



RURAL, ECONOMIC & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

7 JUNE 2017

Present:

Councillors M. Sheldon (Chair), E. Hutchinson (Vice Chair),
M. Blase, G.E. Botterill, R.de Burle,
M.C.R Graham MBE, M. Glancy, J Simpson.

As Substitute:-

Councillor A. Freer-Jones for T. Beaken,
Councillor J.T. Orson for L. Higgins.

Chief Executive,
Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods,
Central Services Manager, Economic Development Officer,
Administrative Assistant for Communities and Neighbourhoods.

R1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Beaken, Councillor Higgins and Councillor Rhodes.

R2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2017 were confirmed and authorised to be signed by the Chair.

The Erratum to the minutes of 2 November 2016 and 11 January 2017 were confirmed.

At this point the Chair stated that Item 8 of the Agenda would move to Item 4 of this committee to allow the Chief Executive to leave the meeting after this item.

R3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Orson declared a personal interest in any item relating to the County Council by virtue of him being a County Councillor, however it was noted he is no longer on the Cabinet and is therefore not a decision maker.

R4. NAME OF COMMITTEE

The Chief Executive submitted a report to give Members an opportunity to consider the renaming of the Rural, Economic and Environmental Affairs Committee.

The Chief Executive gave an overview of the report bringing Members attention to 3.2 of the report; stating to better reflect the rurality of the Council and that rural services are delivered as business as usual it is suggested that the addition of "Rural" to the title of this committee is no longer relevant to the way the Council is operating and will continue to operate in the future. Other policy committees do deal with rural service issues therefore the amendment to the title of this Committee as well as giving clarity to the delegated authority and Terms of Reference of the policy committees will also help develop further inclusivity.

The Members attention was also brought to point 3 of Recommendation 2.2: to receive an annual report of the Chief Executive upon the rural matters affecting and the actions taken by the Council during the previous financial year. Noting 3.5 of the report; an "Annual Rural" report to Councils is becoming more common and has recently been praised by the Leicestershire Rural Partnership as an example of good practise in the way Councils can "rural proof" their service delivery which is in line with this Council's developing business as usual approach to its rural services.

The Chief Executive noted that part 3 of the Recommendation 2.2 should in fact be a received as a separate Recommendation 2.3.

Members stated that the new name and acronym for the Committee Economic and Environmental Affairs (EEA) was not appropriate and it was suggested that 'Melton' be added to create Melton Economic and Environmental Affairs (MEEA). All Members were in favour of this change and felt that this name would also create inclusivity.

The chair moved that Recommendations of the report be approved. All Councillors were in favour.

RESOLVED that

- (1) The Governance Committee be recommended that the Constitution set the name of this Committee as Melton Economic and Environmental Affairs Committee
- (2) The Governance Committee be recommended to consider amending that the Terms of Reference of the policy committees as follows:-
 1. Policy, Finance and Administration Committee have included new delegations as follows:-

To deal with all responsibilities within the remit of this Committee in accordance with the best interests of all local communities, including rural.

2. Community and Social Affairs Committee and those of this Committee as retitled be amended as follows: - To deal with all responsibilities within the remit of this Committee in accordance with the best interests of all local communities, including rural.

- (3) Receive an annual report of the Chief Executive upon the rural matters affecting and the actions taken by the Council during the previous financial year.

At this point the Chief Executive left the meeting.

R5. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

There were no recommendations from other committees.

R6. UPDATE ON DECISIONS

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods submitted an update on decisions report.

Members attention was brought to item 1 of the report noting the charges have started to be implemented with no negative impact caused, adding the '20 minute free parking' policy has received strong positive feedback.

A Member noted that this policy has been a success and felt the debate that took place regarding the charges at the previous meeting of this committee was one of the strongest he has been apart of.

A quick discussion took place regarding how well the council had done at calibrating the car park machines to work with the new one pound coins well ahead of the implementation.

RESOLVED that the Update on Decisions document be noted.

R7. DRAFT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY REFRESH

The Head of Communities & Neighbourhoods submitted a report seeking Members comments on the Draft Economic Development Strategy.

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods gave a brief introduction of the report noting this was a refresh of the 5 year document that was approved by this Committee.

The Economic Development Officer gave an overview of the report bringing Members attention to the 4 key areas set out in the table on page 2 of the report and focusing on the projections in future growth. Also noting an action plan update will be created in due course with the final strategy being brought to the 30 August meeting of this Committee.

A Member noted that they believed a more regular update of the action plan would be appreciated, to help give more certainty and clarity as to where this stands. The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods and the Economic Development Officer noted they will now bring back 6 monthly action plan updates.

A discussion was had regarding what was most needed in the Borough to help bring in more business with a suggestion being that incubator units could be vital to helping small businesses starting and to grow. The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods noted that the Council will be looking into these suggested developments and ideally a direct intervention in the town centre would be ideal to help bring businesses in.

A Member enquired as to whether the stated percentage of 29.6% of the working age population had NVQ level 4 or above qualifications was low and as to whether the priority is still to make sure the average percent has Level 2 and above in English and Mathematics. The Economic Development Officer noted that yes this is low in comparison to Leicester and Leicestershire which was 34.5% and that yes the average target is still to have Level 2 and above for English and Mathematics. The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods noted Melton has both people with low and high level qualifications and that a comprehensive place profile will be brought back to this Committee late this year..

A brief discussion was had regarding the advertisement and profile of this consultation noting that it needs a positive lift with the suggestion of a press release for the website and newspapers. A Member noted that the use of social media sites such a Facebook will help to bring more attention. Both the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods and the Economic Development Officer noted that they will create a plan to help implement this.

The chair moved that Recommendation 2.1 of the report be approved. All Councillors were in favour.

RESOLVED that Members made comments and approved the draft Economic Development Strategy (Appendix A), for consultation with a view to bringing back a final version to this Committee in August 2017.

R8. MELTON TOWN CENTRE AUDIT REPORT

The Head of Central Services to submit a report providing Members with information on a recent access audit of Melton Town Centre with the view of producing a prioritised action plan of the issues which were identified.

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods presented an overview of the report bringing Members attention to 3.3 Equalities Steering Group (ESG) felt that a more in-depth assessment of the town centre was required in order to make an informed decision. As a result, the Centre for Accessible Environments (CAE) was commissioned to undertake the access audit. This access audit took place in July 2016 and a detailed report of the auditor's findings was produced, the most up to date list of these actions was attached at Appendix A.

Members attention was brought to recommendation 2.1.(ii) of the report; asking Members to agree that further work be carried out to produce a prioritised action plan action plan to be submitted back to this committee at a later date.

A Member noted that the council should proceed with sorting the 'easily' fixed issues i.e. trimming trees and to then bring only the more difficult issues back in the action plan. All Members were in favour of this.

A Discussion took place advising that this item should be recommended to the Town Area Committee for consultation and then brought back to this Committee. This was agreed with by the Town Area Committee (TAC) and all Members.

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods agreed that whilst this is being recommended to the (TAC) for consultation, the Council will proceed with the 'easily fixed' issues in consultation with the Chair and will bring a report back to this Committee with updates.

The chair moved that the Recommendations of the report with the addition of the recommendation of this item to the (TAC) be approved. All Councillors were in favour.

RESOLVED that

- (1) Members took note of the findings of the report.
- (2) Members agreed that further work be carried out to produce a prioritised action plan; this will be taken to the Town Area Committee for consultation and an updated plan be submitted back to the committee at a later date.

R9. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

The meeting that started at 6:30pm finished at 7:00pm

Chairman