



Enterprise and
Growth Scrutiny
Committee

9th October 2014

10.00 am

Item

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Public

**MINUTES OF THE ENTERPRISE AND GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON 4 SEPTEMBER 2014
10.00 - 11.20 AM**

Responsible Officer: Julie Fildes
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Present

Councillor Steve Davenport (Chairman)
Councillors Andrew Bannerman, Martin Bennett, Nicholas Bardsley, Charlotte Barnes,
John Hurst-Knight, Peter Cherrington (Substitute) (substitute for Pauline Dee) and
Jon Tandy (Substitute) (substitute for Jean Jones)

12 Apologies for Absence and Substitutes

Apologies were received from Councillors William Parr, Pauline Dee and Jean Jones.

Councillors Jon Tandy and Peter Cherrington attended as substitutes for Councillors Jean Jones and Pauline Dee respectively.

13 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Members were reminded that they must not participate in the discussion or voting on any matter in which they had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and should leave the room prior to the commencement of the debate.

14 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 28th July 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

15 Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

16 Member Question Time

There were no questions from Members.

17 Economic Growth Re-Design

The Economic Growth Re-design Manager up-dated Members on the work and activity that had been undertaken to redesign Shropshire's Economic Growth Services since the previous meeting of the Committee on the 28th July 2014.

She reported that as part of the on-going work under the Community Business strand of the redesign work Officers had considered how the Council engaged with businesses within their local community and how they could assist them to better understand the role they could have in creating local wealth. As part of this work Officers had attended the joint Pontesbury and Minsterley Parish Council meeting in August. The Parish Councils had undertaken 'the bucket as a local economy' exercise and found it useful. Officers had also attended the Minsterley Show in mid-August, which had been a good source of data. Community Group mapping, business and resident survey work had also continued to gather relevant and useful information.

In response to a Member's question, the Economic Growth Re-design Manager confirmed that she had identified 200 businesses in the Pontesbury area and this had been achieved using a variety of methods; from the use of commercial companies providing lists to word of mouth. She agreed that many small businesses who were not registered as Limited Companies and those that operated out of private homes and not paying business rates could be difficult to identify.

The Economic Growth Re-design Manager outlined some of the findings regarding the area's statistical profile and a Member commented that many of the characteristics of the area echoed a number of other areas in the County, with the development of tourism being a prime local priority.

In response to a Member's comments regarding tourism the Business and Enterprise Service Manager explained that the visitor economy formed a key part of the Economic Growth Strategy.

It was noted that the Economic Building Blocks and Areas of Focus had been identified. The Economic Growth Re-design Manager agreed with a Member's comment that a firm understanding of the needs of local businesses was essential for strategic planning. She continued that as part of the Strategic Growth Workstream, strong links with the Physical Growth Workstream had been identified and these provided an evidence base for successful delivery. Officers had also been considering how the eighteen Place Plan areas could be used for strategic delivery and how Parishes could be encouraged to be more proactive in finding resolutions to their own issues with the Council taking on more of an enablement role in the process.

Members noted that the next Decision Accelerator would be held on Monday 22nd September 2014, where all the findings and associated evidence would be examined. It was planned that common strands across the four individual work themes would be identified and taken forward into the next phase of the project. In addition, Officers would also be identifying and testing new operating models.

Answering a Member's query about the difficulties of scaling the project up to the whole County the Economic Growth Re-design Manager explained that the project was resource intensive because of the amount of learning being taken from it. This learning would be used to change processes and procedures and would result in other areas requiring fewer resources than the initial pilot area. She continued that the project would be rolled out in identified areas and tailored to the needs of each area, it would not be done in a single drop across the County.

A Member's comments about the way the Council communicated with businesses were noted. A Member suggested that a questionnaire could be enclosed with the annual business rates as a means of gathering information.

Members discussed the wider issues of communication, both digital and the strategic ones of road and rail transport. The Business and Enterprise Service Manager reminded Members that the Business Board was actively engaged in identifying the problem spots with the mobile phone network and working to improve it. Members suggested that the Council should be involved in this, particularly as it had featured as a topic on earlier work programmes of the Committee. Members discussed whether this could be an item for the future work programme. The Business and Enterprise Service Manager agreed to look into this further and update Members at a future meeting and look to invite representatives from the two main providers; EE and Vodafone.

Members noted that the Joint Meeting of Pontesbury and Minsterley Parish Councils had identified higher and further education provision as items for future development in the area. The Economic Growth Re-design Manager commented that it was for Parishes to identify areas of importance to them but the Council had to take a strategic overview on the provision of services and required a body of evidence regarding need before it would take the aspiration further. She continued that as the Council became a Commissioning Council it would move away from its traditional role of service provider and take on the role of service enabler. The Council would also have to consider who would be the most appropriate body to give businesses the support they required and whether there were other methods of supporting businesses more effectively.

18 Future Work Programme of the Enterprise and Growth Scrutiny Committee

Members discussed establishing a Rapid Task and Finish group to work with the Economic Growth Re-design Manager on the business re-design process. A Member suggested that two Committee Members could shadow the Economic Growth Re-design Manager and the relevant Portfolio Holder to identify areas of work that a Task and Finish Group could usefully undertake, returning to the next meeting of the Committee with specific terms of reference for a time limited piece of work. Another Member suggested that the Committee had already identified areas

of work for a Rapid Task and Finish Group and a shadowing process was unnecessary. It was noted that, under the Constitution, the Committee as a whole had to agree the terms of reference and the scope of any working group that it appointed.

The Council's Performance Manager advised Members that the area of the business redesign was huge and their resources were limited. He agreed that setting up the Rapid Task and Finish Group would allow Members to be better integrated with the process and would allow them to act as a 'critical friend'. He continued that before deciding on the specific area to follow, Members should consider in which areas they were interested in and which they could influence. He suggested that Members may wish to take advice from Officers after the Decision Accelerator on the 22nd September as to where their efforts could be best directed.

Members agreed that Councillors Davenport and Barnes would attend and observe the Decision Accelerator in September. Following that work would be undertaken to scope out the terms of reference for a Rapid Task and Finish Group.

It was also agreed that a meeting of the Enterprise and Growth Scrutiny Committee Work Programme Working Group would be held before the next meeting of the full Committee to discuss suggested items for the work programme, to consider:

- Mobile Telecom connectivity;
- Planning – a broader scope;
- Licensing;
- Apprenticeships – although it was noted that this was best linked into the work on the economic growth; and
- Inviting Cabinet Members to attend meetings to update Members on performance issues.

Signed (Chairman)

Date: