

Minutes of Economic Development Committee

Meeting Date: Thursday, 5 November 2020, starting at 6.30pm
Present: Councillor S Hirst (Chair)

Councillors:

D Berryman	S Fletcher
S Bibby	M French
D Birtwhistle	S Hore
I Brown	S Knox
B Buller	G Mirfin
J Clark	J Rogerson

In attendance: Director of Economic Development and Planning, Head of Regeneration and Housing, Head of Cultural and Leisure Services, Senior Accountant.

Also in attendance: Councillor T Austin.

Not in attendance: Councillor M Hindle.

785 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillor R Elms.

786 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2020 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

787 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY INTEREST

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

788 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

789 EMPLOYMENT LAND MONITOR

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report providing information on employment land availability across the Ribble Valley. The report set out the initial findings of recent monitoring with a review of key aspects such as activity in relation to planning applications and their implementation. A review of commercial properties currently available in the market had also been carried out. In parallel land take up in relation to land commitments and allocations would continue to be monitored as part of the local plan process to inform the need for additional land to be identified or reviewed.

Reference was made to the current level of churn particularly in the town centres and the number of licensed properties that were closed down. It was also noted

that there had already been some changes in occupancy in premises in the appendix attached to the report.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

790 TOURISM PROGRESS REPORT

The Director of Community Services submitted a report outlining general progress on tourism with particular reference to measures taken to support the visitor economy during the pandemic. The Council's tourism and promotional activity was usually guided by a destination management plan; however this plan had been suspended, and in an immediate response to the crisis, officers working closely with the Ribble Valley Tourism Association had written a 'Response and Recovery Plan for Tourism and Hospitality' aimed at supporting tourism through good communication and marketing initiatives. The booklet had been circulated to members of the Committee for their information. The launch had taken place in June 2020 alongside a video called 'When the time is right' designed to keep the area in people's minds during lockdown.

It was noted that circumstances with the latest lockdown had already overtaken the recovery plans in the booklet. Members commented upon the excellent content in the booklet and asked that businesses in the hospitality sector be kept informed of any grants available to them to help them through the lockdown period.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

791 REVENUE OUTTURN 2019/20

The Director of Resources submitted a report for Committee's information on the outturn for the financial year 2019/20 in respect of the revenue budget for this Committee. There had been a number of variations in both income and expenditure during the year that had given rise to an overall underspend of £28,888 on the net cost of services. There had been no transfers to or from reserves.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

792 REVENUE MONITORING 2020/21

The Director of Resources submitted a report for Committee's information on the position for the period April to September 2020 of this year's revenue budget for this Committee. The report outlined the comparison between actual and budgeted expenditure for the period.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

793 CAPITAL OUTTURN 2019/20

The Director of Resources submitted a report for Committee's information on the 2019/20 capital programme outturn for this Committee. There was no expenditure in 2019/20 and the budget slippage of £20,000 had been moved into the 2020/21 financial year.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

794 CAPITAL MONITORING 2020/21

The Director of Resources submitted a report for Committee's information on the progress of the capital programme for the period to the end of September 2020. There had been no expenditure on the two schemes in this Committee's capital programme as at the end of September.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

795 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports from representatives on outside bodies.

796 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That by virtue of the fact that the following items of business be an Exempt Information under Category 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be now excluded from the meeting.

797 CLITHEROE TO HELLIFIELD RAIL PROJECT

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report asking Committee to agree a way forward for the production of a Strategic Outline Business Case to support the Clitheroe to Hellifield Rail Project which was identified in the Council's Economic Plan.

She reminded members that in March 2020 the Council had submitted an application to the Department of Transport Restoring Your Railways Fund. Notification had been received in May that the application had been approved and progressed to the next stage of developing a Strategic Outline Business Case. The DfT would fund 75% of costs up to £50,000 to help fund transport and economic studies and create a business case.

A Project Group had been set up and was meeting monthly, as well as discussions taking place with stakeholders. It had subsequently been identified that consultants were required to undertake the Business case on our behalf. Part of the project was a requirement to analyse the capacity of the network and as such Network Rail had been procured as the only provider able to carry out the work for technical reasons under an exemption to the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

The Director of Economic Development and Planning reported that she had now been informed that Community Rail Lancashire had successfully secured a contribution following an application to the Community Rail Development Fund.

She reported that seven tenders for the Strategic Outline Business Case had been received and were currently being evaluated.

Members were pleased with the progress made on this project and suggested various issues that might be considered in the future including additional platforms/halts.

Councillor T Austin was given permission to speak on this item.

RESOLVED: That Committee:

1. note the appointment of Network Rail to undertake the capacity analysis work and the exemption to the Contract Procedure Rules which had already been granted;
2. recommend to Policy and Finance Committee a sum of £20,000 from the Economic Development budget be included for the scheme; and
3. agree that officers approach the organisations set out in the report for contributions towards the overall scheme in order to determine funding available.

The meeting closed at 7.40pm.

If you have any queries on these minutes please contact Nicola Hopkins (414532).