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KIRKLEES COUNCIL

DISTRICT COMMITTEE - DEWSBURY AND MIRFIELD

Thursday 30th June 2016

Present: Councillor Nosheen Dad (Chair)
Councillors D O'Donovan, M Ahmed, E Firth, M Hussain,
P Kane, V Lees-Hamilton, C Scott, K Taylor, G Asif and
M Pervaiz

Apologies: M Bolt

In attendance: Approximately 10 members of the public were in
attendance

1 Welcomes and Introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and the Councillors introduced themselves. Apologies have been received from Councillor Martyn Bolt.

She advised the meeting is a formal committee meeting of the Council. Members of the public are welcome but if they wish to speak could they please raise their hands. Only Councillors would be able to vote on decisions.

There would be public question time at the end of the agenda for any questions from members of the public.

Deputations and Petitions had been moved towards the end of the agenda, at item number nine, and that would be the case for future meetings this year.

2 Minute's Silence in Memory of Batley and Spennings MP Jo Cox

The Chair asked everyone at the meeting to join her in a minute's silence as a mark of respect for the late Jo Cox MP for Batley and Spennings.

3 Minutes of previous meeting

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 01 March 2016 were approved as an accurate record.

4 Interests

No interests were declared.

5 Admission of the public

Agreed that all items would be held in public session.

6 Update on the North Kirklees Growth Zone

The Chair advised that in December 2015 Stephen Jagger and Andrew Jackson gave a presentation introducing the North Kirklees Housing and Enterprise Zone. They were asked to return to provide an update once some progress had been made. Stephen Jagger thanked the Committee for inviting them back and hoped they would return regularly over the course of the next few years. He emphasised that this is a long term plan to support growth for the area.

Under new funding regimes there has been a reduction in the funding available to local authorities, and money local authorities and partners try to get from elsewhere has vastly reduced as well. Grants have basically gone. There has been a move towards a loan that you have to pay back with interest.

The Growth Zone aims to get on the national agenda as part of the Northern Powerhouse concept. This is not just a Council scheme, but is reliant on partnerships. There has been much work in getting partners on board and building their confidence in the scheme. There is a need to make the scheme as attractive as possible for them to work in this area. There is a lot of potential to get private sector investment and there is a potential for net gain to the economy of £2.2 billion over a twenty five year period.

It will be a sustainable plan that delivers, but quick wins and successes all the way through are also needed. The aim is to develop major employment opportunities linked to housing growth. As the Local Plan is adopted, large scale growth is also about training for younger people, apprenticeships and supply chain development. The more money that can go into people's pockets the better, as they spend locally and it starts recycling. New employers will be brought in and existing employers supported to grow. That means new employment sites, including the new site at Chidswell with the potential for 2,500 new jobs.

Good transport schemes are also needed, rail, road and pedestrian. The urban centres in the area need to thrive. A different type of trading environment is needed to reflect the different way people are spending money.

Progress has started. A lot of funding now comes through Leeds City Region and the Local Enterprise Partnership. In April 2016, it was recommended this Growth Zone becomes a strategic priority regionally and that has been agreed. The Homes and Communities Agency are now working proactively with us, looking how they can help bring investment into the area from their programmes. The private sector is working really closely with the Council now. Over the next twelve to twenty four months progress should accelerate.

Andy Jackson provided an update on the Townscape Heritage Initiative. It is a driver for the regeneration of the Northgate area of the town centre. The proposed scheme on Corporation Street is due to start in two weeks' time. Northgate House is due to start in August and talks are happening with other property owners in the Northgate area. Two weeks ago he ran virtual merchandising sessions to help people understand how to increase their 'capture rate' of customers.

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Command Authority and the Local Enterprise Partnership have approved the funding envelope for Pioneer House and for the Dewsbury Learning Village. There are still many discussions and approvals needed however.

