

Economic Prosperity Sub Committee

Tuesday, 3 September 2019

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

Apologies: Councillors J Stirling and F Weetman

EP6/19 Substitute Members

There were no substitute members appointed.

EP7/19 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no Declarations of Interest or Dispensations reported.

EP8/19 Minutes of Previous Meeting

Resolved that the minutes of the previous meeting held on the 25 June 2019 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

EP9/19 Inward Investment

The Head of Regeneration and Economic Development attended the meeting to present details of the Council's approach to inward investment. The sub-committee noted the borough's strengths, the benefits of inward investment and how 6,415 new jobs had been created in the last 5 years. Many were based on the successful Cobalt and Quorum Business Parks.

Members examined plans to market the Swan Hunter site which offered a 34 acre riverside development featuring a deep water quay suited to the subsea and offshore engineering sectors. The sub-committee considered the Council's long term objectives for the site, the financial implications of its development and the wider benefits of employment on the site for the local economy and neighbouring communities.

The Swans Centre for Innovation had been developed by the Council to offer incubator units for the offshore energy sector. Further office space within the centre was currently being refurbished to create space for an additional 10 companies.

The Port of Tyne owned 50 hectares of development space at Whitehill Point/Royal Quays. The site lay within an Enterprise Zone with access to a heavy duty quay allowing large vessels to be accommodated with the potential use by offshore wind industry.

The Council had entered into a partnership with Highbridge Properties Ltd to develop an 82 acre site at Indigo Park, Weetslade. The sub-committee considered the need for speculative

development to attract manufacturing or warehousing operations to the site. Members also discussed the impact of development on the surrounding ecology and transport networks and how the use of the site for employment would relate to other industrial and housing developments in the area.

The Council had a small team working on inward investment. They targeted their activity on key sectors including the energy, digital, FPBS (finance, professional & business services) and advanced manufacturing sectors. North Tyneside was marketed as a key location for business using various methods and in partnership with other key agencies. Support had been provided to Smulders which had led to £50m of investment and 700 jobs and to Accenture who had increased its workforce in the borough from 250 to 1,200.

In the future, consideration would be given to the risks and opportunities related to Brexit and there would be work with the North of Tyne Combined Authority to exploit grant funding opportunities, explore economic links with South East Northumberland and address skills gaps, particularly in the digital, construction, engineering and welding sectors.

The sub-committee considered the extent to which inward investment in North Tyneside was delivering inclusive growth and equality of opportunity regardless of gender or age.

It was noted that there were 10,000 micro businesses based in North Tyneside and it was suggested that an examination of the needs of small businesses in terms of office space and its potential impact on town centres should be included within the work programme, if not addressed by the Retail and Town Centre Sub Group.

EP10/19 Work Programme 2019-20

At its previous meeting the sub-committee had given consideration to the formulation of its work programme 2019/20 when a range of potential topics for scrutiny had been identified. Following consultation with the Chair, Deputy Chair and Head of Regeneration and Economic Development a draft work programme had been prepared and this was submitted to the sub-committee for approval. The work programme would be kept under review throughout the year and, if necessary, topics and scrutiny exercises would be added, deleted or amended.

It was **agreed** that the work programme 2019/20 be approved.