

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 15th September, 2016

Time of Commencement 7.00 pm

Present:- Councillor Allison Gardner – in the Chair

Councillors Bailey, Dymond, T Hambleton, Holland,
Loades, Matthews, Northcott and
G Williams

Officers Jayne Briscoe (Scrutiny Officer)

Apologies Councillor(s) Proctor and Wilkes

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 22 June 2016 be agreed as a correct record.

3. REPORT ON THE BUSINESS HELPLINE

This report was introduced by the Regeneration and Economic Development Manager and had been compiled in response to a request from the members for a performance report on the use of the Business Support Helpline. The Helpline is the gateway for local businesses to access free expert business advice and support.

In addition to this the Chair also submitted a report of a meeting with the Growth Hub Business Helpline Advisor which included comparative data on the use of the Helpline from across the Staffordshire Region together with recommendations for future actions to develop awareness of the service both within the Borough Council and externally.

Members agreed with the recommendations in the reports and asked that work be carried out to ensure that:-

- Business Helpline information be optimised on google search.
- Information relating to the business area of the Borough Councils web site diagnostics be examined and included within the final report.
- Pop ups to be placed in the Civic Office reception area and in the libraries and vacant shops owned by the Borough.
- LAPs be engaged to ensure that Business Helpline pop ups were included in events.

- Work to be carried out to collect data on the skills base of the Newcastle area.
- A copy of the job description for the Growth Hub Business Helpline Advisor to be included in the next report to this Committee.
- The Borough Business Development Officer to link with the recently appointed Business Development Officer at Kidsgrove Town Council.
- That awareness of the Business Helpline be promoted within customer services and Councillors.

Agreed - That the Executive Director of Regeneration and Economic Development be requested to carry out work on the suggestions made by members and that the outcomes be included in the penultimate report on this scrutiny topic at the November meeting of the committee.

4. SCRUTINY BRIEF FOR THE BOROUGH MARKET

The Chair and Vice Chair submitted a scrutiny brief relating to Newcastle market. Members recommended that the following be included within the study: -

- That the role of the Bid team Manager be included and invited to be a part of the scrutiny process.
- That contact be made with nearby successful partnerships such as Alsager.
- That alternatives to a Local Authority run market be examined eg Market Drayton
- How the role of the markets team could be developed.
- Ways that the market offering could need the shopping needs of the growing nearby town centre student population.

5. WORK PLAN

Councillor Loades reported that, with regard to the issue of the impact on highways of planning developments across the Borough and the A34 traffic policy developed by the Staffordshire County Council, he had requested a forward report which would include the A34, A53 and A500 and that this report would be available for the next meeting.

The November meeting would examine the use of the Business Helpline and receive a presentation of markets website. Growth Deal 3 would be examined at an appropriate future meeting date.

Scrutiny was also requested on plans to grow local business within the Borough.

6. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

7. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no Urgent Business.

COUNCILLOR ALLISON GARDNER
Chair

Meeting concluded at 8.15 pm