

Minutes of a meeting of the Regeneration and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday, 30 November 2016 at Council Chamber - Keighley Town Hall

Commenced 6.10 pm
Concluded 8.55 pm

Present – Councillors

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT	GREEN
Heseltine Mallinson	Farley Green Jamil Pullen	R Ahmed	H Hussain

Observers: Councillors M Slater and Ross-Shaw – Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Transportation and Planning

Apologies: Councillor Fear

Councillor Farley in the Chair

28. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

During the meeting and in the interests of transparency, Councillor Pullen disclosed, in respect of the item relating to Regeneration of Keighley (Minute 32) that he had previously had business dealings with a company mentioned in relation to the Chesham Street site (Appendix A).

During the meeting and in the interests of transparency, Councillor Green pointed out that he was mentioned by name in Appendix C of the report in respect of the Regeneration of Keighley, having had previous involvement in the matter.

29. MINUTES

Resolved –

That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2016 be signed as a correct record.



30. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

There were no appeals submitted by the public to review decisions to restrict documents.

31. REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

No referrals to the Committee had been received.

32. REGENERATION IN KEIGHLEY

The report of the Strategic Director, Regeneration (**Document “N”**) gave an update on regeneration activity in Keighley and the progress made since the report presented to the Committee in December 2015.

The Strategic Director explained that the report covered a mixture of projects that Members had expressed an interest in previously. The Airedale Partnership provided an overview and guided the direction of the regeneration works. The membership of this body included the Council, the NHS, Shipley College and a number of local business people.

A Member of the Committee said that he had been given to understand, some time ago, that an economic plan for Keighley would be produced having a holistic approach and including consideration of the broader issues such as transport links to motorways and the area outside the town centre. He suggested that such that a report should be submitted to this Committee.

In response to a question the Strategic Director said that the Airedale Partnership met roughly every six weeks, although the last meeting had been on 5 September 2016.

He presented an update on each project as follows:

Appendix A – Chesham Street

- Agreement had been reached with a local developer to facilitate best use of this site and a planning application was anticipated.
- It was noted that this site was outside the Conservation Area.
- It was estimated that 260 jobs could be created through the development of the site.

Appendix B – North Street and Cavendish Street

- Planning permission had now been given for the existing buildings on North Street to be demolished and an outline permission granted for the development of a Public Sector Hub on the site along with a ‘meanwhile use’ should this be necessary in the interim period.



- Demolition was due to commence the week of 12 December and would take approximately 30 weeks. There would be some associated road closures, mainly on Sundays.
- The stained glass window would be removed and stored for re-use in the future.

He responded to Members questions as follows:

- The Manager of the Keighley Business Improvement District (BID) had been consulted in relation to the scheduling of proposed road closures and he would be cognisant of the need to avoid any special or sporting events.
- The preferred organisation that had previously intended to purchase the Cavendish Street building had now withdrawn. It was now likely that this site would be dealt with alongside the North Street site although there were a number of issues to be resolved.
- Negotiations were on-going in respect of the proposed Public Sector Hub on the North Street site; this was a complex process as it involved different agencies with different needs but it was anticipated that the Council would be in a position to enter into the relevant contract(s) in the first quarter of 2017. Once these were signed the project would move towards construction.
- He was confident that the project would be moving forward by Summer 2017 even if all the current potential end users did not sign up.
- The Council's Estates and Property Team was taking the lead on this project in conjunction with officers from Economic Development.
- The design of the site retained the necessary land for the provision of an additional lane to allow vehicles to turn from North Street into Cavendish Street. In terms of achieving the needs of the Hub development and the need for highway improvements it was not believed that they were mutually exclusive, it should be possible to meet both needs.
- In terms of air quality, keeping traffic moving was considered to be beneficial.

Members commented that:

- Unless there was a significant change in the economy it was questioned how realistic the chances were of selling the Cavendish Street building. The North Street building was to be demolished and it made sense if this site was dealt with at the same time.
- There was a need for wider look at the issues; would doing one thing in isolation potentially compromise other plans?
- It was questionable whether moving traffic was beneficial in terms of air quality.

Appendix C – Former Worth Valley Shopping Centre

- This site was now in new ownership and active discussions with the Council were taking place.
- The notices around the perimeter were to be removed in the near future.

A Member noted that the site was not listed on the landowner's website which



indicated the sites that they were currently marketing.

The Strategic Director undertook to report back to Members on the reasons why plans to try to undertake widening of East Parade had not proved possible and also on a condition, said to be attached to the planning permission for demolition of the former buildings on the site, which had specified that the natural stone should be retained and reused.

Appendix D – Assistance to Small and Large Businesses Including New Business Start Ups.

- This included the delivery of flood recovery grants to a number of businesses.
- Options were now being explored in terms of a scheme to replace the direct assistance to small and micro businesses in Keighley that had originally been funded through a project under the European Structural Funds Programme.
- Local businesses were also assisted to access funding through the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and information would be presented to Members in due course on which businesses had been assisted by this initiative.

