

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 23rd March, 2016

Present:- Councillor David Stringer – in the Chair

Councillors Burgess, Holland, Loades, Matthews, Northcott and Williams

Apologies

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1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest stated.

2. MINUTES OF A PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2015 be agreed as a correct record.

With regard to consideration of the Community Infrastructure Levy which had been deferred from the December meeting it was noted that this would need to be again deferred to the next meeting as the report had not been completed.

A request was made for further information regarding the Housing Strategy and in particular the support for those members of the community who require it and also for those who will come to the Borough in the future.

3. NEWCASTLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY: YEAR FOUR REVIEW AND FIVE YEAR ACTION PLAN

This report was considered by Cabinet on 16 March 2016 at which time the Executive Director for Regeneration and Development had been authorised to make any amendments in line with the recommendations of this Committee.

Members were offered a briefing in terms of progress in relation to Year four and considered the actions proposed in Year Five.

Take-up had been disappointing in relation to Business Boost 2016 and also of the training offered to market stall holders.

Work would continue with the Local enterprise Partnership to ensure that the Borough received the best possible outcome from any funding, particularly in relation to the Ryecroft scheme.

It was not possible at the meeting to give the numbers of people who had engaged with the Enterprise Coach. The Chair asked that in future the Committee highlighted the work priorities alongside the KPIs.

Members moved on to look at the priorities for 2016-17. With regard to capacity it was highlighted that there was an insufficiency of resources to do more and in this respect Councillor Loades suggested that contact with the LAP be maximised to support on tasks.

Councillor Burgess asked whether a survey had been carried out with regard to the purchasing needs of young people and in this respect it was agreed that Councillor Burgess would be involved in the work.

Councillor Loades, exploring how to work with partners to gain best advantage from the benefits of HS2 considered that although there were a large number of housing developments planned but little business development. Councillor Williams echoed this view and did not feel that North Staffordshire was not as progressive as other authorities.

With regard to the Ryecroft development Councillor Loades asked that further consideration be given to parking.

Heritage lottery funding may help support the Go Kidsgrove initiative. The Chair urged progress with regard to the development of the Marina information board.

4. **NEWCASTLE TOWN CENTRE PARTNERSHIP/BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT UPDATE - MARCH 2016**

Consideration was given to a report which provided an update to members on BID progress.

It was explained how the BID had aligned its financial years to the traditional March to April cycle and would chase the outstanding BID levy payment.

It was noted that the Council were preparing to enter into a contract with the BID for the delivery of the 2016 Christmas Lights.

Details of events within the Town Centre were reported together with footfall figures.

The procedure to close down the Kidsgrove Town Centre Partnership was outlined for the information of members.

The Chair was pleased with the reduction in the vacancy rate; Councillor J Williams congratulated the wider team and was very pleased to see that shops within the Arcade had been let by keen young business people. Councillor Loades was pleased to see an increase in footfall figures and asked if a comparison of the figures could be produced in future years.

Resolved:- That the report be noted

5. **NEWCASTLE HOUSING ADVICE CONTRACT PROGRESS - QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE STATISTICS**

Consideration was given to a report on the northern housing application performance Q3 Oct-Dec 2015/16. It was pointed out that a much higher proportion had been excluded due to incorrect details being included onto the application form in the first instance.

Resolved:- That the report be noted

6. **GO KIDSGROVE - ACTION PLAN**

Members considered the Go Kidsgrove Action Plan 2016.

The Chair stated his major concern relating to funding for the project, particularly in relation to the lack of income apart from start up or grants funding which had been achieved. The Chair also had strong views regarding the unhelpful relationship and working practices between the Town Centre Partnership and Town Council.

The Chair suggested that the Heritage Walk be developed on an app and funding be sought from Healthwalks. Councillor Loades also suggested that Kidsgrove be made a Heritage Town and funding be attracted from the Heritage Lottery fund.

It was recommended that Section 136 monies be aligned to the project action plan. It was also recommend that support continue for Go Kidsgrove and that ways to ensure that Go Kidsgrove and Kidsgrove Town Council work together and move forward.

Resolved :- That the report be noted.

7. **WORK PLAN**

Resolved:- The Economic Development and Enterprise Scrutiny Committee Work Plan be noted

8. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

No members of the public were present at the meeting

9. **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Business.

10. **COUNCILLOR DAVID STRINGER**

Members of the Committee thanked Councillor David Stringer, who would not be seeking re-election for his commitment as Chair of the Committee.

COUNCILLOR DAVID STRINGER
Chair