

Economic Prosperity Sub Committee

Tuesday, 25 June 2019

Present: Councillor Janet Hunter (Chair)
Councillors K Barrie, J Harrison, J Kirwin, M Rankin,
M Thirlaway, J Walker and M Wilson

Apologies: Councillors N Craven and K Lee

EP1/19 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 N Craven

EP2/19 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no Declarations of Interest or Dispensations reported.

EP3/19 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the previous meeting held on the 26 March 2019 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

EP4/19 Work Programme 2019/20

The sub-committee gave consideration to the formulation of its work programme 2019/20. In doing so the sub-committee took into account a report setting out its role and remit, guidance on how it might select topics for examination and the previous year's work programme outlining the topics previously covered.

Reference was made to the sub group, appointed by the sub-committee, to examine the future of retail and town centres in North Tyneside. The group had prepared a draft report and recommendations which had been scheduled to be presented to this meeting for approval. However the Chief Executive and Head of Law and Governance had advised that the Head of Regeneration and Economic Development be given an opportunity to meet with the sub group to discuss the findings and recommendations before the report was finalised. The report was now scheduled to be presented to the sub-committee at its next meeting in September.

The Head of Regeneration and Economic Development attended the meeting to discuss the formulation of the work programme and to make suggestions as to those areas the sub-committee could usefully examine. He raised the following issues:

- a) the repositioning of retail and leisure provision in town centres and the potential for digital connections and high speed broadband to attract new businesses into town centres;
- b) North Tyneside benefitted from the employment provided by its large office parks. It

would be useful to track office occupation and to analyse any trends in occupation which may highlight opportunities for example to attract any overspill from Newcastle City Centre;

- c) the importance of working with partners such as the North of Tyne Combined Authority and the Port of Tyne to release opportunities such as developing offshore industries along the riverside and to work more strategically to develop the opportunities in the South East Northumberland corridor into North Tyneside;
- d) there was an important link between place and the economy. The impact of major housing developments on town and district centres would need to be considered;
- e) transport infrastructure was important to support a strong economy and there was a regional bid to the Transforming Cities Fund to dual the metro line near Pelaw to increase capacity on the system and to re-introduce passenger services on the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne railway line; and
- f) there was a link between the economy and employment with education and skills and the need to raise educational attainment and aspirations.

Members of the sub-committee also suggested a range of topics for scrutiny during the forthcoming year as follows:

- a) to carry out an audit of businesses in North Tyneside to analyse demand for smaller serviced office spaces which would allow fledgling businesses to network with similar businesses and grow without substantial risk;
- b) to examine the economic impact of past projects such as the coastal regeneration in Whitley Bay and the development of North Shields Fish Quay, to assess what worked well and to evaluate the outcomes, benchmarked against the original objectives of the projects;
- c) to examine the Council's trading companies' plans, strategies and vision and their likely impact on the borough's economy;
- d) to examine the extent to which there has been an uplift in the employability of people living in the borough;
- e) to consider what is meant by the term economic prosperity. In the context of the wide range of activities going on to develop the local economy there is a need to look holistically at the impact of these individual projects, such as the Clean Air Zone proposals, to test whether they will have the desired effect in delivery the vision for the borough's economy. Furthermore, did the Council have a clear view of what type of economy it was seeking to achieve in 10 or 20 years time;
- f) to contribute to any reviews of the Local Plan, to assess delivery of the plan in terms of the number of houses built, jobs created and roads constructed and whether the plan could be improved;
- g) to identify skills shortages and to examine the action to be taken to address any gaps;
- h) to consider how the introduction of a charging Clean Air Zone may be used as an opportunity to boost the borough's economy by retaining business in the area;
- i) to what extent were the Council's plans and strategies likely to deliver inclusive growth, identifying cold spots and ensuring people from these areas are included in economic growth through initiatives such as evaluating social value in procurement.
- j) to examine the Council's approach to attracting inward investment and how development opportunities such as the Swan Hunter's site and Indigo Park might be exploited;
- k) to consider the inhibitors to speculative property development in the area and how these might be overridden;
- l) to visit locally owned and small businesses;
- m) to evaluate how much business contracted by the Council as part of its repairs and maintenance service is procured locally; and
- n) to consider the Council's approach to delivering a green industrial revolution to take rapid

action to reduce the carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere, its impact for local industries and to ensure people have the right skills for the future green jobs.

It was **agreed** that (1) the Chair, Deputy Chair, Head of Regeneration and Economic Development and Democratic Support Officer be authorised to consider and prioritise the topics suggested during the meeting and prepare a work programme for the year ahead; and
(2) the Head of Regeneration and Economic Development prepare and circulate to members of the sub-committee a briefing note setting out an overview of the national and regional policy framework which helps shape the local approach to economic development.