

REGENERATION SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL

Thursday, 28 July 2011 at 6.00 p.m. at the Council House

Panel Members Present: Councillor I. Shires (Chair)
Councillor D. Anson
Councillor R. Carpenter
Councillor B. Douglas-Maul
Councillor S. Fitzpatrick
Councillor L. Jeavons
Councillor M. Munir

Officers Present: Tim Johnson - Executive Director (Regeneration)
Mike Lavender - Head of Strategic Regeneration
Simon Tranter - Head of Development and Delivery
Jane Kaur-Gill - Regeneration Team Leader, Economic Wellbeing
Alix Jackson - Regeneration Officer, Project Management
Charis Blythe - Trainee Planning Assistant
Craig Goodall - Scrutiny Officer

91/11 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor I. Azam and Councillor D. James.

92/11 SUBSTITUTIONS

There were no substitutions for the duration of the meeting.

93/11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest or party whip for the duration of the meeting.

94/11 MINUTES

It was agreed that Councillor L. Jeavons be listed in attendance at the last meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes, as amended, of the meeting held on 13 June 2011, a copy having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.

95/11 CREATING BUSINESS AND A SKILLED WORKFORCE

The Panel received information on the current economic situation globally, regionally and locally and reflected on the recent workshop session that took place on the proposed workstreams on creating business and a skilled workforce in Walsall.

Members were shown four short films, the first 'Shift: Change' presented facts on the global economy and the current direction of travel. Three further films were shown informing Members of the local situation with regard to child and family poverty, worklessness and economy.

The following were the principle points from the ensuing discussion:-

- The Panel discussed the loss of local manufacturing jobs to the Far East and the importance of capitalising on future opportunities to create employment in the future;
- Difficulties experienced by local businesses recruiting local people with the right skills and attitudes were discussed;
- The difference in outcomes between east and west of the Borough was noted;
- The importance of breaking inter-generational worklessness in families was noted.

The Head of Strategic Regeneration presented the conclusions of the scoping meeting that took place to develop the creating business and a skilled workforce workstreams. The principle changes were a slight shift in focus to investigate:-

- (a) how do you start a business?
- (b) how do you sustain a business?

It was felt that the initial proposed workstream of creating a skilled and flexible workforce would be captured as an essential theme running through both of the proposed topics.

Members requested to commence both workstreams with case study examples mapping the real life customer journey. It was felt the starting a business workstream could focus on young people trying to start a business.

RESOLVED:

THAT:

1. **the 'Workforce Working Group' becomes the 'Business Sustainability Working Group';**
2. **Councillor L. Jeavons be lead Member for the Business Sustainability Working Group;**
3. **Councillor S. Fitzpatrick be lead Member for the Business Start-Up Working Group;**
4. **the Chair, lead Members and lead officers of Working Groups meet to plan the Working Group investigations;**

5. **customer journeys be mapped for:-**
 - (a) **a cohort of residents wishing to start a business;**
 - (b) **a range of established businesses seeking ongoing support and guidance;**
6. **the mapped customer journeys be reported to the respective Working Groups;**
7. **statistics on child poverty on a Ward basis be provided to Panel Members;**
8. **the presentations and videos given to the Panel be made available to Members;**
9. **a press release be issued highlighting the work that the Panel is undertaking.**

96/11 TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION

The Panel were informed on completed, ongoing and future schemes for regenerating Walsall Town Centre. The Head of Delivery and Development, the Regeneration Officer - Project Management and the Trainee Planning Assistant gave a short presentation (annexed) to the Panel. They highlighted:-

- Why the Town Centre matters;
- Issues and challenges facing the Town Centre;
- Development opportunities;
- The Town Centre framework.

The following were the principle points from the ensuing discussion:-

- Members and officers agreed on the need to produce a strategic plan of the Town Centre for development and regeneration. It was important that this strategy reflected the town's transport needs;
- Members were re-assured that Walsall was actively marketed to developers and employers at every opportunity. Commercial sensitivities prevented these discussions being publicised to Members;
- Problems with the image of Walsall Town Centre were recognised as a detriment to attracting people to the Centre.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

97/11 ENTERPRISE ZONE

The Panel was updated with regard to the creation of a Black Country Enterprise Zone (EZ).

The Executive Director (Regeneration), explained that the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership was proposing eight sites to be designated EZs. This proposal was currently being assessed for eligibility and affordability. A decision was expected in August.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

98/11 FORWARD PLAN AND WORK PROGRAMME 2011/12

The Panel considered their Work Programme and the latest version of Cabinet's Forward Plan of key decisions.

21/11 Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership

The Executive Director (Regeneration) informed the Panel that the Council was working with Carillion to undertake a business friendly planning review. Once complete, the review would produce a report and recommendations for future improvements.

RESOLVED:

THAT:

- 1. information on the business friendly planning review be circulated to all Members of the Panel;**
- 2. the following items be added to the Panel's Work Programme:-**
 - (a) Corporate Asset Management 2009-2014;**
 - (b) Financial monitoring.**

99/11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members noted that the date of the next meeting was 22 September, 2011.

The meeting closed at 7.48 p.m.

Signed:

Date: