

Economic Prosperity Sub Committee

Tuesday, 5 November 2019

Present: Councillor Janet Hunter (Chair)
Councillors K Barrie, N Craven, J Kirwin, K Lee,
J O'Shea, J Stirling, J Walker and M Wilson

Apologies: Councillors M Rankin, M Thirlaway and F Weetman

EP11/19 Appointment of Substitute Members

Pursuant to the Council's Constitution the appointment of the following substitute member was reported:

Councillor J O'Shea for Councillor M Thirlaway

EP12/19 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no Declarations of Interest or Dispensations reported.

EP13/19 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 3 September 2019 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

EP14/19 Economic Prosperity Strategies

The sub-committee examined the Council's current approach to economic prosperity and how it related to relevant regional and national economic strategies, in particular:

- a) whether the Council had a clear view of what type of economy it was seeking to achieve in 10 or 20 years' time;
- b) whether the existing wide range of activities to develop the local economy would have the desired effect in terms of delivering the Council's vision for the borough's economy; and
- c) the extent to which plans and strategies were likely to deliver inclusive growth, enabling as many people as possible to contribute and benefit from growth, identifying cold spots and ensuring people from these areas are included in economic growth through initiatives such as evaluating social value in procurement.

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Bruce Pickard, as Cabinet Member responsible for Regeneration, Planning, Business and Economic Development, and John Sparkes, The Head of Regeneration and Economic Development attended the meeting to present details of the Council's current approach, answer questions and to discuss the issues set out above.

During the discussion the sub-committee:

- a) noted that work was planned to update the Council's Employment and Skills Strategy to bring that and the Ambition for North Tyneside into a single view of an Inclusive Economic Strategy for Cabinet's consideration and to align with the work of the North of Tyne Combined Authority.
- b) queried what data the Council held in relation to vacancies to identify skills shortages and how employers needed to clearly define the skills required, taking into account future needs such as those arising from the need to address climate change;
- c) considered how the North of Tyne Combined Authority provided the mechanics in terms of scale, partnership working and funding to deliver an inclusive economy; and
- d) discussed the challenges associated with Brexit, particularly the uncertainties regarding future funding arrangements.

The Chair thanked Councillor Pickard and John Sparkes for attending the meeting and for presenting details of the economic strategies and answering the sub-committee's questions. She asked that the sub-committee be kept informed of progress.

EP15/19 Retail and Town Centre Sub Group

The sub-committee considered the report and recommendations of the Retail and Town Centre Sub Group. In September 2018 the sub-committee agreed to appoint a time limited sub group to:

- a) examine the existing local plans and strategies that aim to develop town and retail centres in North Tyneside;
- b) examine national policies, strategies, campaigns and reports, including
- c) examine how the retail sector and consumer behaviour have changed and how retailing may develop in the future;
- d) examine what other local authorities have done to successfully remodel their town centres; and
- e) formulate evidence based recommendations as to how the Council might shape its regeneration plans to develop and support sustainable retail and town centres in North Tyneside.

The sub group had met with a wide range of stakeholders and considered various policy documents and research papers to consider the issues facing the retail sector and to understand the current plans and strategies. Based on this evidence and taking into account advice from the Council's Head of Regeneration and Economic Development the sub group have prepared the report and recommendations which were presented to the sub-committee.

Resolved that the the report and recommendations of the Retail and Town Centre Sub-Group be approved for submission to the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee and then Cabinet.