

Economic Prosperity Sub Committee

Wednesday, 14 July 2021

Present: Councillor M Wilson (Chair)
Councillors L Bones, T Brady, J Harrison, H Johnson,
J O'Shea, B Pickard, W Samuel, J Stirling and Westwater

Apologies: Councillors M Hall, Janet Hunter and J Walker

1/21 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 Janet Hunter

2/21 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Councillor T Brady declared a non-registerable personal interest in relation to the Shop Local Campaign as she owned a small business and was currently exploring the possibility of using the campaign.

Councillor B Pickard stated that, as a Cabinet Member, he had been involved in the formulation of the Inclusive Economy Strategy and the establishment of the Shop Local Campaign, and so would restrict his comments to the accuracy of the information presented.

3/21 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2021 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

The Chair thanked officers for providing supplementary information since the last meeting in relation to the amount of funding likely to be invested in North Tyneside as part of the Government's Plan for Jobs and he expressed his frustration that detailed figures had not been available from the Department of Work and Pensions and the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

4/21 Inclusive Economy Strategy

At its meeting on 24 May 2021 the Cabinet had approved an approach towards developing an inclusive economy in North Tyneside. Julie Dodds, the Council's Service Manager: Inclusive Economy and Business Growth, presented the background to the strategy, details of the Council's approach and the steps to be taken to implement it.

The sub-committee heard that the approach sought to build a more inclusive North

Tyneside, particularly using the local economy as a route to making that happen. The report to Cabinet set out a framework for a range of projects and activities across all the Council's departments aimed to making North Tyneside and its economy, more inclusive. It contained a framework approach organised across seven fundamental areas; Education, Employment, Safety, Social equity, Housing, Connections and Environment.

In considering the Council's approach members of the sub-committee asked questions and made comments when the following issues were discussed in more detail:

- a) The differences in the approach now proposed to tackling inequalities and deprivation compared to those approaches adopted over the past 25 years;
- b) The role of the sub-committee in monitoring indicators of deprivation and inequalities and evaluating the impact of the strategy;
- c) How the Council's approach, as part of a wider regional drive for more and better jobs, would address the issue of lower wage rates within North Tyneside compared to other parts of the country;
- d) The opportunity for the Council to bid for funding from the Levelling Up Fund and the Council's designation within Category 2 of the priority list of areas. The Council could collaborate with other authorities with a higher priority rating to bid for funding;
- e) How statistics and averages often failed to accurately reflect the inequalities that existed in areas of the borough;
- f) The need for investment in adult and further education to provide skills and training opportunities for those who did not gain qualifications in school; and
- g) The wider national and global economic landscape within which the Council would need to work collaboratively with its public and commercial partners to deliver an inclusive economy.

5/21 Shop Local Campaign

The sub-committee received a presentation from Julie Dodds, the Council's Service Manager: Inclusive Economy and Business Growth, in relation to the Shop Local Campaign in North Tyneside and its future development.

The "Buy Local North Tyneside" was an initiative delivered by three town centre chambers of trade and Newcastle Building Society, supported by the Council and the North Tyneside Business Forum. The website buylocalnorthtyneside.co.uk had acted as a directory and mostly digital campaign activity, and this had been supported by roundabout advertising and a substantial flyer drop to residents.

After consultation and discussion with the chambers of trade, the Business Forum and a presentation from Totally Locally it was agreed that efforts should be channelled into promoting this brand as a successor to Buy Local. Totally Locally was a grass roots campaign, built on the ethos that anyone can use it and inclusive in nature. It allowed all businesses to get involved irrespective of sector, whether they are service led/goods led or part of a chamber. It offered a Borough wide solution with a free of charge brand that already has market traction both nationally and internationally with some existing local take up. £50,000 of funding was being sought from the North of Tyne Combined Authority's Recovery and Innovation Places Fund to help support activity and roll out.

A separate but interlinked workstream involved the provision of an e-commerce platform where local businesses could sell their goods and services under a local banner of North Tyneside. It would allow click and collect options, individual delivery arrangements and

potentially provide consolidated delivery options that could combine orders from multiple shops in particular geographies and deliver via sustainable electronic bikes and vans. A funding application is being considered for CONTAIN funding which will provide up to £100k for the first year including platform development, set up and promotion, as well as business subscriptions and the consolidated delivery operation.

The sub-committee welcomed these initiatives as much needed help for the independent retail sector in North Tyneside. Members referred to the need to also attract and develop manufacturing industries in the borough and officers confirmed that this area of work was being addressed as a separate workstream.

6/21 Sustainable Transport Schemes

Following several successful bids for funding, the Council had recently sought views on plans to provide around 14km of new cycling routes across the Borough including an option for the first 'Dutch-style' roundabout in the region. The Council had secured nearly £1.6m from the Government's Active Travel Fund (ATF) and £7million from the Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) for cycling improvements. The detail of each proposal varied as the ATF schemes have been prepared to outline design stage, whereas the TCF schemes are at an earlier concept stage.

Nick Bryan, the Council's Highways Manager, attended the meeting to present the preliminary outcomes from the consultation which had closed on 11 July 2021. Respondents had represented the views of both motorists and cyclists and generally the greater number of respondents were in favour of the proposals. Many respondents had recorded constructive comments as to how the schemes could be improved but most comments were made without knowledge of the physical and budgetary constraints on the schemes. Some of the themes to emerge from the consultation were safety concerns regarding the proposed "dutch-style" roundabout at New York, an insistence that cycle routes should always be segregated without exception and concerns that some interventions may create/increase traffic congestion.

The sub-committee considered the adequacy of receiving 500 responses to such significant proposals and queried whether further work would be undertaken to analyse who had responded. In response to questions officers described the extent and nature of cycling routes in Chirton Ward, the rationale for the location of the proposed routes, many of which were to connect to public transport hubs such as North Shields Metro Station, and the impact of the routes on parking places. Members also considered the impact of the proposals on traffic using the Foxhunters junction if they were introduced before the construction of a through road across the Murton Gap. Secure cycle parking would be provided at transport hubs to complement the new routes and members emphasised the importance of adhering to the required standards when providing shared cycle and pedestrian paths.

7/21 Work Programme 2021-22

The sub-committee were presented with a draft work programme which had been formulated in consultation with the Chair and relevant officers. The plan had been based on outstanding scrutiny exercises carried over from 2020/21 and some topics identified by members of the Council. Members were invited to prioritise these topics for examination and

to raise any others topics for inclusion in the work programme.

It was **agreed** that 1) a discussion on Freeports be postponed following the recent submission of a regional collaborative bid for a North East England Freeport;

2) support for town centres should continue to be a priority area for the sub-committee to consider and any work in this area be linked to how the Council can support and benefit from new and flexible ways of working;

3) the River Tyne North Bank Study be presented to the next meeting in September;

4) the sub-committee should investigate success stories and talk to businesses who have been attracted to the area to discuss how they envisage the future in terms of an inclusive economy, a green industrial revolution, skills and training and the office property market; and

5) the sub-committee consider establishing a sub-group to examine in more detail the Council's approach to ensuring people have the right skills for future green jobs.