

REGENERATION SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL

Friday 21 January 2011 at 6.00 p.m. at the Council House

Panel Members Present: Councillor D. Pitt (Chair)
Councillor M. Ahmed
Councillor I. Azam
Councillor D. Coughlan
Councillor L. Harrison
Councillor L. Jeavons
Councillor I. Shires

Portfolio Holders Present: Councillor A. Andrew – Regeneration
Councillor M. Bird – Leader
Councillor C. Towe – Finance and Personnel

Officers Present: Mike Tichford – Assistant Director (Regeneration)
Andrew Rumble – Partnership for Walsall Economic
Regeneration Manager
Chris Knowles – Lead Accountant
Craig Goodall – Scrutiny Officer

58/10 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors D. Anson, S. Coughlan and B. Tweddle.

59/10 SUBSTITUTIONS

Councillor L. Jeavons substituted for Councillor S. Coughlan.

60/10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP

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

61/10 BUSINESS START UPS IN WALSALL

The Panel were informed of details of the number of business start ups in Walsall compared to regional and national statistics. Members were also informed of the support that is available to help new businesses.

The Partnership for Walsall Economic Regeneration Manager reported that business start up levels in Walsall were significantly lower than the levels regionally and nationally. The levels of business 'deaths' was also higher in Walsall when compared to regional and national levels. Walsall required over 2,000 additional businesses to match national levels of business numbers. Therefore it was critical that local people were encouraged to establish their own businesses and that existing businesses were retained. He explained that support was available to local businesses through the Working

Neighbourhoods Fund, Business Link, Black Country Enterprise, Business Link , Jobcentre+ and the Princes Trust.

The Chair explained that he had serious concerns about the deficit in business numbers in Walsall and the low survival rate of local companies. He suggested that the Panel establish a working group to investigate business start ups and the how support should be provided to new businesses.

There was a short discussion on the needs of business engagement and networking.

RESOLVED:

THAT:

- 1. a working group be established to investigate business start ups and how support to new businesses should be provided;**
- 2. the following Members be appointed to the working group:**
 - a. Councillor D. Pitt**
 - b. Councillor I. Azam**
 - c. Councillor I. Shires**
- 3. Councillor D. Pitt be appointed Lead Member of the working group;**
and;
- 4. Councillor D. Anson be invited to become a Member of the working group.**

62/10 DRAFT REVENUE AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Panel considered the revised draft revenue budget and draft capital programme proposals for 2011/12.

The Portfolio Holder (Regeneration) reported the draft revenue budget and draft capital programme to the Panel.

RESOLVED:

That the draft revenue budget and draft capital programme 2011/12 of the Regeneration Portfolio be noted.

63/10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was noted as 17 March 2011.

The meeting closed at 6.15 p.m.

Signed:

Date: