

Minutes of Economic Development Committee

Meeting Date: Thursday, 21 September 2017, starting at 6.30pm
Present: Councillor R Swarbrick (Chairman)

Councillors:

S Bibby	K Hind
I Brown	J Holgate
P Dowson	J Rogerson
P Elms	I Sayers
M Fenton	R Thompson
M French	

In attendance: Director of Community Services, Head of Financial Services, Head of Cultural and Leisure Services, Head of Regeneration and Housing, Regeneration Policy Officer and Tourism and Events Officer.

281 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors S Atkinson, P Elms and S Hirst.

282 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interest although the Chairman reminded Committee that he works for a broadband company.

283 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

284 DRAFT RIBBLE VALLEY TOURISM DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Director of Community Services submitted a report asking Committee to consider a first draft of a Ribble Valley Tourism Destination Management Plan. He informed Committee that one of the key objectives of the Council is to encourage economic development throughout the borough with a specific focus on tourism, which it achieves through a number of services which impact on tourism but primarily through the employment of a dedicated officer with a budget for promotional activity.

The work of promoting tourism is achieved very much in partnership with the private sector and delivered through a number of ways. The report included the nature and scope of the work undertaken in stimulating tourism growth along with a draft Destination Management Plan, which Committee were asked to consider for private sector consultation.

Destination Management is a process of leading, influencing and co-ordinating the management of all aspects of a destination that contribute to a visitors

experience, taking account of the needs of visitors, local residents, businesses and the environment. The Destination Management Plan is a shared statement of intent to manage a destination over a stated period of time, articulating the roles of the different stakeholders and identifying clear actions that will be taken and the apportionment of resources.

It was intended that once the draft Destination Management Plan had been considered by Committee it would be circulated to the Ribble Valley Tourism Association and its Members for comments and reported back to this Committee for final approval. This Plan would then become an effective performance management framework for the new Committee with regard to tourism, reporting back periodically on its key actions.

Members discussed the Tourism Destination Management Plan and were impressed with the detail in it. It was felt it would be useful to determine other issues including the amount of business rates income from tourism, which sector of tourism brings in the most revenue and obtaining evidence in order to produce a wider Tourism Strategy in the future. Points were also raised about the state of tourist signposts within the borough as well as town centre signposting.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. approve the draft Destination Management Plan for consultation;
2. ask that the Plan return to Committee incorporating comments from consultees for final approval;
3. advise that we seek consultancy assistance to investigate the underpinning evidence to establish the importance of tourism to the economy of Ribble Valley; and
4. create a heritage/tourist trail involving partners and products across Ribble Valley and launch a plan of action to enhance the heritage products available.

285

EMPLOYMENT LAND MONITOR

The Chief Executive submitted a report updating Members on employment land within the borough. Employment and a strong economy are important to the Ribble Valley and the Council has a responsibility to ensure that there is sufficient employment land provision in the area in order to facilitate employment and economic investment in the borough and make preparations to meet with business, economic and employment growth needs for the future. The report included a schedule of employment land in Ribble Valley at the current time. The borough needs a balanced portfolio of land to accommodate a sustainable growing economy that can respond to dynamic market conditions, and changing business needs and working practices and by initially establishing how much land there is consideration can then be applied to how much land is required in order to meet potential future demand within the local plan to 2028.

He informed Committee that the borough's planning policies are intended to intervene in this respect to ensure amongst other things, an appropriate balance between housing and employment uses in the borough.

With regard to the schedule of land, development was now under way on some of these sites and once completed, would be deducted from this table in the following year. Further additional sites to meet the future needs of business growth are currently being identified through Ribble Valley's recent submitted Housing and Economic Development Plan document through which the Council is allocating land to help address as a minimum the residual employment land requirements as measured against the overall requirement and spatial distribution of employment provision set out in the Core Strategy.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

286 TOWN CENTRES UPDATE

The Chief Executive submitted a report for Committee's information on activities in connection with Clitheroe town centre regeneration. The Council has a long history in working in partnership with local stakeholders and business groups and the two main towns of Clitheroe and Longridge in the Ribble Valley serve both the local community itself and the surrounding settlements within Ribble Valley.

