

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 25th April, 2012

Present:- Councillor Mark Olszewski – in the Chair
Councillors E Boden, D Clarke, M Holland, D Loades and S Olszewski

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations stated.

2. MINUTES OF A PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2012 be agreed as a correct record.

3. TOWN CENTRE PARTNERSHIP ISSUES

The Town Centre Partnership resulted from work carried out in 2009/10 in readiness for changes in the economic climate. In the last two years there have been changes in the Personnel of the Chamber of Trade. The Council has a good relationship with the new personnel and the retailers.

Champions for projects were selected from the groups, for example champion for markets, parking etc. Newcastle, along with 362 other towns, submitted applications to be a Portas Pilot town. Twelve would be selected in May with a possible further 12 selected in June.

The pilot provides a blueprint of what Newcastle would like to do.

If the Council did not receive funding from the Portas Project, there would still be things that Newcastle could do. The town centre was in need of re-marketing and re-inventing itself.

A large amount of independent traders were not on the internet although it was possibly the internet which was destroying high street trade.

Members felt that the town needed to find new attractions and to promote tourism into the area with more cultural and family oriented aspects.

A use needed to be found for the empty shops such as pilot schemes for entrepreneurs etc.

The Scrutiny Brief on the Town Centre Partnership was considered. Members agreed that the Work Plan of the Town Centre Partnership be scrutinised and it should be made known that the Economic Development and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been set up to help organisations such as the Partnership.

A calendar of events should be created with some thought and planning going into them.

Resolved:- (a) That the information be received.

(b) That the Town Centre Partnership be carried over to the next Municipal Year for scrutiny by this Committee.

4. BROADBAND UPDATE

The Council's Head of Customer and ICT Services, was a representative on the County Broadband Group but they had not met as yet. She would report back to a future committee when a meeting had taken place.

It was important to have the broadband provision upgraded in areas with poor or no signal. This may encourage businesses to locate in Newcastle.

Resolved:- That the information be received.

5. WORK PLANS FOR SCRUTINY

Members considered a report outlining the topics being considered by the different Scrutiny Committees.

Resolved:- That the information be received.

6. FORWARD PLAN ITEMS

Members considered the items listed within the Forward Plan, but agreed that no Work Plan be decided upon until the new Municipal Year.

The Council's Executive Director for Regeneration and Development explained that this Committee had requested to scrutinise the Staffordshire Strategic Assets Review but information had not been available at the time. This item should therefore be carried forward into the new Municipal Year.

Resolved:- (a) That the information be received.

(b) That the Staffordshire Strategic Assets review be considered by this Committee in the next Municipal Year.

COUNCILLOR MARK OLSZEWSKI
Chair