

Minutes of a meeting of the Regeneration and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday 19 December 2017 at Keighley Town Hall

Commenced 6.00 pm
Concluded 7.55 pm

Present – Councillors

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	GREEN	INDEPENDENT
Heseltine	Farley Jamil H Khan	H Hussain	K Hussain

Observers: Councillors Ali, Brown and M Slater

Also present: Councillor Ross-Shaw - Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning and Transport

Apologies: Councillors Mallinson and Nazir

Councillor Farley in the Chair

22. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

No disclosures of interest in matters under consideration were received.

NO ACTION

23. MINUTES

Resolved –

That the minutes of the meetings held on 28 February and 28 March 2017 be signed as a correct record.

ACTION: *City Solicitor*

24. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

NO ACTION

25. REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There were no referrals to the Committee.

NO ACTION

26. REGENERATION IN KEIGHLEY

The report of the Strategic Director, Regeneration (**Document “L”**) provided an update on key regeneration projects in Keighley.

In presenting the report the Programme Delivery Manager highlighted particular points and responded to Members' questions, as follows:

Appendix A – Keighley Business Improvement District (BID)

- This was the first BID initiative undertaken in the district and it was just approaching the end of its second year of five.
- The vacancy rate for town centre units had reduced to 9.64% which was below the national average and the best figure achieved for a number of years.
- The scheme had encouraged local businesses to try new initiatives and had led to a rise in joint working and the development of a number of events with a positive impact.
- The scheme had helped to develop confidence in the town.
- The continuation of the BID after the initial five year term would require a further positive ballot of businesses; this would usually be carried out during the fifth year.
- The Council's Business Rates Enforcement Team would address any problems with non-payment.
- The Town Centre Management funding had been rolled forward to the BID scheme and the company used the former Town Centre Manager's office.

Appendix B – South Pennines Leader Programme

- This was a European Union initiative focussed on the rural economy, with six relevant priorities aiming to create jobs and economic growth.
- Only a couple of Keighley businesses had received grants to date. There was a need to promote the scheme with those businesses who might benefit and press releases would be organised to increase awareness.

Appendix C – Superfast West Yorkshire

- The Government was putting significant investment into the delivery of superfast broadband capability.
- Effective broadband could help businesses change what and how they did things. An example was given of the impact for a local architect's firm.
- Significant progress had been made and it was anticipated that the vast majority (98%) of properties would have the opportunity to gain access to a superfast network by 2020.
- Solutions were available for more rural communities and the Project Team

could be approached to discuss the potential options.

Appendix D – New Shopping Development

- The development site off Gresley Road/East Parade had been acquired by a national developer further to the previous owners having been unable to progress its development. This company had a good track record in such development and good connections within the retail sector.
- Commercially sensitive discussions were currently taking place.
- Pre planning application advice would be sought prior to a formal application for planning permission.
- Although the national climate was challenging at the present time some positive progress had been made recently and more news was anticipated in early 2018.
- Past studies had indicated that Keighley had the capacity to support another shopping centre.
- The size of the footprint/floorspace available would, to some extent, determine those end users who would be interested.
- The new owner, UAI, was a long established, specialist, regeneration company with a substantial portfolio and offices in London and Manchester; it had been involved in high quality developments around the country and, subject to any planning constraints, it was anticipated that this would be a substantial scheme.

Appendix E – Former Keighley College Buildings

- Of the three former college buildings, only Cavendish Street now remained and, further to the necessary funding having been identified, work was now underway to progress its demolition.
- The North Street site had outline planning permission for a Public Sector Hub; tangible and serious discussion was underway with interested parties and progress was expected in early 2018. This scheme entailed some complex procurement procedures. As part of the North Street proposals the introduction of an additional left hand turn lane from North Street into Cavendish Street had been progressed.

Appendix F – Keighley and Airedale Business Awards

- This annual event was an excellent showcase for businesses in Keighley and Airedale; the comments made by participants illustrated its success and beneficial impact.
- The event worked on the basis of nomination and the most straightforward approach was for a business to nominate itself and to provide information about its achievements; using it as a promotional opportunity. This approach had the benefit of avoiding any misrepresentation.
- There was a website where information was available on previous winners and sponsors and which included case studies and positive accounts of involvement (www.keighleyairedalebusinessawards.co.uk).
- Increasing the diversity of participants had been identified as an issue and

positive efforts were to be made to identify relevant businesses and to encourage them to apply.