The Strategic Director, Regeneration undertook to provide more detailed information to Members in respect of the outcomes achieved from the direct assistance to businesses including the total number of businesses assisted.

A Member said, in respect of flooding, that at Stocksbridge it was believed that the River Worth now flowed so fast (due to walls having been built at the sides) that it forced the River Aire to back up thus flooding a number of properties, unlike the situation in the past when the River Worth had backed up and flooded Marley Playing Fields. It had been suggested that residents may be able to join together to access funding to try and get the whole issue addressed rather than just undertaking individual solutions.

The Strategic Director said there had been a willingness to look at pooling grants if an overall sustainable solution could be identified but it had been established, in that case, that there were no collective measures that could be undertaken that would address the issue. Property owners had therefore undertaken individual measures. The Flood Strategy would look at the overall situation.

In response to a question he said that all remedial flood works were assessed for impact by specialists.

Members made the following comments:

- There had been two '1 in 100 year' flood events within two years; this needed to be taken into consideration when developing new infrastructure.
- Specific work was needed in respect of the Stocksbridge area; when flooded it cut off that end of Keighley.
- It was noted that the Environment and Waste Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee were undertaking a Water Management Scrutiny.
- Flooding had an economic effect on Keighley.



- There must be engineering solutions to the problems affecting certain specific locations.
- The Area Committees were the right agencies to look at specific areas whereas the Environment and Waste Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be looking at the whole picture.
- There was a need to look upstream and to consider what could be done to prevent this happening.

Appendix E – Keighley Business Awards

- These were considered to be a fantastic success arising from collaborative working.
- Sponsorship for the 2017 event was looking healthy.

This was welcomed.

Appendix F – Keighley Business Improvement District (BID)

- This project had been approved in late 2015 and good progress was being made on delivering the business plan.

The Strategic Director gave the following responses to questions:

- The re-evaluation of business rates by the Government would not impact on this scheme.
- A co-ordinated communication on BID was to be sent out to all businesses in December.
- Over 90% of businesses had paid their contribution to date.
- Airedale Enterprise Services was hoping to develop the Awesome Business Club which would include those businesses outside the BID area and a large number of businesses had signed up to this.

Appendix G – Keighley Market

- A significant capital investment had been made over the last few years. The market was lively and active and the current vacancy rate was only 7%.
- A number of test trading opportunities were made available.
- Some of the impact in terms of reduced footfall might be associated with the large number of discount stores now in the town centre

In answer to Members' questions it was stated that:

- The decline in footfall was a national trend. It was recognised that the retail sector had changed significantly since 2004. Work was being undertaken to try and make the markets a destination in their own right.
- The information from non-market traders suggested that footfall was down overall but spend per customer was up.
- The test trading scheme had been running for a number of years and had proved effective in attracting and retaining new traders. It was believed that



this idea had been used in other markets in the district.

Members commented as follows:

- There was a need to establish where the existing customer base was from; there was the potential for another new shopping centre to be developed in the town and work should be undertaken on this before that point.
- The stated footfall figures were 12 years apart. The figures for the last five years should be provided. Was this a steady decline or more rapid?
- An understanding was needed of the reasons why some people used the market and others did not. Traders should contribute towards this analysis.
- It was about getting the balance right and establishing the market's place within the broader offer of the town centre.
- Information on this should be included within a report back to the Committee on the wider economic strategy for the town and its outer areas.
- It was questioned whether the traders had been asked for their views.
- It was considered that parking fees were an issue that needed to be seriously considered; this could be a factor affecting where people chose to shop.
- Parking fees in Keighley were believed to be relatively competitive although finding a space could be a problem.

Appendix H – Keighley Townscape Heritage Scheme

- This project was approaching its end.
- A bid had been made to the Lottery Fund for a similar initiative for Bradford City Centre and had received a positive response from property owners.

In response to Members questions, he said that:

- If the Council were to proceed on a more formal basis to progress works on certain properties then this could entail a significant liability.
- A legal charge was placed on a property if a grant was over £10,000 (*Note: after the meeting it was clarified that the correct figure was £20,000*); it was believed that this would have to be repaid if the property was sold within a certain period of time.

Members said that:

- One property could potentially spoil a whole area and it was questioned whether it would be possible to have potential investors ready to take on properties if enforcement had to be pursued; this should be an idea that was given further consideration.
- The scheme had made a fantastic difference and the officers had done a very good job.

Appendix I – Keighley Town Centre Traffic Management Measures

- There was no single solution but it was believed that there were a number of initiatives that could contribute to the short term, medium term and longer term improvement of existing conditions. The Executive was to consider a report at



- its meeting to be held on 6 December 2016.
- In terms of the Hard Ings Road Improvement a decision had been taken at the meeting of the Executive on 8 November 2016 that would allow the scheme to move forward.

Members commented as follows:

- When highway infrastructure had been discussed at the Area Committee assurances had been given that all Keighley Ward Members would be involved in the discussions about the potential changes; this had not happened, nor had taxi operators or the bus companies been involved.
- There was a concern that there was no clear picture about what was being done and the wider impact across Keighley. A report was going to the Executive setting out what was proposed to be done but there was a need for local input.
- The Chair said that he was aware of a recent meeting that had been held in respect of a new traffic modelling programme which had involved at least one taxi company and bus company.
- If new modelling technology was available then the results should be made available to local Members. It was crucial that local Members were involved in the process and were aware of any proposals; they should have been so prior to a report being submitted to the Executive.
- It was understood that a meeting was being organised but only the Councillors from the three Keighley Central wards had been invited, this should be rectified in the future.
- A wider strategic view was needed; was the traffic coming to or through Keighley because these two alternatives led to different issues arising.
- Any major works would need to be included within the West Yorkshire Transport Plan.
- It would be good to have an idea of the expected economic benefits to the town/local businesses.

The Strategic Director, Regeneration said that he would raise the issue of consultation with the relevant officers. It was noted that the recommendation to the Executive included a commitment to undertaking consultation with the Area Committees and the Strategic Director undertook to support this particular proposal.

In response to a question from a Member about whether the process whereby the acquisition of land necessary for the Hard Ings Road Improvement Scheme would be sought to be achieved by agreement would delay the start of the scheme, he said that a generous timetable had been drawn up and there should be time to pursue the formal process should that prove necessary.

Appendix J – Council Wardens

In response to questions, the Strategic Director said that:

- Litter Action Days had been held once a month but this was to be increased to



twice a month. Three or four fixed penalty notices were usually issued on each occasion.

- Publicity of the issue of notices was not pursued as a matter of course but the suggestion that it should be to raise awareness of the consequences would be taken on board for the future.
- It was not known what the legalities might be in respect of making the parents of minors pay their fines but this could be investigated and reported back to Members.
- Issuing such notices was part of the day to day role of the wardens; the action days just placed a specific focus on the issue.
- It was an offence to not give the correct details about your identity if issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- 'Body cams' were used by some wardens, particularly in the City Centre.

Members made the following comments:

- The responsibility of the wardens in respect of the issue of litter and other issues should not be lost sight of. The wardens did a great job but the focus appeared to have altered to be almost entirely on parking enforcement and perhaps there was a need for a review of priorities.
- Addressing litter problems could be as important as parking tickets; it had an impact on the perception of the district.
- Business owners also needed to take some responsibility in this regard.
- An idea had been put forward at one point that the names of businesses should be included on packaging so that the litter could be traced back to its source.
- If the issue of parking tickets generated income then could more wardens be employed?
- The wardens were an asset and it was a shame that their role had altered from that originally carried out.

In response to a number of general questions from Members the Strategic Director, Regeneration said that:

- The vacant site off Water Lane was being promoted. The Heritage Scheme was making that side of the town centre more desirable.
- A further planning application had been submitted in respect of the site alongside the bypass that had previously been granted permission for a waste treatment plant.
- The Victoria Hotel had been purchased by a private individual.

Resolved –

- (1) That the Strategic Director, Regeneration be requested to present a report to the Committee, before the end of the municipal year, in respect of the wider economic strategy for Keighley.**
- (2) That the Strategic Director, Regeneration be requested to provide more detailed information to the Members of the Committee in**



relation to the footfall figures for both the market and the town centre as a whole, for each of the last five years.

- (3) That the Executive be requested to give consideration to demolishing the Cavendish Street building (part of the former Keighley College) whilst the contractors are on site demolishing the associated North Street building.
- (4) That the Strategic Director, Regeneration be requested to ensure that, in developing the plans for the public sector hub on the site at North Street, Keighley, balance is maintained in respect of the needs of pedestrians and transport.
- (5) That a recommendation be made to each Area Committee that it considers looking at those locations within its area that are at particular risk of flooding with a view to identifying local solutions.
- (6) That the Executive be requested to ensure that, prior to the implementation of the delegated powers in respect of the proposed traffic management measures for Keighley, a meeting to discuss traffic management in Keighley is convened with invitations to all the Councillors representing the Keighley Constituency and transport companies.
- (7) That the Environment and Waste Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee be requested to consider undertaking a review of the role of Council Wardens.

ACTION: *City Solicitor
Overview & Scrutiny Lead
Strategic Director – Regeneration*

33. WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17

Members considered the Committee's Work Programme for 2016-17 (**Document "O"**).

Resolved –

That a report in respect of problem commercial and residential properties and land across the district be added to the agenda for the meeting to be held on 28 February 2017.

ACTION: *Overview & Scrutiny Lead*



Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a correct record at the next meeting of the Regeneration and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

THESE MINUTES HAVE BEEN PRODUCED, WHEREVER POSSIBLE, ON RECYCLED PAPER