The proposal is that Kirklees College will relocate from their current site to a Learning Village on the former Safeway site and to Pioneer House, taking the Adult Learning and Graduates. It's an opportunity for the town centre to have increased footfall. The plans Andy showed, he advised are subject to detailed design. Access would be from Halifax Road and the rear of Pioneer House. The shop front details are yet to be designed. The former Safeway site intended contemporary design was shown.

Pioneer House has a target opening in 2018, and the Learning Village in late 2017. The numbers of students will be significant. It will increase footfall and dwell time in the town centre.

Councillor Hussain asked about the shop front improvements and how these would happen. Andy advised they have identified a number of critical buildings and they hope there will be take up. A good number of people are interested, but the grant is not 100%.

Councillor O'Donovan offered thanks to the Councillors and Officers that had been involved in hard work over a long time to help this happen.

Councillor Kane emphasised it is good news. He advised the businesses outside the town centre, in the business parks are doing really well, but there is no guarantee new jobs would come to Dewsbury. Stephen Jagger advised they would work hard with business and skills, to up skill local people over the longer term. He had worked in another part of Yorkshire with unemployment rates at 50%, and this had been brought down to 7 or 8% and 80% of people working with new employers were local. It is a long term process.

Councillor Ahmed asked about the loan aspect, and Stephen Jagger advised there are no very big loans at this stage. Councillor Scott asked how skills required would be married into the proposals. She asked how the zone would be marketed to make it attractive to investors. Stephen advised there were discussions with surrounding authorities and much of the marketing would come through the private sector. There would have to be a big coalition of partners.

Councillor Asif asked about parking in the town. The market area parking is not close enough. He also asked about the courses the college would be delivering, and that they would take account of work skills needed now and in the future. Andy advised the college are looking carefully at the skills needed now and in the future. Andy and Stephen would come back to members to discuss issues for the town centre such as parking.

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There were a number of questions from the public including what steps had been taken to attract new retailers for empty units in the town. Andy Jackson advised that retailers are attracted by increased footfall, and the numbers of students would help address this, and with more retailers, more people in general would start to come to the town centre.

Stephen Jagger talked about looking to new uses for the empty buildings such as more niche, leisure and commercial, and housing.

RESOLVED: - That Stephen Jagger and Andy Jackson be thanked for their update.

7 **Dewsbury and Mirfield District Committee Arrangements 2016-2017**

The Chair advised the District Committees would play a large role in supporting the move to New Council locally, and the how the Council would work with local communities on this.

Jackie Ingham summarised the report that had been distributed about the Committee arrangements for 2016-17, including a revamp of its Plan of Place, and its priorities for the year; Early Intervention and Prevention and Economic Resilience, Health and Wellbeing and Social Action. The Committee's grant scheme would have these as the criteria for applications for funding. There would be five meetings in public in the year and the schedule of meetings would go out to the Committee contact list.

RESOLVED:- That the proposed arrangements for the Dewsbury and Mirfield District Committee in 2016-17 be approved.

8 **Devolved Committee Budgets**

The devolved budget balances were highlighted.

The following discretionary grants and returns to budget were noted:

- A discretionary grant of £500 revenue to the Eightlands and Ashworth Hobbies and Crafts Club to pay for venue hire for the next year.
- An underspend of £8,500 revenue to be returned to the District Committee devolved revenue budget in relation to the Dewsbury Business Rate Relief Scheme, approved by Dewsbury Area Committee on 10th December 2013.
- Underspend of £3,000 capital to be returned to the District Committee capital budget in relation to the Streetscene Apprenticeship Programme, approved by the Dewsbury Area Committee on 26th March 2013.