Appendix G – Hard Ings Road Improvement

- A Public Enquiry was scheduled for January 2018; there were two outstanding objections to the related Compulsory Purchase and Side Road Orders, although it was hoped that agreement could be reached prior to the Inquiry taking place.
- It was anticipated that the work would be completed in 2019.

A Keighley Ward Councillor commented:

- A lot of positive progress had been made and local businesses needed to be supported.
- An invitation to participate in the Business Awards event could perhaps be included with the business rates bills.
- It was not felt that the South Pennines Leader Programme was easily accessible.
- There were issues with superfast broadband in the Worth Valley.

Town Councillors addressed the Committee as follows:

- The High Street roundabout was the biggest problem in terms of traffic/congestion and the provision of an extra turning lane on North Street was not considered to be an effective solution. It was considered that the demolition of the North Street building had presented an opportunity to provide a buffer zone to prevent traffic going straight on and then cutting in.
- It was questioned what the intention was in respect of a particular property on North Street that was having a detrimental impact on the appearance of the street scene.
- Internet shopping had damaged a lot of high street businesses; assisting businesses with these issues was considered to be a way forward.
- The Town Council produced a magazine that was delivered to approximately 23000 homes and businesses; discussion would be undertaken with officers about including information in respect of the Business Awards event.

Members made the following comments:

- The good work that had been undertaken by the BID scheme was acknowledged.
- It was considered that there was a need for a strategic vision specifically for Keighley, including consideration of infrastructure, as well as the district as a whole. There was concern that the work being undertaken could prove to be ineffective because of the increasing levels of traffic and congestion.
- The Keighley and Airedale Business Awards was a high quality event which broadcast an excellent message.
- Elected Members had a role to play in promoting the Business Awards event to the local businesses in their area.
- Perhaps past participants could be used as role models.
- The reason for non-engagement by particular groups should be further

investigated.

- The Council had limited control in respect of the development of a new shopping centre and the reported progress was welcomed.
- A scheme in Saltaire; 'shop happy' would be worth exploring.

The Portfolio Holder responded to the issues raised as follows:

- The demolition of the North Street building had provided the opportunity to implement the turning lane; this was not being put forward as a solution to the issues but would deliver some benefits.
- Support for e-commerce schemes was available through the BID.
- It was believed that a 'shop local' initiative was under consideration.
- There was dedicated funding for the Hard Ings Road Improvement Scheme through the West Yorkshire Plus Transport Fund; the Council had to go through the due process in respect of the compulsory purchase of land in order for the scheme to progress, the deadlines in relation to this funding were clear and transparent.
- It was considered that the production of a separate economic strategy for Keighley was not the right way forward. Keighley was an integral part of the district and a district-wide Economic Growth Strategy was being developed and was expected to be launched in 2018.
- Keighley already had a number of innovative and successful businesses.
- It was recognised that better connectivity was needed across the district and there was a list of projects to address the issues, including those specific to Keighley. The Government's vision was that improvements should be driven forward on a regional basis and the Council had made submissions to the West Yorkshire Combined Authority; trans-pennine connections were a priority.

The Assistant Director, Economy and Development Services and the Programme Delivery Manager explained that:

- Significant traffic modelling had been undertaken and if there had been no benefit from the provision of an additional lane on North Street this work would not have been progressed.
- Despite lengthy dialogue with the owner of the property referred to (on North Street) it had not been possible to achieve an appropriate solution. The Council could not force the owner to undertake the work. It would be extremely difficult to justify the funding of a Compulsory Purchase Order particularly in light of the current constraints on resources.
- In terms of increasing diversity of participation, the new Business Covenant encouraged the engagement of business with the local community, including in respect of the provision of work placements/work experience and apprenticeships.

Resolved –

- (1) That Document "L" be welcomed and that the Strategic Director, Place be requested to submit a report to update Members, in the next municipal year, with officers taking account of the comments made by the Committee at this meeting.**

- (2) That a report on the Business Covenant be submitted to this Committee at the earliest opportunity in the next municipal year.

ACTION: *Strategic Director, Place
Scrutiny Lead*

27. WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18

The Committee's Work Plan for 2017/18 was submitted (Document "M") for Member's consideration.

Resolved –

That items in respect of:

- **An update in relation to regeneration projects in Keighley**
- **The Council's Business Covenant,**

be included in the Committee's Work Programme for 2018/19.

ACTION: *Scrutiny Lead*

Chair

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