It is important that regular monitoring takes place to ensure that the vitality and viability of these two town centres continues and the local business community in both Clitheroe and Longridge play an important role to assist in the long-term economic success of the area.

In recent years the Council had also assisted in the creation of town teams in both Clitheroe and Longridge. These have consisted of representatives from local interest groups, business, civic and other local stakeholders.

There was a continuing need to work closely with these established business groups and continue to develop initiatives and priorities to support the town centres of Clitheroe and Longridge, along with other service and retail centres in the borough to help ensure that they are economically successful and attractive places. The Council will continue to provide individual support, information and guidance directly to these business groups and assist in partnership working on activities to support trade in each of their locations.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

287 BROADBAND IN RIBBLE VALLEY

The Chief Executive submitted a report for Committee's information giving an update on fibre broadband services, its availability and future proposals for further rollout in the Ribble Valley. Super-fast broadband refers to a range of measures to ensure businesses and consumers are best able to access the benefits of high speed broadband internet connections.

The previous Lancashire superfast broadband programme began in 2013 which aimed to deliver high speed fibre broadband being rolled out and given access to 130,000+ premises across Lancashire between 2013 and the end of 2015. Superfast Lancashire is a partnership between Lancashire County Council and BT, with additional funding from the Government's broadband delivery UK as well as European Regional Development Fund, Blackburn with Darwen Council and Blackpool Council and has now commissioned more than 500 of the 900 fibre broadband roadside cabinets it is installing across Lancashire.

Superfast Lancashire completed the main phase of its programme at the end of June 2015 which will have enabled 97% of Lancashire homes and businesses to be covered by the fibre broadband network. It was pointed out to Members that this connection is only made to a cabinet in a village and that full connection to be made to a specific premises, this must be requested with the added frustration that in rural areas the distance of copper wire to a premises is a long way from the cabinet. Members asked for a map of the superfast broadband delivery for their information.

Many rural businesses have had to find alternative solutions for their broadband requirements which unfortunately come at a much higher cost than a connection through BT. It was important therefore that we continue to support businesses in our rural areas to ensure that they have the ability to access sufficient broadband speeds and that financial support is available to enable them to do this. The Council would continue to lobby for broadband issues to be included as part of the Lancashire Growth Programme and support be offered to existing businesses who require a better broadband connection with which to run their businesses.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

288 RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR ENGLAND 2014 – 2020

The Chief Executive submitted a report for Committee's information regarding the Rural Development Programme. This is jointly funded by the European Union and the Department of the Environment Food and Rural Affairs and the aims of the programme are to safeguard and enhance the rural environment, improve the competitiveness of the agricultural sector and foster sustainable and thriving rural businesses and rural economies across England.

The four main elements are environmental schemes, countryside productivity, growth programme and LEADER. The LEADER element of the funding is available to local businesses, communities, farmers, foresters and land managers.

The programme delivery is split into sub-regional areas and in Lancashire there are three local action groups that have been established to manage the RDPE programme of activity.

Each application is considered against the priorities identified and currently six projects have been approved in Ribble Valley with a number of further projects in development.

Committee felt it would be helpful if more information could be provided on grant funding available.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

289 CAPITAL MONITORING 2017/18

The Director of Resources submitted a report for Committee's information on progress on the approved 2017/18 Capital Programme for this Committee for the period to the end of July 2017. To date there had been no spend on the economic development initiative scheme. At this stage development opportunities to bring forward land for employment were being reviewed and would be reported to this Committee. It is anticipated that this capital scheme be considered to help support any emerging initiatives that arise as a result of that report.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

290 REVENUE MONITORING 2017/18

The Director of Resources submitted a report for Committee's information on the position for the first four months of this year's revenue budget as far as this Committee was concerned.

Committee were informed of the three cost centres that had been transferred from Policy and Finance and Community Services to this new Committee.

The comparison between actual and budgeted expenditure shows an overall underspend of £1,588 on the net cost of services. The current variances do not present any significant concern, however this situation can fluctuate depending on activities that take place.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

The Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Business Plan 2017 – 2020 entitled "Lancashire: The Place for Growth" was circulated to Members for information and would possibly be subject of discussion at a future meeting.

The meeting closed at 7.30pm.

If you have any queries on these minutes please contact Marshal Scott (414400).