



Enterprise and
Growth Scrutiny
Committee

10.00 am

Item

Public

**MINUTES OF THE ENTERPRISE AND GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON 23 MARCH 2017
10.00 - 11.45 AM**

Responsible Officer: Amanda Holyoak

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Present

Councillor Steve Davenport (Leader)

Councillors Andrew Bannerman, Nicholas Bardsley, Pauline Dee (Vice Chairman),
John Hurst-Knight, Jonny Keeley, Nic Laurens and William Parr

45 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

Apologies were received from Councillor Jean Jones.

46 Declarations of Interest

None were declared.

47 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2017 were confirmed as a correct record.

48 Public Question Time

There were no questions from members of the public.

49 Member Questions

There were no questions from Members.

50 Draft Economic Growth Strategy

The Head of Economic Growth gave a presentation on the Draft Economic Growth Strategy. A copy of the draft Strategy had also been circulated to Members (copy of report and presentation attached to the signed minutes). The presentation covered the objectives of the Strategy, its priority actions and the next steps.

Members were asked for their comments on the draft and during discussion the following points were made:

Target actions and resources on economic opportunities

Members felt that:

the role of the Business Board and Business Ambassadors was extremely valuable, especially those representing Shropshire's larger companies.

Cross border working was essential (the Head of Economic Growth was able to give reassurance that this was already happening)

The role of University Centre Shrewsbury and other Further and Higher Education institutions would be extremely important, especially in relation to the sectors of particular growth potential in Shropshire and meeting recruitment challenges.

There was a need to recognise the needs of RAF Shawbury, and to take into account any concerns it might have regarding the future of the Clive Barracks Site.

There was a need to recognise the likelihood that driverless cars could be common by 2020, particularly in relation to the work related to Northern Gateway Development Zone and proximity to HS2 hub at Crewe. A member reported that HS2 plans were very much centred around driverless cars and plans for long term infrastructure should be suited to this technology.

The need to recognise the potential of Wem for growth, particularly as a station on the Cardiff - Manchester line.

Enable businesses to grow and succeed

Members felt that:

There was a need for strong and consistent Member and officer input from Shropshire Council into sub-regional meetings of the LEP, West Midlands Combined Authority

Deliver Infrastructure to support growth

Members felt that:

There was a need to focus on transport connections in the north of the county but where transport connections could never be as good, for example, in the south west of the country, there should be a focus on digital and mobile connections. A member commented that in other parts of the country, software and game developers were often based in rural areas where rents were lower due to poor transport links.

There should be consideration given to developing new rail halts at the football ground, and at the Flaxmill, particularly in the light of traffic congestion in Shrewsbury.

Appropriate maintenance of existing road infrastructure was essential so that communities did not become isolated.

The Head of Economic Growth said she had identified a need to demonstrate that business as usual and infrastructure maintenance was in hand. She said she would take this up with the Head of Infrastructure and Communities.

The Director of Place and Enterprise thanked the Committee for the comments and encouraged Members with further feedback to forward it the end of the consultation period on 28 April 2017. It was intended that Strategy would be finalised in May and approved by Cabinet in June.

The Committee agreed that it should monitor performance through regular reports and Members agreed that development of a performance dashboard would be very helpful.

51 Final Report of the Planning Task and Finish Group

The Planning Services Manager explained the background and content of the report of the Planning Task and Finish Group (copy attached to signed minutes).

He explained how feedback from Members had helped in the revision of business processes to date and informed the review of the Planning Service. During discussion the Planning Service Manager said he would remind officers of the importance of an effective relationship with Councillors.

Members recalled a previous tour of the county to see examples of developments of differing quality. It was suggested that this should be run again. Members were also pleased to note that the Chief Executive of the Royal Town Planning Institute would be visiting Shropshire on 19 June 2017, to see things first hand from a Shropshire Perspective.

The Chairman emphasised the importance of avoiding delays by waiting for responses from consultees internal to the Council. Members were informed that this was being addressed by the Head of Economic Growth.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee endorsed the recommendations in the report:

- i. That following the election in May there will be a new Council and this would then be an appropriate time to revisit the planning committee options.
- ii. That the business process review recommendations outlined in the report be implemented
- iii. That the recommendations and responses to the RTPI "Fostering Economic Growth be embedded into the culture and operation of the Planning Service.
- iv. That the Council recognises that the performance of the planning process is dependent not only on the planning team, but also on the resource and capacity of internal and external consultees to the process.

52 Update on Economic Growth Activity

The Head of Economic Growth provided gave an update on Economic Growth Activity. Members heard that:

- All enquiries received by the team were logged and collated. The client relationships management system which recorded all interactions with businesses was under review with the aim of making better use of the information collected.
- Work was underway with the Communications Team on raising the profile of the Service and external communication. A programmed approach was being developed.
- A response to the Housing White Paper was due on 2 May 2017
- A response to the Industrial Strategy was also being developed alongside the LEP and Business Board
- A draft of a new Skills Plan would be available at the end of May 2017.
- Activity including workshops was planned to promote Low Carbon and Skills Strand EU Funding, as take up had been low so far.
- The EU funding approach going forward had been raised at LEP level.

Members thanked the Head of Economic Growth for the update.

53 Work Programme

The Chairman said he hoped it would be possible to arrange a meeting in April to consider the night time economy.

He thanked Members who were not standing for re-election for their valued contribution to the work of the Committee.