

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

9 JULY 2024

The meeting commenced at 9.30 am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool.

Present:

Councillor Hargreaves (In the Chair);

Councillors Bailey Fleet, Dodds, Lindridge, Scarborough and Young.

Also Present:

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.2 Councillor Creevy was in attendance as substitute for Councillor Male

Officers: Tony Hanson, Executive Director of Development, Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services
Beverley Bearne, Assistant Director, Development and Growth
Gemma Ptak, Assistant Director, Preventative and Community Based Services
Denise Wimpenny, Principal Democratic Services Officer

1. Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Male.

2. Declarations of Interest

None at this point in the meeting, however the Chair declared a personal interest later in the meeting as Chair of Families First North East (Minute 5 refers)

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2023

Received.

4. The Role and Remit of the Economic Growth and Regeneration Committee *(Executive Director of Development, Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services)*

Type of decision

For information.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Committee received a comprehensive presentation by the Executive Director of Development, Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services, Assistant Director, Development and Growth and the Assistant Director, Preventative and Community Based Services 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 together with an overview of the current key projects and capital schemes the Council was managing over the forthcoming years. It was agreed that the presentation be shared with all Members of the Council following the meeting.

The Committee debated issues arising from the presentation which included the following suggestions/comments/queries:-

- A Member commented on the benefits of the update and suggested that a 6 monthly update on key capital projects, as opposed to an annual report, be provided to a future meeting of this Committee.
- In response to a query raised in relation to live projects included within the capital programme, the Assistant Director Development and Growth agreed to provide a report to a future meeting of this Committee to include an overview of the regeneration schemes within the capital programme and explained that projects were managed using a reporting dashboard which included tracking information covering programme milestones, costs and risks etc and that the full capital programme and governance arrangements were outlined in the Capital Strategy which was reported to Finance and Policy Committee in February 2024. The Chair requested that given the next meeting was not until September, the Assistant Director, Development and Growth share this information with all Members of the Committee following the meeting together with any salient information/previous reports which would assist Members in their role on this Committee going forward.
- The Chair referred to ongoing work at the production village and was keen for Members of the Committee to undertake a site visit to observe progress first hand as and when appropriate.

- The Chair commented on the importance of the Committee to challenge and set direction in a positive manner.
- Clarification was provided in response to concerns raised in relation to take up figures at The Bis. Members emphasised the importance of retention and supporting new businesses to grow. The need to review the functions and marketing of The Bis to address the issues raised was also suggested.
- The Executive Director of Development, Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services provided clarification in response to queries raised in relation to enforcement arrangements in terms of land and buildings. The Chair referred to a recent scrutiny investigation into derelict land and buildings and requested that the report be shared with this Committee once finalised.
- Discussion ensued in relation to future priorities, cultural heritage opportunities, inward tourism and the wider promotion of the town, methods to improve the visitor/tourism economy, future options for the art gallery, the challenges in terms of lack of investment and ongoing financial pressures, funding opportunities, health and social inequalities, the various methods of communication, the importance of effective communication with residents and the potential challenges in this regard.
- An update was provided in response to issues raised in relation to cultural heritage opportunities and future plans as well as details of current and planned exhibitions.
- As part of the update on jobs and skills there was reference by the Chair of the information she had been made aware of relating to adult literacy levels in the town. She requested that a report comes to the next committee detailing the challenges facing this issue for consideration.

Decision

- (i) That the contents of the presentation and comments of Members be noted and actioned as appropriate.
- (ii) That the presentation slides be shared with Members following the meeting.
- (iii) That the Assistant Director, Development and Growth provide the following information following the meeting:-
 - Overview of live capital projects.
 - Salient information/previous regeneration related activity reports to assist Members in undertaking their role on this Committee going forward.

- Final scrutiny investigation report in relation to derelict land and buildings once finalised.
- (iv) That a 6 monthly update report on key capital projects, as opposed to an annual report, be provided to a future meeting of this Committee.
- (v) That a report be provided to a future meeting of this Committee to include an overview of regeneration schemes within the capital programme, tracking information covering programme milestones, costs and risks.
- (vi) That a site visit for Members of this Committee be held at the Production Village as and when appropriate.
- (vii) A report on Adult Literacy be brought to the September meeting.

5. Long Term Plan for Towns *(Executive Director of Development, Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services)*

Type of decision

Non-key

Purpose of report

To provide a progress update on the Long Term Plan for Towns (LTPT) Programme and to consider arrangements to appoint a Chair and representatives for the Voluntary and Community Sector to sit on the LTPT Board.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Committee was referred to the background of the report presented to Finance and Policy Committee 19 February 2024. Members had previously agreed to support the proposal for the existing Town Deal Board to take up the remit of an interim board who would establish a programme in the short term to provide time for a new strategic place board to be created. This would allow the newly established LTPT Board to identify any gaps in interventions and also to ensure there was no duplication of investment or delivery. The proposed membership of the new LTPT Board had been agreed by Members, details of which were set out in the report and the Chair identified that a session was being held with colleagues from the VCS to further conclude the membership from the sector on the board.

Following the report to Members in February a formal request was tabled at the Town Deal Board meeting on 5 March 2024 when Members agreed:-

- That the Town Deal Board to act as the interim board for LTPT while a new designated Project Offer was appointed
- To invite the MP for Hartlepool and Police and Crime Commissioner to be official Town Deal Board Members in the interim periods these were mandatory memberships for the Town Board.

Members were referred to guidance published in May 2024 which included governance information and board membership, details of which were included in the report.

The Chair commented on the challenges around the timescales to present a 3 year business plan by 1 August and was of the view that the current interim board arrangements should remain pending further Government guidance. The Chair also suggested that in addition to including the Chair of Economic Growth and Regeneration Committee to the membership of the LTPT Board, that at least 3 representatives from the voluntary and community sector should be included. At this point in the meeting the Chair declared a personal interest as the Chair of Families First North East who would participate in the session with VCS colleagues.

Decision

The Committee:-

- a) Noted the contents of the report;
- b) Agreed that the existing interim board arrangements should remain pending receipt of further Government guidance.
- c) Noted the additional organisations to be added to the membership of the LTPT Board;
- d) Noted the addition of the Chair of Economic Growth & Regeneration to the membership of the LTPT board;
- d) Noted that the LTPT Board will include at least three representatives from the voluntary and community sector (VCS). Discussions will be held with representatives from the VCS to consider how to embed an approach of co-production to agree the required 10 year Vision Statement and the interventions that would form the 3 year investment plan; and
- e) Agreed that subject to any further changes to guidance which may affect the above recommendations and the delivery of the Long Term Plan for Towns, that any changes requiring urgent decisions are delegated to the Executive Director for Development, Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services in consultation with the Chair of Economic Growth and Regeneration.

The meeting concluded at 11.40 am.

H MARTIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

PUBLICATION DATE: 16 JULY 2024