 Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

88 HERITAGE & CULTURE UPDATE REPORT

The Committee considered the exempt report presented by the Business Manager – Heritage, Culture & Visitors which sought to provide Members with an update on the results of the visitor research project and the following financial year.

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

89 ROBIN HOOD DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

The Committee considered the exempt report presented by the Director – Resources/Deputy Chief Executive which sought to update Members on the development of the former Robin Hood Hotel.

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

Meeting closed at 8.15 pm.

Chairman