

Minutes of Economic Development Committee

Meeting Date: Thursday, 20 September 2018, starting at 6.30pm
Present: Councillor R Swarbrick (Chairman)

Councillors:

S Atkinson	K Hind
S Bibby	J Holgate
I Brown	J Rogerson
P Dowson	I Sayers
M Fenton	D Taylor

In attendance: Director of Economic Development and Planning and Head of Cultural and Leisure Services.

288 APOLOGIES

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

289 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

290 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interest.

291 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

292 REVISITING MEMBER/OFFICER PROTOCOL

The Chief Executive submitted a report to take a further look at the Member/Officer Protocol. One of the recommendations of the Peer Challenge Review was that the Council should revisit this Member/Officer Protocol as an opportunity to make suggestions as to how the Protocol could be strengthened or improved.

It was suggested that this Protocol should be reviewed once the new Council is in place after the Elections in May 2019 and thereafter after every three years.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and the above suggested changes be reported to Accounts and Audit Committee.

293 RIBBLE VALLEY TOURISM DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Director of Community Services submitted a report asking Members to approve the Ribble Valley Tourism Destination Plan 2018/19. One of the key

objectives of the Council is to encourage Economic Development throughout the borough with the specific focus on tourism which it achieves through a number of services 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.

The Head of Cultural and Leisure Services reminded Members that at their meeting on 21 September 2017, they had approved a draft plan for consultation purposes with the private sector partners. Destination Management is process of leading, influencing and co-ordinating the management of all the aspects of a destination that contribute to a visitor's experience taking account of the needs of visitors, local residents, businesses and the environment.

The draft plan had been subject of consultation with private sector partners from whom it had received widespread approval. There were a few areas where the plan had been strengthened namely:

- a greater appreciation of the value of the arts and in particular musical performance;
- a better representation of countryside recreation and associated activities;
- a better description of the importance of value of digital marketing and social media;
- a better link with marketing Lancashire's Visitor Economy Strategy which has now been launched.

Following approval of the plan it becomes an effective management framework with regard to tourism. Although it was highlighted that we must also remain responsive to new opportunities as they arise.

Members were impressed with the Tourism Destination Management Plan and acknowledged that Ribble Valley had gone from strength to strength with tourism being one of the fastest growing economies.

Members asked questions with regard to some of the statistical information and how they compared with past years. Comments were also made about the tourism signs on the roadsides not being kept clean by Lancashire County Council and that this reflected badly on the area.

Members requested a report on the latest STEAM figures with the last few years to a subsequent Economic Development Committee and also suggested taking to Parish Council Liaison meeting.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the Destination Management Plan 2018/19 as submitted and prepare a summary promotional version to share with consultees and partners.

294 SERVICE CENTRE HEALTH CHECKS

The Chief Executive submitted a report outlining information on the Ribble Valley borough's key centres of Clitheroe, Longridge and Whalley. The Council are committed to ensuring the vitality and viability of the key service centres within the borough and recognise that they represent an important resource of retail,

service, leisure and employment provision. In connection with this the Council continues to support initiatives that contribute towards these aims and work in partnership with local businesses and town centre groups to help ensure that the borough's key service centres are economically successful and attractive places.

Clitheroe, Longridge and Whalley like other centres nationally, play an important role in serving the requirements of the local community on a day to day basis. They form a focal point for the surrounding area and provide a wide range of services that are accessible to the population, including retail, employment, leisure, along with such things as financial and health services.

The Council is required to review and assess the vitality and viability of its service centres to help ensure an adequate supply of services and facilities and to meet the requirements of the local population, both currently and in the future. Also the policies within the Council's Local Development Framework must be informed by a robust evidence base and work is currently being undertaken to update the evidence base to support the LDF and the Core Strategy.

The service centre health check assessments draw some positive conclusions in that the vitality and viability of all three centres – Clitheroe, Longridge and Whalley appear to be continuing in their own individual roles and function in the wider borough in terms of healthy functioning centres.

Members discussed various aspects of the town centres and in particular the night-time economy of Whalley.

RESOLVED: That Committee agree that the Service Centre Health Checks document be published as part of the Local Plan review evidence base and that the findings are taken into consideration in preparing the review of the Council's economic strategy.

295 GATEWAY SIGNS

The Director of Community Services submitted a report providing details and costings for gateway signs which could be located on the entry points to the borough's main settlements. At the last Committee Members had requested a report on options for large road signs on the entry point to Clitheroe, Longridge and Whalley that are termed as Gateway Signs by the Department for Transport. The report gave an illustration of what a sign could look like and outlined the cost per sign as being around £2000 plus VAT to purchase and install a sign (1.5m x 2m). The number of signs required would be known after an assessment by a suitable contractor. At present it was estimated at 7 signs in total covering the main routes into Clitheroe, Longridge and Whalley.

Members discussed the merit of having gateway signs as well as again raising the issue that the current signs in the borough are not kept clean by Lancashire County Council. It was pointed out that these signs would be the Borough Council's responsibility.

RESOLVED: That Committee agree to proceed the project of gateway signs and ask officers to prepare a capital bid to cover the cost of the project.

296 CAPITAL MONITORING 2018/19

The Director of Resources submitted a report on progress on the approved 2018/2019 capital programme for this Committee for the period to the end of August 2018. There had been no spend to date on the economic development initiatives scheme and development opportunities to bring forward land for employment will be reported to this Committee in due course.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

297 GOVERNMENT CALL FOR EVIDENCE

The Chief Executive submitted a report for Committee's information on the House of Lords Select Committee on the Rural Economy call for evidence. The Select Committee is investigating a wide range of themes such as local services and amenities, rural business and investment, housing, transport, digital connectivity, employment, democratic change, deprivation and equality and rural isolation. Response to the call for evidence were requested to be received by Monday, 10 September 2018 and the focus of the Committee's inquiry is stated to include how the government is performing on the rural economy, improving and maintaining provision for essential services as well as helping rural business to thrive. The response to the consultation which had been prepared in consultation with the Chairman of the Economic Development Committee was attached for Committee's information.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

298 REVENUE OUTTURN 2017/18

The Director of Resources submitted a report on the outturn for the financial year 2017/2018 in respect of the revenue budget for this Committee. There had been a considerable number of variations in both income and expenditure during the year that had given rise to an overall underspend of £10,797 on the net cost of services. There had been no transfers to or from reserves.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

299 REVENUE MONITORING 2018/19

The Director of Resources submitted a report updating Committee on the position for the period April to July 2018 of this year's revenue budget as far as this Committee was concerned. The comparison between actual and budgeted expenditure shows an overspend of £108 for the first four months of the financial year 2018/2019. At this point it was too early in the year to predict any likely outturn position and the current situation may fluctuate as the year progresses. Departmental budgets are currently being reallocated following the recent restructuring which may impact on the budgets reported to this Committee.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

A report had been circulated by Councillor Richard Sherras following his attendance to the Rural Services Network rural conference on 4/5 September 2018.

Councillor Ken Hind reported on the LEP Board and the current consultation taking place as to whether it should be free standing rather than under the auspices of Lancashire County Council.

The meeting closed at 7.25pm.

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