

(Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting of the sub-committee scheduled to be held on 11 September 2018.)

Economic Prosperity Sub-Committee

26 June 2018

Present: Councillor Janet Hunter (Chair)
Councillors J Cassidy, D Drummond,
J Harrison, K Lee, M Madden,
P McIntyre, J Mole, M Rankin, W Samuel
and J Walker.

Also present: Councillor B Pickard, Deputy Mayor

EP01/06/18 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor F Weetman.

EP02/06/18 Substitute Members

There were no substitute members appointed.

EP03/06/18 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no Declarations of Interest or Dispensations reported.

EP04/06/18 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the previous meeting held on the 27 March 2018 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

EP05/06/18 Business Support (Previous Minute EP43/03/17)

In March 2017 a sub-group appointed by the sub-committee had formulated a report and a series of recommendations on how existing business support might be enhanced and how additional services might be developed to improve the success rate of start up businesses. The recommendations had been accepted by the Cabinet in June 2017.

Sean Collier, Senior Manager: Business & Enterprise, attended the meeting to present details of the action taken as a result of the recommendations. Councillor B Pickard, Deputy Mayor and the cabinet member with responsibility for business and economic development was also present.

During consideration of the report the sub-committee examined in more detail:

- a) the submission of a bid for external funding to maintain the Business Factory. The outcome of the bid was likely to be known in September or October 2018;

- b) the intention of local authorities across the region to begin to assess the likely impact of Brexit;
- c) the merits of the North East Fund in providing loans to growth businesses;
- d) the absence of any grants to attract inward investment to the region, and the comparison with other areas such as Teesside, Scotland and Northern Ireland who had such schemes;
- e) the potential to build industrial units on a speculative basis to attract inward investment; and
- f) the upturn in the offshore turbine industry which had led to greater interest in the Swan Hunter site.

It was **agreed** that the action taken as a result of the recommendations contained in the Business Support Sub Group's report be noted.

EP06/06/18 Work Programme 2018/19

The sub-committee gave consideration to formulating its work programme for the year ahead. A draft work programme was presented which had been prepared in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair and was based on outstanding scrutiny exercises carried over from 2017/18 and topics identified by the Chair and Deputy.

The Senior Leadership Team had identified a list of key policy areas, plans and strategies to inform the development of the scrutiny work programmes. It was noted that the sub-committee had previously contributed to the formulation of many of the strategies included in the list, for example the Transport and Cycling Strategies, and it was proposed that discussions with the relevant Cabinet Members would continue so that the sub-committee's work programme would continue to support and complement any work in these areas.

Two topics had been identified by members of the public that fell within the sub-committee's remit: parking on pavements and parking on the seafront. The sub-committee heard that the Council had previously given careful consideration as to how it might more effectively enforce pavement parking within the existing legal framework. The government had recently announced that it was considering introducing new legislation to strengthen the powers available to local authorities to enforce pavement parking. In view of this the sub-committee agreed that it should examine the details of any new legal powers when they were known to consider how these might be implemented in North Tyneside.

Councillor Pickard raised two issues for possible in depth investigation. He referred to the government's Industrial Strategy, the Local Enterprise Partnership's Strategic Economic Plan and the North of Tyne Combined Authority's proposed local industrial strategy and he suggested that the sub-committee may wish to examine how the three strategies would link together.

Councillor Pickard also suggested that the sub-committee may wish to examine the future of retail centres in the borough. If the Council were to regenerate its town and retail centres, how could it develop sustainable retail models in the light of the growth of online shopping? Members discussed the topic and suggested that any investigation could include consideration of:

- a) the role and nature of town centres, retail parks and smaller shopping areas such as Forest Hall in 20/30 years time;
- b) the needs and views of young people who will be the customers of the future;

- c) information held by retailers about their digital strategies and changes in customer behaviours;
- d) the approach taken by other local authorities in regenerating and remodelling their town centres; and
- e) the environmental implications of the changes in retailing and the increase in the number of deliveries to customers homes.

The sub-committee had the option to appoint a time limited sub-group to carry out an in-depth investigation. It was agreed that the future of town centres would be a suitable topic for an in depth investigation.

The draft work programme included the possibility of the sub-committee visiting local businesses in the borough. It was suggested that members visit Sterling Pharma Solutions in Dudley.

Resolved that (1) the proposed work programme for 2018/19 be approved; and (2) an investigation into how the Council might develop sustainable town and retail centres in the light of the growth of online shopping be included in the work programme.