

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 5th April, 2017
Time of Commencement: 6.30 pm

Present:- Councillor Allison Gardner – in the Chair

Councillors Holland, Loades, Matthews, Northcott, Owen, Snell and G Williams

Officers Jayne Briscoe - Scrutiny Officer, Elaine Burgess - Markets and Regeneration Officer, Kim Graham - Regeneration and Economic Development Manager and Jo Halliday - Head of Housing, Regeneration and Assets

Also in Attendance Councillor John Williams – Portfolio Holder for Town Centres, Property and Business

1. APOLOGIES

An apology was received from Councillor Dymond.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest stated.

3. MINUTES OF A PREVIOUS MEETING

Agreed: That the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 30 November 2016 be agreed as a correct record.

4. DRAFT REPORT - BOROUGH MARKET

The Chair presented the draft report from the scrutiny committee on Newcastle Borough Market for consideration and comment by members.

In response to a question on the methodology employed to capture the views of the members of the public the Chair clarified that a mixed approach of on-line and face to face reporting had been undertaken.

In view of the commercially sensitive information contained in the report relating to the operation of the market at this point in the meeting members moved into closed session under paragraph 3 in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Agreed: That the Portfolio Holder be asked to review full details of the competitive tender document relating to the Borough Market prior to issue.

At this point in the meeting members returned to open session.

5. BUSINESS HELPLINE DRAFT REPORT

In accordance with a request by this Scrutiny Committee the Regeneration and Economic Development Manager submitted a performance report relating to the use of the Business Helpline by Newcastle businesses.

The Stoke and Staffordshire Business Helpline is the first point of contact for business support across Staffordshire and the helpline provides a central contact for a range of free business support which includes Start Up, Growth, Finance, Regulation, People and Contacts. Where appropriate the Business Helpline puts callers in touch with a range of specialist advisors, programmes or funds via the Growth Hub.

The Regeneration and Economic Development Manager explained that a meeting was held with the Business Helpline Advisor and options to increase Newcastle business contact with the Helpline were discussed. In this respect performance reports revealed that 93 businesses from the Newcastle area had accessed the Business Helpline since March 2016 which compared favourable or was equal to the 5 other Staffordshire authorities only Stafford had a higher number of business contact with the Helpline.

The report set out a number of areas for improvement which would be at no additional financial cost to the Authority but which would require more officer time to be invested.

Members discussed the suggested areas for improvement and recommended to Cabinet that the following be implemented.

- Agreed:**
- (i) That the work of the Business Development Officer be completely directed to business development in the Borough.
 - (ii) That the Borough seeks to participate in the Staffordshire Business Festival.
 - (iii) That the Business Development Officer be asked to consider establishing a data base for the top 50 businesses.

6. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

7. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no Urgent Business.

8. DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION

That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business as there is likely to be disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

9. **BID INFORMATION**

It was moved by Councillor Snell and seconded by Councillor Loades that this item should not be taken forward as the information currently had no place within the decision making process for the outdoor markets tender.

Agreed: That consideration of this item be withdrawn from the agenda.

10. **TENDER DOCUMENT**

The Head of Housing, Regeneration and Assets submitted a report on the Borough Market together with details of a competitive tender document for an independent operator. Members asked that the full and complete document be submitted for review by this Committee prior to issue.

Agreed: That the Portfolio Holder be asked to review full details of the competitive tender document relating to the Borough Market prior to issue.

11. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING - 24 MAY 2017**

The next meeting of this Committee was due to be held on Wednesday 24 May 2017.

COUNCILLOR ALLISON GARDNER
Chair

Meeting concluded at 8.30 pm