

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 18th September, 2017
Time of Commencement: 7.00 pm

Present:- Councillor Mark Olszewski – in the Chair

Councillors Gardner, Holland, Loades, Matthews,
Northcott, Owen and Spence

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

Apologies Councillor(s) G Williams

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Whilst not a declaration of interest Councillor Owen pointed out that he no longer represented UKIP in relation to the political balance and the future allocation of seats.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2017 be agreed as a correct record.

3. THE GOLD STANDARD FOR HOMELESSNESS SERVICES - DIAGNOSTIC PEER REVIEW

The Head of Housing, Regeneration and Assets presented this report which provided an update on the DCLG Gold Standard Peer Review Assessment. Participation of the Gold Standard Process is considered to be a key process to support the continuous improvement of the homelessness/housing services at the Council. The Council passed the first stage with an overall score of 67%.

As part of the process a number of key recommendations were identified for the council to consider and implement prior to pursuing the further challenges which concerned the website, reception and interview facilities, homelessness case files and the overall quality of the housing options.

Members questioned whether improvements could be made alongside pursuing the challenges and the Chair explained that the process would be one of co-operation with the service provider to achieve the best outcome.

A member was concerned at the apparent difficulties with the IT provision and looked forward to an improvement upon the move to Castle House.

Agreed: That support be given to Option 2 – That the Council consider and implement actions from the improvement plan prior to pursuing the challenges.

4. HOMELESSNESS REDUCTION ACT 2017

The Head of Housing, Regeneration and Assets submitted a report based on The Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) 2017 which was predicted to be enacted in April 2018.

The updated HRA sets out a framework for significant change to homelessness legislation with several new duties which will require a change in working practices and additional resources. The main aim of the new legislation is to help prevent the homelessness of all client groups, regardless of priority need.

As the full details of the legislative changes were not known it was considered sensible for the scrutiny committee to retain this item on the work programme and to examine it again when appropriate. Meanwhile it was recommended that a communication be sent to the DCLG which pointed out the difficulties in responding to the proposed legislation until details were published.

Agreed: That this item be retained on the work programme and that clarification be sought from the DCLG on the implications for Local Authorities of The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

5. **DRAFT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

A meeting of the Economic Development and Enterprise Sub Group was held on 19 July to inform the first draft of the Economic Development Strategy (EDS) 2018 – 2023 The draft EDS, subject to revision by this Committee will be used as a basis for consultation with partner organisations, local businesses and wider community.

Members felt that the support of local MPs should be enlisted to lobby for improvements at Junction 15.

It was noted that reference to knowledge based work should be included in the strategy.

Overall it was agreed that the aspirations expressed in the draft strategy should be accompanied by targeted outcomes, a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis, that the housing assessment was in line with the Borough Strategy and that reference be made in the document to the major changes which would occur during the life of the strategy 2018-2023 such as the impact of Brexit and HS2. Members also requested there should be reference to work with the rural communities and more detail on SMEs (small and medium enterprises).

Agreed: That, taking into account the comments of this Committee, the Draft Economic Strategy be revised and re-submitted for final approval by this Committee. Moving forward, the strategy be used as a basis to consult with our partner organisations and local business community and the results from the consultation reported to Cabinet.

6. **WORK PROGRAMME**

Members gave consideration to their future work programme and the contents noted.

7. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

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

8. **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Business.

9. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Economic Development and Enterprise Scrutiny Committee will be held on 7 December 2017.

COUNCILLOR MARK OLSZEWSKI
Chair

Meeting concluded at 8.00 pm