

Minutes of Economic Development

Meeting Date: Thursday, 2 November 2023, starting at 6.30 pm
Present: Councillor D Birtwhistle (Chair)

Councillors:

J Alcock	M Graveston
S Atkinson	J Hill
R Corney	S Hirst
S Cowman	R Ray
L Edge	R Walsh
R Elms	A Wilkins-Odudu
S Fletcher	

In attendance: Senior Accountant, Director of Economic Development and Planning, Tourism Officer, and Head of Strategic Planning and Housing.

444 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received for the meeting from Cllr G McCrum.

445 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2023 were approved as a correct record subject to the addition of apologies from Cllrs J Hill and S Hirst, and additional detail in respect of minute number 349 – Climate Change. The minutes were signed by the Chairman.

446 DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY, OTHER REGISTRABLE AND NON REGISTRABLE INTERESTS

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary, other registrable or non-registrable interests.

447 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

448 WEDDING SECTOR IN THE RIBBLE VALLEY

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report to note the importance of weddings to the local economy, and the measures taken by the Council, with the support of the Ribble Valley Wedding Heaven Partnership to maximise its tourism potential.

Weddings were amongst the priorities of the Ribble Valley's tourism strategy. They were an important part of the visitor economy, not only in direct spend at venues but also in supplementary accommodation, wedding suppliers, dining, and retail. In 2021, the Council had launched the Ribble Wedding Heaven partnership in conjunction with the majority of licensed wedding venues in the Borough, to develop the brand 'Ribble

Valley Wedding Heaven'. This was thought to be the only partnership of its kind, whereby venues worked together with the local authority. Since its inception there had been a rise in the volume of weddings in the Ribble Valley, however, the report noted that this was difficult to attribute directly to the partnership. Wedding market trends along with the future trends and potential were noted in the report.

The Council's Tourism Officer presented the report and noted that it was difficult to measure the number of weddings and their impact as the data simply wasn't available. Members felt that the Ribble Valley was becoming known for weddings and hospitality. It was highlighted however that accommodation can be limited and could be a future focus.

449

CLITHEROE FOOD FESTIVAL

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report providing an update on the Clitheroe Food Festival, as early preparation for the 2024 Food Festival started, and the proposed works to Castle Street.

The Ribble Valley Taste Fest would be held from Monday 5 August to Friday 9 August 2024, and the Clitheroe Food Festival would be held on Saturday 10 August 2024. The report provided Members with information in regards to queries raised at the meeting of the Full Council 10 October 2023, and a breakdown of stalls and non-food traders which had attended the festival in 2022 and 2023.

The works to Castle Street would commence in early 2024 and would not be completed in advance of the food festival. It was not anticipated that the works would affect the hosting of the food festival, and the programme of works under the collaboration agreement with LCC would take the festival into account.

The rationale for the date returning to its original weekend in August was explained to members, and it was confirmed that there were no conflicting events of any concern locally that weekend. The ratio of food to non-food stalls was discussed and Members felt that it was beneficial to have some non-food options, noting that the number of non-food stalls in 2023 was one less than in 2022. It was also suggested that local agriculture was explored as a potential source for suppliers and their produce.

Councillor S Atkinson left the meeting.

450

CAPITAL MONITORING 2023/24

The Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report for information on the progress on this committee's 2023/24 capital programme for the period to end of September 2023.

There had been no spend or commitments against the capital scheme budget and it was unlikely the budget would be spent by financial year-end.

451

REVENUE MONITORING 2023/24

The Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report for information on the position for the period April to September 2023 on the 2023/24 revenue budget for this committee.

The comparison between actual and budgeted expenditure showed an overspend of £4,414 for the first six months of the financial year 2023/24.

452 MINUTES OF WORKING GROUPS

There were no minutes from working groups.

453 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports from representatives on outside bodies.

454 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That by virtue of the next item 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.

455 BUSINESS SUPPORT FOR NET ZERO TRANSITION & DECARBONISATION

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report for information updating Committee on the Business support for net zero transition and decarbonization project which was being funded from the Council's UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

The project had commenced in the middle of quarter one of 2023. By the end of quarter two, the East Lancashire Chamber of Commerce were working with 43 businesses across the Ribble Valley working on their decarbonization, having diagnostics, collecting their carbon footprint data, having onsite carbon footprint site audits, working on their action plan implementations, and attending events.

The Chamber were working closely with the Council's Economic Development Team to market the project, and an event was being held on 14 November 2023 at Holmes Mill which was open to all businesses.

The meeting closed at 6.57 pm

If you have any queries on these minutes please contact the committee clerk, Rebecca Tait 01200 414408 rebecca.tait@ribblevalley.gov.uk.