

ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT & PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 26th September, 2018

Time of Commencement: 7.00 pm

Present:- Councillor Gary White – in the Chair

Councillors:

Burgess

John Cooper

Driver

Gardner

Harrison

Olszewski

Reddish

J Tagg

J Williams

Officers

Andrew Bird - Head of Recycling, Waste and Fleet Services, Jayne Briscoe - Democratic Services Officer, Executive Director (Regeneration and Development) - Neale Clifton and Regeneration and Economic Development Manager - Kim Graham

Also in attendance: Councillor M Holland (representing Councillor Northcott) and Councillor T Johnson

Mrs V Bradford, Mrs A Williams and Mr Doug Morris from the Newcastle under Lyme Business Improvement District.

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Gardner declared an interest in the University Growth Corridor as an employee of Keele University and took part in the discussion.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING - 4 JULY 2018

Resolved That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2018 be agreed as a correct record.

4. REPRESENTATIVES OF THE BID - INVITED TO ATTEND THE MEETING

On the invitation of the Chair Mrs Viv Bradford, Mrs Amy Williams, and Mr Doug Morris, representatives from the Newcastle under Lyme Business Improvement District, attended the meeting and highlighted the achievements of the BID during 2017 within the priority work areas of:

- Promoting Newcastle under Lyme

- Developing the Distinctive Newcastle under Lyme Experience
- Growth and Investment

They explained that businesses were encouraged to attend networking events and to meet on a regular basis to help ensure that the trader's voice was heard. Parking in the town centre was highlighted as a priority area for joint working with the Borough Council. The appearance of the empty Town Centre vacant units which included the Ryecroft area was a concern for the BID members. The developments of the CCTV strategy together with a Town Centre Wi-Fi were opportunities for development and joint working.

The use of the bandstand in Queens Gardens for a Sunday concert could be considered by the BID at the Events Committee.

The Chair questioned the level of support offered by the Borough Council and the BID members referred to the previous agreement in respect to free parking after 3pm in conjunction with Christmas late night shopping events. BID members noted that the Ryecroft car park was consistently underoccupied.

Members of the BID asked for clarification of the discretionary scheme in respect of business rates.

Agreed: (i) That, at the December meeting of this Committee, the charging policy at the Borough Town Centre car parks be examined in relation to the need to encourage footfall

(ii) That, Cabinet be informed of the view of this Committee to support the BID in their request for free car parking in conjunction with Christmas late night shopping.

(iii) That a report setting out clarification of the discretionary business rate support scheme be submitted to the December meeting of this Committee.

5. EXECUTIVE RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIONS - TREE MANAGEMENT - CHAIR TO REPORT

The Chair of the Committee, Councillor G White reported on the response received from the Leader of the Council to the request from the Committee to retain the supplement of £30,000 for tree maintenance within the future budget allocation. The Leader indicated that this amount was built into the base budget and that to ensure that the money was spent effectively and efficiently it would be reviewed every year.

Agreed: That the report be noted.

6. RECYCLING SERVICE - UPDATE

The Head of Recycling and Fleet Services presented a review of the recycling collection service following the report of a Cross Party Cabinet Panel Task and Finish Group, which included the proposal to charge for the provision of a garden waste collection service.

Members of this Committee were asked to examine the performance of the service in terms of the recycling rates being achieved and in this respect there were a number of KPIs which the Committee could monitor in relation to the future performance of the service.

The Chair pointed out to members that there was the potential call in on this item.

Members discussed the proposed recycling service and were supportive of the intention to reduce the number of recycling containers.

It was confirmed that the new scheme could be delivered within budget, including the current overspend. With regard to the cost of new bins it was confirmed that this was approximately £1m and that new vehicles would need to be procured.

A member suggested that aluminium recycling be encouraged due the relatively high income which could be achieved.

Members asked for evidence to confirm that 60% of Authorities charged for the collection of garden waste and that there was no evidence that flytipping had increased as a result of this charge.

It was anticipated that any resident with a large garden could access, at cost, a home compost bin.

It was noted that the capacity of the bin may be an issue with the move to fortnightly recycling bin collections.

Agreed: That the report be noted

7. UNIVERSITY GROWTH CORRIDOR

A report was submitted, for the view of this Committee, on the vision and proposals for the University Growth Corridor, an area of land to the west of Newcastle substantially comprising the Keele University campus and the site of the former Keele Municipal Golf Course.

The consultant delivered a brief presentation confirming the boundaries of the study area; the technical constraints relating to the land (highlighting the Green Belt designation); the broad principles of arranging the land uses to respond to the Local Plan requirements for housing and employment and indicative plans showing the arrangement of housing-led development on the former golf course (amongst retained woodland areas and public open space), along with a new primary school and expansion of the University to enable delivery of more Science and Innovation Park business space, academic floorspace, post-graduate accommodation and renewable energy provision.

The general consensus was that the principle of development was acceptable however there were areas of concern:-

- quality of housing / density; there was general agreement that any housing should meet wider community needs whilst being of a good quality overall. Specific concern was raised about the potential risk

of the development being too dense for this urban fringe/rural location.

- mix of housing; there should be a wide range of house types and tenures to meet local need as well as any demand arising from the University's growth.
- Transport and community infrastructure; Members felt that it was important for the development to reflect future infrastructure requirements in the wider area particularly in relation to highways but notably in relation to medical facilities such as a GP and dental practice.
- Open space; linked to the earlier point about housing density Members were keen to ensure that there would be adequate levels of publicly accessible open space in addition to the retained woodland areas.

To conclude the discussion Members were asked to focus upon the following three questions:

1. Are Members happy that the main objectives of the masterplan have been met; in particular, in relation to the case for Green Belt release?

Members agreed that, as far as their remit was concerned, the masterplan objectives had been met

Are Members satisfied with the economic growth case put forward?

Members agreed that, as far as their remit was concerned, there was a very compelling case for economic-led growth in this location.

2. Are Members content, in principle, that the proposed quantum, scale and nature of development on the former golf course are consistent with the Council's objectives for land disposal

Subject to any future, more detailed plans addressing the specific points raised, and as far as their remit was concerned, Members were satisfied with the indicative proposals in respect of the Council-owned land.

8. **SMART MOTORWAY**

Agreed: That representatives from the appropriate bodies in connection with the Smart motorway be invited to attend the meeting of this Committee in December.

9. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committees work programme was presented by the Scrutiny Officer who pointed out that there were currently no items to be considered at the meeting of the Committee on 13 December 2018.

Agreed: That the work programme be amended as follows:-

- That, representatives from the appropriate bodies be invited to attend 13 December meeting to enable members to consider the issues surrounding the Smart Motorway.
- That, at the 13 December meeting, members scrutinise the policy of charges at Town Centre Car Parks in relation to the need to encourage footfall in the Town Centre.

10. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from members of the public on this occasion.

11. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of business on this occasion.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on Thursday 13 December 2018.

COUNCILLOR GARY WHITE
Chair

Meeting concluded at 9.45 pm