

ENVIRONMENTAL AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE

11th April 2013

PRESENT:-

Conservative Group

Councillor Watson (Chairman), Councillor Roberts (Vice-Chairman) and Councillors Mrs. Hall, Harrison (substitute for Councillor Ford), Mrs. Patten, Smith (substitute for Councillor Mrs. Brown) and Stanton.

Labour Group

Councillors Chahal, Dunn, Mrs. Heath, Stuart and Tilley.

In attendance

Councillor Mrs. Plenderleith.

EDS/58. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from Councillors Mrs. Brown and Ford (Conservative Group) and Councillor Taylor (Labour Group).

EDS/59. **MINUTES**

The Open Minutes of the Meeting held on 7th March 2013, were taken as read, approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

EDS/60. **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Councillor Smith declared a personal interest in Minute No. EDS/63, as he had previous dealings with Business Link when establishing his own business.

EDS/61. **REPORTS OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Councillor Mrs. Plenderleith advised that she had sent a letter to the Chairman of Environmental and Development Services Committee requesting input into next years work programme.

MATTERS DELEGATED TO COMMITTEE

EDS/62. **SOUTH DERBYSHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT**

A presentation was delivered which sought Member's support for an Economic Development Statement, which was attached as an Annexe to the report.

Members were reminded that an Economic Development Strategy for South Derbyshire which covered the period 2008 to 2012 had been approved, and was set within the context of the East Midlands Regional Economic Strategy 2006-2020. However, following adoption of the Strategy, the UK and world economies had entered a major downturn. This led to a decline in business confidence and a sharp rise in unemployment during 2008 and 2009. In response to the economic downturn, a twin-track approach had been adopted

and the aims set out in the Economic Development Strategy had been successfully pursued, whilst in addition, a range of shorter term measures had been adopted to assist smaller businesses in the area.

Details were provided on recent developments which included the District Council's Planning and Economic Development Policies which had facilitated the rapid growth of business in the area, and had been aided by external funding secured by economic development projects that had successfully delivered benefits for the local economy. In addition, initiatives were listed that had come via the South Derbyshire Partnership and in particular its Sustainable Development theme group, which was the District's principle Economic Development Partnership.

It was proposed to adopt an Economic Development Statement that would reiterate the vision, objectives and ambitions of the early Economic Development Strategy. The South Derbyshire Partnership would remain the key vehicle for delivering these ambitions. This Partnership brought together the public and third sector organisations involved in economic development, with representative bodies and individual businesses from the private sector.

It was anticipated that a new strategy could be published in 2015 for the following 5 years. The vision, objectives and ambitions of the South Derbyshire Economic Development Strategy 2008-2012 had proved to be robust and had led to the improvement of the economic position of the District. As such, it was proposed that they were maintained in the interim, as the Economic Development Statement for South Derbyshire.

Members supported this report, however requested that investigations be made in to the recent publicity on 'WorkFare', and a further report be submitted to the Committee.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the South Derbyshire Economic Development Statement be approved.***
- (2) That investigations be made into the recent publicity on WorkFare issues at B & M Bargains in Swadlincote and a further report be submitted to the Committee on this issue.***

EDS/63. SOUTH DERBYSHIRE BUSINESS ADVICE SERVICE

A report was submitted which sought Members support to continue the South Derbyshire Business Advice Service.

In August 2012 Members had approved the piloting of a Business Advice Service to the end of 2012/13 financial year. This had commenced in November 2012 and offered free, independent, face-to-face, one-to-one business advice to entrepreneurs and companies in the District, and was designed to complement the targeted support provided by Central Government initiatives such as the GrowthAccelerator project. The service had aimed to particularly benefit new start and smaller businesses who were

not in a position to pay for business advice services from commercial providers.

Full details were provided on this service along with numbers of enterprises that had been assisted and issues which had been tackled.

The survey of beneficiaries to date found that 100% of respondents rated the quality of the service provided as good or excellent.

The cost of operating this service would be met from existing budgets, with funds being re-prioritised in order to extend the initiative. Where opportunities arose, additional funding would be sought from partner organisations to develop the service. Support would also be sought from the South Derbyshire Partnership.

RESOLVED:-

That the South Derbyshire Business Advice Service be supported and funds be reprioritised in order to extend the service.

EDS/64. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered the updated work programme. It was also requested that all future work programmes be prepared on a 6 monthly rolling basis.

RESOLVED:-

That the updated work programme be approved, and the future work programme be prepared on a six-monthly rolling basis.

EDS/65. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

RESOLVED:-

That, in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the Meeting as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that there would be disclosed exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of the Schedule 12A of the Act indicated in brackets after each item.

DONNINGTON PARK PLANNING APPLICATION (Paragraph 6)

A response was approved on the basis of the recommendations within the report.

A REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S STRUCTURE (Paragraph 1)

The Committee supported the proposals relating to the review of the Council's structure.

P. WATSON

CHAIRMAN