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The Committee considered applications for funding and **RESOLVED** that budget expenditure be approved as follows:

- (i) £1,300 revenue to the Dewsbury Amateur Swimming Club towards the costs of venue hire, hoodies and flyers.
- (ii) £4,560 revenue to the Learning Community Interest Company towards the costs of delivering two homework clubs in two schools in Dewsbury West ward; Westmoor Primary School and Boothroyd Academy.
- (iii) £1,830 revenue to Ravensthorpe Community Centre towards the costs of running the 'Leaders and Readers' Programme.
- (iv) £2,250 revenue to Sports, Education and Training 3 in Communities towards delivery of a six week programme of sporting activities in Westborough.
- (v) £4,000 revenue to run a 'You and Your Community' participatory budgeting event for Dewsbury South ward.
- (vi) £14,000 New Homes Bonus to pay for mental health first aid training for community mental health champions across the four wards in the District.
- (vii) To defer the decision on the application from the New Friends of Dewsbury Cemetery for funding towards the installation of a war memorial in Dewsbury Cemetery.
- (viii) £3,000 revenue to the Dewsbury Sacrifices Group towards the costs of a year's rental for their research base.
- (ix) £1,000 revenue to pay for the production and distribution of Heroes Welcome promotional leaflets and posters, plus a promotional banner, for distribution and use across the District.
- (x) £2,200 capital to pay for the replacement and installation of 10 new litter bins in the Market Place, Dewsbury.
- (xi) £3,000 revenue to the 20:20 Foundation towards the costs of delivering and educational and recreational programme for young people.

9 Deputations / Petitions

The Committee received two deputations from Bruce Bird:

- (i) Seeking support from the Councillors for the work of the Dewsbury Real Junk Food Company.
- (ii) Asking the Council to identify appropriate Council Officers to develop a working relationship in relation to a number of aspects of the development work of the Dewsbury Partnership; Planning, IT, Community data, Events, and other areas that might arise. He invited the elected members to get involved in the working groups of the Partnership.

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Councillor O'Donovan asked Bruce to reconfigure the third paragraph on the front page of the Partnership leaflet Bruce had distributed.

RESOLVED: - That Bruce be thanked for making his deputation, and that it be passed to the Assistant Director, Regeneration and Investment for consideration and response.

10 Public Question Time

The following questions were asked and Councillors responded:

A member of the public advised he had read that twenty per cent of local councillors were in arrears with their Council Tax, and as elected members they should be setting an example if twenty per cent of the community were in arrears, services would suffer.

The same member of the public wanted to raise his concerns he said he had raised eighteen months ago, about the footpath running alongside Earlsheaton Academy School running down to Lincoln Road. It was being used as a dog toilet. Irresponsible dog walkers continue to ignore the notices, but the notices are eight feet above the ground and about three inches by ten inches, so hardly visible. Could there be larger notices placed on the school fence highlighting the potential penalty of £1,000, or widening the tarmac path to the wall, so eradicating the shrubbed area being used as a toilet, or indeed using CCTV for a short period of time. 1,000 students use the path daily and this is a real health hazard. Plastic bag dispensers went up, but were vandalised.

Councillor Kane advised the area had been cleared on various occasions, and people need to take some responsibility. The Council has lost £190 million from its budget. There is a cost to changing the signs. He advised he was one of the Councillors on the arrears list but he changed his payments to direct debits to make sure this did not happen again. He cleared the small amount owing as soon as he received the letter. Councillor Firth advised he had paid by standing order, and as soon as he realised these were no longer accepted, he changed it to direct debit payments.

Kumon Y'All are putting on their gala on 16th July. Could everyone try and go along to support them.

On the last Minutes, item 4 had been the derelict building on which Councillor Kane advised a compulsory purchase order had been placed. Where were The Council up to with this, as it caught fire four weeks ago. Councillor Kane advised a demolition order had been placed on the building now.

11 Dates of future meetings

The dates and times are:

Thursday 6th October 2016, Dewsbury Minster 7 – 9pm
Tuesday 29th November 2016, Dewsbury Town Hall 7 – 9pm
Thursday 23rd February 2017, Mirfield Venue, 7 – 9pm
Tuesday 11th April 2017, Dewsbury Town Hall 7 – 9pm