

Minutes of Economic Development

Meeting Date: Thursday, 25 March 2021, starting at 6.30 pm
Present: Councillor S Hirst (Chair)

Councillors:

D Berryman	S Fletcher
S Bibby	M French
D Birtwhistle	M Hindle
I Brown	S Hore
B Buller	G Mirfin
J Clark	J Rogerson
R Elms	

In attendance: Director of Economic Development and Planning, Head of Leisure and Cultural Services, Head of Regeneration and Housing, Tourism Officer, Senior Accountant and Planning Policy Assistant

Also in attendance: Councillors T Austin

1075 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for the meeting were received from Councillor S Knox.

1076 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman with the addition of Cllr R Elms to the apologies.

1077 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND NON PECUNIARY INTERESTS

There were no declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests.

1078 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

1079 COVID 19 ECONOMIC IMPACTS

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report for information on the assessment so far on the ongoing impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the economy of the Ribble Valley.

The report highlighted levels of unemployment with the working population claiming Universal Credit; the percentage of eligible employees enrolled on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (furlough); a timeline relating to events and policies relating to the pandemic; support grants paid out by the Council and vacant premises within the centres of Clitheroe, Longridge and Whalley.

Monitoring would continue and would form part of the full economic and employment land review required for the Local Plan, and officers would continue to work with the local chambers of trade / business groups.

It was suggested that additions could be included such as the number of businesses gone completely and numbers of newly registered businesses.

1080 TOURISM PROGRESS REPORT INCLUDING THE RESPONSE TO THE PANDEMIC

The Director of Community Services submitted a report for information on general progress with tourism activity, with particular reference to measures taken to support the visitor economy during the pandemic, through the implementation of the Response and Recovery Plan.

The 'response' included ensuring clear and consistent messages about the pandemic; measures to help local businesses; keeping in touch with visitors; and keeping positive messages about tourism to the fore.

The 'recovery' included creating safe and welcoming tourism with practical measures; promoting new tourism themes and new campaigns; keeping in touch and supporting businesses; and keeping marketing channels open to customers.

Members were informed that the visitor guide this year would be in an on-line format initially with a much reduced print run later in the year.

Members appreciated the report and the work carried out so far and asked that 'care in the countryside' also be an issue to be conveyed to visitors wherever possible so that our special places remained so.

1081 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2021/22

The Director of Resources submitted a report for information on the schemes approved for inclusion in this committee's 2021/22 capital programme. There was just one scheme totalling £66,750 for Economic Development Initiatives.

1082 REVENUE MONITORING 2020/21

The Director of Resources submitted a report for information on the position for the period April 2020 to February 2021 of this year's revenue budget as far as this committee was concerned.

A comparison between actual expenditure and the revised estimate was shown and the main variances highlighted. There was currently an underspend of £3,322 for the period that did not present any significant concern.

1083 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports from representatives on outside bodies.

1084 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

That by virtue of the next items of business being exempt information under Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be now excluded from the meeting.

1085 PURCHASE OF LAND AT A59 BARROW

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report asking committee to consider undertaking a Development Appraisal in respect of whether to purchase land along the A59 in Clitheroe for use as employment land. The report outlined the specific area of land and the sort of appraisal that would be required.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

1. Agree to the appointment of consultants to undertake a Development Appraisal of the land, and
2. Agree to a total budget of up to £20,000 for the Development Appraisal to be sourced from the Economic Development Initiatives budget.

1086

CLITHEROE TO HELLIFIELD RAIL PROJECT

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report updating members on the production of a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) in relation to the Clitheroe to Hellifield Rail Project.

The SOBC would be submitted to the Department for Transport in April for assessment and members would be kept updated on the outcome.

Councillor Austin was given permission to speak on this item.

The meeting closed at 7.39 pm

If you have any queries on these minutes please contact the committee clerk, Olwen Heap 01200 414408 olwen.heap@ribblevalley.gov.uk.