

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

28 JUNE 2022

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool.

Present:

Councillor Young (In the Chair)

Councillors Brown, Clayton, Feeney, Hargreaves, Lindridge

Officers: Michael Beirne, Principal Economic Growth Officer
Israr Hussain, Economic Growth and Regeneration Manager
Denise McGuckin, Managing Director
Katie Smith, Economic Growth Officer
Amanda Whitaker, Democratic Services Team

1. Apologies for Absence

Councillor Loynes

2. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Young – consultant to one of the restaurants involved in restaurant week 2022 – agenda item 8.2.

3. Minutes

An elected member requested an update on the Council Motion which had been considered at the meeting of this Committee on 1 March 2022 (minute 27 refers). The Managing Director responded that an Officer Working Group had been established. A report would be submitted to a meeting of this Committee in September/October and then to Finance and Policy Committee which would address the social value issues set out in the Motion.

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 March 2022 were received

4. The Role and Remit of the Economic Growth and Regeneration Services Committee

The Committee received a comprehensive presentation by the Managing Director outlining the role and remit of the Committee and the service areas of the Authority that fell under its management. The presentation also included challenges and priorities and an overview of the Council's current budget position.

The Committee debated issues arising from the presentation, including the following:-

- Council's Housing Stock – Although it was highlighted this was a function of the Finance and Policy Committee, the Managing Director undertook to check HRA rules and to explore the issues raised in relation to future investment. The Managing Director also responded to clarification sought regarding 'right to buy' and advised that a HRA report would be submitted to the July meeting of the Finance and Policy Committee.
- Mayoral Development Corporation – all elected members were encouraged to take part in the current consultation.
- Role of the Committee – Concerns were expressed that this Committee needed to be flexible and responsive and was disconnected from other relevant Committees and Forums. The Managing Director undertook to consider the issue.
- Tall Ships 2023 – Elected members sought to ensure that all local businesses were ready for this event. The Managing Director responded referring members to the various workstreams, one of which was being led by the Assistant Director, Development & Growth. The Managing Director undertook to consider further with regard to the role of this Committee.

Decision

The presentation was noted.

5. Hartlepool Annual Economic Update 2022 *(Assistant Director -Development and Growth)*

Type of decision

For information/Non Key

Purpose of report

To provide an update on Hartlepool's economic position and important business news and announcements impacting the Borough and the local economy over the past year.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The report summarised the latest economic related statistics for Hartlepool and set out statistics for other Tees Valley Local Authorities, the Tees Valley as a whole and comparisons to the wider North East figures. The report also summarised key announcements over the year that would have notable impacts on the local economy. An overview of the activities undertaken by the Council's Economic Growth Team including local data collated as a result of these activities was also presented. The Managing Director highlighted the salient issues identified in the report.

Following presentation of the report, concerns were expressed by the Chair over the impact on businesses of uncapped utility tariffs impacting on gas and electric costs and increase in supplier fees. It was considered that more support needed to be provided to businesses, by Government, to help them deal with rising costs and inflation. Committee Members supported the Chair's comments and highlighted issues that all companies were having to address to survive the current economic situation.

The Chair suggested that a letter be sent on behalf of the Committee to the Secretary of State, with a copy sent to the Jill Mortimer MP, to call for more Government support to be provided to businesses. It was suggested also that a survey be undertaken to formulate the letter.

The Managing Director referred to the role of the Combined Authority and suggested that representatives of the Authority be invited to attend a future meeting of this Committee

The Committee noted that Hartlepool's 5-Year New Business Survival Rate (2015-2019) is significantly lower than the other regions. It was highlighted that the 3rd year of a business tended to be key and it was important to know reasons for that and to act on that intelligence. It was also highlighted that the support required by businesses varied from that required in the initial start-up period to that required 5 years plus in business. Elected Members debated issues relating to the value of employment and links to skills and employment which was recognised as a national issue. It was noted that the Adult Education Service were undertaking a skills audit.

The opportunities for businesses arising from the Tall Ships 2023 event were highlighted by Committee members. The Managing Director updated the Committee on planning for the event which included a number of work streams, including a business work stream. It was agreed that 'Tall Ships 2023 – Business Work Stream' be included as an agenda item for the next meeting of the Committee.

Decision

The current economic position of Hartlepool and the activities undertaken and delivered by the Economic Growth Team were noted.

It was noted that the Economic Growth Team will produce quarterly economic updates to supplement the annual update.

It was agreed that a letter be sent on behalf of the Committee to the Secretary of State, copied to Jill Mortimer MP, to call for more Government support to be provided to businesses.

It was agreed that 'Tall Ships 2023 – Business Work Stream' be included as an agenda item for the next meeting of this Committee.

6. Hartlepool Restaurant Week 2022 – Evaluation Report *(Assistant Director – Development and Growth)*

Type of decision

For information/Non Key

Purpose of report

To provide an update on the evaluation and economic impact of the recent Hartlepool Restaurant Week 2022 and to seek endorsement of the delivery of a further Hartlepool Restaurant Week campaign, to take place in late 2022.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The report advised the Committee that the first ever Hartlepool Restaurant Week, organised by the Council's Economic Growth Team, was held between 24th and 30th January 2022. The aim of the project was to encourage people to support Hartlepool's local independent eateries following a particularly challenging period for the hospitality sector throughout the coronavirus pandemic. A total of 21 businesses were involved in the campaign ranging from small cafes to larger restaurants. The event was delivered using funds from the Council's Welcome Back Fund allocation.

The marketing activities delivered to promote Hartlepool Restaurant Week were set out in the report together with the economic impact and feedback from businesses and feedback from customers. A table in the report summarised the budget used to deliver the project totalling £7,180. With an estimated economic impact of £50,000, Committee members highlighted that this demonstrated a good return on investment for the local economy. Congratulations were expressed to those involved and support was expressed for the delivery of a further Hartlepool Restaurant Week, promotion of which to commence at an early date.

Decision

The evaluation report and positive economic impact of the recent Hartlepool Restaurant Week 2022 was noted.

The Committee endorsed the delivery of a further Hartlepool Restaurant Week, to take place in late 2022, with funding to be met from existing Economic Growth service budgets.

The meeting concluded at 11.30 a.m.

H MARTIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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