



Chairman - Councillor F Beatty

Present (for all or part of the meeting):-

Councillors:

J A Barron

B M Cross

P C Edgeller

A R McNaughton

D M McNaughton

M Phillips

J P Read

D P Rouxel

Also present:-

Councillor A F Reid, Economic Development and Planning Portfolio

Officers in attendance:-

D Piper - Head of Economic Development and Planning

J Holmes - Development Manager

M Smith - Economic Growth and Strategic Projects Manager

A Yendole - Strategic Planning and Placemaking Manager

J Allen - Democratic Services Officer

EDP25 Minutes

Minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2024, as previously circulated, were approved as a correct record.

EDP26 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J S Powell.

EDP27 Business and Leisure Tourism - Presentation

Charlotte Cain, Visitor Economy Partnership Development Manager, Staffordshire County Council, gave a presentation regarding tourism in Staffordshire. Key areas included partnership working, County wide marketing strategy, and growth following recovery after Covid in the sector.

Jackie to circulate Marketing strategy to all members

It was confirmed that tourism would form part of the new Local Plan.

Stafford Borough Council would feed into the Partnership. An Action Plan to be drawn up with the assistance of Charlotte Cain

Tourism to be revisited by the Committee in nine months' time.

The Cabinet Member was asked if funding could be secured for a Project Lead. It was noted that there were significant projects taking place in the town centre currently and there was a resource issue.

Charlotte Cain was thanked for delivering the presentation and attending the meeting.

RESOLVED:- that the content of the presentation be noted.

EDP28 Update from the Task and Finish Review - Town Centre Events

Councillor D M McNaughton, Chair of the Task and Finish Review Group, updated the Committee on the previous two meetings.

The Chair of the Town Centre Partnership would be attending the next meeting of the Task and Finish Review Group.

Task and Finish Review Group to report back to this Committee in Autumn 2024.

RESOLVED:- that the update from Councillor D M McNaughton be noted.

EDP29 Biodiversity Net Gain

Considered the report of the Head of Economic Development and Planning which gave an update regarding progress by the Council with regard to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) which became a statutory duty from 12 February 2024.

In particular, attention was drawn to the robustness of the policy to ensure developers met their obligations.

RESOLVED:- that in accordance with the powers delegated to the Committee the report be noted

EDP30 Development Management Performance Update

Considered the report of the Head of Economic Development and Planning informing the Committee on the performance in Development Management and progress in reducing the backlog of historic applications.

A new chart was circulated with the most up to date information regarding the number of applications received, withdrawn/decided.

The Head of Economic Development and Planning reported that excellent progress has been made over the last few months. Also, there had been a successful bid for £100k from Government specifically to appoint additional resource to reduce the backlog further.

The Development Manager reported that more applications were being determined per month than were being received. It was noted that the number of applications received was lower than last year. Data was skewed for December 2023 due to the holiday period.

The next update charts would also show the number of householder applications.

RESOLVED:- that in accordance with the powers delegated to the Committee the report be noted.

EDP31 Performance Update Q3

Considered the Performance Update for Quarter 3 of 2023/24 for those areas under the remit of the Committee.

The list of 6 community projects applying for Rural England Prosperity funding would be circulated to Members of the Scrutiny Committee.

It was noted that issues with the turnaround time of land charges was due to small teams at both Councils.

RESOLVED:- that in accordance with the powers delegated to the Committee the report be noted.

EDP32 Work Programme

Considered the report of the Head of Law and Governance detailing agenda items for the next Municipal Year. In addition to those circulated with the agenda, the following items were added:

- Local Plan / Meecebrook
- Stafford Gateway
- UKSPF
- Tourism - including Airbnb
- Town Centre Regeneration
- Task and Finish (Town Centre Events) - concluding report
- Monitoring of S106

Members were asked to send anything else they wish to be considered on future agendas through to Democratic Services.

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee, the Work Programme be approved, subject to the amendments made at the meeting.

CHAIR