



ECONOMY AND GROWTH SELECT COMMITTEE

Meeting: Thursday, 2 December 2021 at 6.30 pm in a virtual meeting

Present: Councillor E Siddall (Chair)

Councillors T Ashton, R Atkins, R Baker, L Grooby, M Hall,
I Huddleston, T Kemp, R Quinn and P Roberts

Councillors Barrow, Greenhalgh, A McKeown, Thrane and Todd were also in attendance.

An apology for absence was received from Councillors K Savage

22/23 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING
(Agenda Item 4)

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2021 be approved as a correct record.

22/24 THE CRESCENT HOTEL - UPDATE (JONATHAN DAWSON, GENERAL MANAGER)
(Agenda Item 5)

Jonathan Dawson of Buxton Crescent Hotel presented members with an update around the hotel from May 2021 and provided information around total numbers of guests and their geographic locations, length of stay statistics, suppliers (20% of suppliers are from Derbyshire), staffing and PR activity to date. It was noted that the Times had made the hotel their spa of the year.

It was reported that the Peak District heavily relies on day visitors, and the average length of overnight stay is 1.8 nights which is reflected in the experience of the hotel. This is in contrast to the remainder of the company's operation within Europe, where the average stay is 11 nights. A high proportion of staff live within Derbyshire but recruiting an appropriate number of spa therapists had been challenging. Work was on-going with Buxton and Leek College and a number of apprenticeships had been offered to candidates all very local to Buxton. Reference was also made to challenges arising as a results of Brexit.

RESOLVED:

That the presentation be received with thanks.

22/25 BUXTON OPERA HOUSE - UPDATE (PAUL KERRYSON, BUXTON OPERA HOUSE)
(Agenda Item 6)

Paul Kerryson, provided members with an update around issues relating to Buxton Opera House. Arising from the impact of the COVID pandemic, an economic assessment was currently being undertaken of the Opera House. During the pandemic, the Opera House had been supported by business grants and the cultural recovery fund and efforts had been focussed on funding requirements for future ambitions which included the installation of a flying system, replacement stage surface and upgraded backstage facilities. Learning and engagement was on-going throughout the pandemic particularly around the technical youth theatre and performers youth theatre. Performances recommenced, subject to COVID safety measures in July and the pantomime was also scheduled to perform. Members were invited to tour the backstage of the opera house at a later date, once the economic assessment was available.

RESOLVED:

That the presentation be received with thanks.

22/26 COVID ECONOMIC RECOVERY (INC UPDATE ON SHOP UNIT VACANCIES)
(Agenda Item 7)

The Committee considered a report and received a presentation highlighting the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic at a local economic level, action undertaken to date to mitigate negative impacts alongside plans that are being put in place to support ongoing recovery.

Matters reported to members included business growth and productivity, Covid-19 grant delivery and administration and other business support measures. Employment statistics and training events and the establishment of a dedicated business hub, tourism – including the development of a Derbyshire Hospitality taskforce and Derbyshire Hospitality Charter to increase the value of jobs within the hospitality sector.

In response to a query regarding the possible impact of the re-introduction of a level of restrictions on the hospitality industry, reference was made to numerous initiatives aimed to support the sector through the welcome back / additional restrictions grant.

Joint working with DCC around transport issues to support the development of tourism would be welcomed, to which members were advised that there was a joint forum which included Visit Peak District, DCC, Planning and Regeneration to establish more connected transport options including cycle routes.

In response to a query around some FE specialist quarrying related skills, members were advised that work was on-going around this are in conjunction with the University of Derby.

RESOLVED:

1. That the activity undertaken to address the impact of the pandemic on the district be noted;
2. That the actions undertaken to support recovery be supported; and
3. That any areas of activity which require further consideration be identified.

22/27 WATER IN BUXTON SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT
(Agenda Item 8)

The Committee considered a report which set out the responses received to the public consultation on the Water in Buxton Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and related Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report. The report and appendices also provide details of suggested responses from the Council to consultation feedback as well as suggested modifications to be made to the SPD.

RESOLVED:

1. That the feedback to the public consultation, suggested Council responses and modifications to the SPD be noted; and
2. That the Executive be recommended to adopt the Water in Buxton SPD.

22/28 REPAIRS TO TODDBROOK RESERVOIR SPILLWAY
(Agenda Item 9)

The Committee considered progress of the proposed programme of works to Toddbrook Reservoir spillway and the key implications affecting the Council.

The Head of Service (Commissioning) and her team were commended for the work done on this project.

In response to a query regarding a guaranteed length of time for the project, members were advised that there may be programme slippage which would be monitored. It was queried whether an undertaking could be sought to guarantee the length of the project and whether financial penalties could be imposed if the undertaking was not complied with, which would be investigated.

Regarding the depth of the spillway, this would depend on the level of rainfall but the design was such that the water levels would not be of an unacceptable level, and it was noted that the liabilities rest with the Canal and Rivers Trust.

RESOLVED:

That the Executive be recommended to approve the proposals as detailed within the report, subject to:

- Formal approval of the proposed scheme by the Development Control Committee;
- Approval being received from the Charity Commission and HLF for the proposed scheme;

- That the appropriate Council land asset be disposed of in order to facilitate the dam rebuild and reduce the Council's ongoing maintenance liability;
- That the Canal & Rivers Trust (CRT) pick up all costs incurred by the Council associated with supporting delivery of the proposed scheme; and
- That authority be delegated to the Executive Director (Place), in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to authorise the disposal of the required land to CRT and to enter into any necessary legal documents in respect of the disposal.

22/29 SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

(Agenda Item 10)

It was requested that the following items be added to the work programme:

- Visitor Peak District / Marketing Peak District – Visitor Strategy
- Update on Fairfield Roundabout
- Local Plan Timeline

RESOLVED:

That, subject to the above, the Select Committee Work Programme, be noted.

22/30 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

(Agenda Item 12)

RESOLVED:

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business as there may be disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of the Local Government Act 1972.

22/31 EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

(Agenda Item 13)

RESOLVED:

That the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2021 be approved as a correct record.

The meeting concluded at 8.15 pm

CHAIRMAN