

ENTERPRISE AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 30th May, 2017

Present:-

Councillor Sarvent (Chair)

Councillors Caulfield

Councillors

Derbyshire

T Gilby +

Martin Elliott, Democratic and Scrutiny Officer
Lynda Sharpe, Economic Development Manager +
Emily Williams, Senior Economic Development Officer +

+ Attended for Minute No.4

1 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' AND OFFICERS' INTERESTS RELATING TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

No declarations were received.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Perkins.

3 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 7 February, 2017 were presented.

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes be accepted as a correct record and be signed by the Chair.

4 CABINET MEMBER FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH - SKILLS ACTION PLAN

The Cabinet Member for Economic Growth, the Economic Development Manager and the Senior Economic Development Officer attended to

provide a progress report on the development of the Chesterfield Borough Council Skills Action Plan.

The Senior Economic Development Officer noted that with the significant levels of investment currently happening in Chesterfield (including Peak Resort, Waterside and the proposed HS2 Maintenance Depot at Staveley) that a highly skilled work force would be required in order to deliver the greatest economic benefits to the area that would result from these developments. The Skills Action Plan would provide the platform from which the activity required to improve Chesterfield's skills profile, and to maximise the benefits to local people of the newly created jobs in Chesterfield could be delivered. It was noted that since 1999 there had been significant reductions in the amount of investment made in workplace learning, and compared to other leading industrialised nations the UK was falling behind in productivity levels, with around 20% of the UK's productivity gap being attributable to low skill levels amongst the workforce. The government's current focus on increasing UK productivity had led to a number of proposed reforms to the skills and apprenticeship system that had been designed to put the employer at the heart of the skills system. These included several significant changes to how apprenticeships would be delivered and funded, including the introduction of an apprenticeship levy and public sector targets for apprenticeship recruitment.

In addition to the national factors and the government policy decisions that had influenced the development of the draft Skills Action Plan there were also local issues in Chesterfield that had been considered in the drafting of the plan. These issues included:

- Chesterfield having higher numbers of unemployed 18 – 24 year olds compared to the regional or national average;
- 12 of 19 wards in Chesterfield having higher levels of residents with no qualifications than the national average;
- Chesterfield benefiting from significant levels of investment with more than £700m of key developments entering the development stage in 2017 including Peak Resort and Waterside.

The Senior Economic Development Officer advised that improving the skills and work readiness of individuals in Chesterfield was vital to ensure that local people could fully benefit from the jobs, skills and economic

growth opportunities that would result from the investments being made in Chesterfield. The Skills Action Plan would enable the benefits of new investment to be maximised and would ensure that skills related programmes had the greatest possible impact on the skill levels of local people. It was noted that having a skilled workforce was crucial to the future economic success of the borough. The main objectives of the Skills Action Plan were:

- Ensuring Local people had the right skills to access current and future job opportunities by working with local partners;
- Working with Local Enterprise Partnerships and Education Partners to ensure that Skills Provision was aligned to future the skill needs of future jobs growth;
- Providing clear advice and support to local people and businesses about the range of skills programmes available;
- Maximising the number of training, employment and supply chain job opportunities for local people arising from new developments in Chesterfield.

The Senior Economic Development Officer noted that the Skills Action Plan had the potential to deliver significant benefits. These benefits included:

- Ensuring that Chesterfield continued to perform well in attracting funding from Local Enterprise Partnership funded programmes;
- Making sure that local people benefited from the investment and skilled jobs growth in the borough;
- Providing a framework to enable the Council to work effectively with partners to align skills provision and future employment demand.

Members asked that as the government was devolving the management of Adult Education Budgets where these budgets would be administered from. The Economic Development Manager advised that it was the Government's intention to devolve Adult Education Budgets to localities (LEPs) from 2018/19 (subject to readiness conditions). Members asked several questions relating to the delivery and monitoring of apprenticeships and were keen to ensure that the Skills Action Plan

included actions to ensure that the apprenticeships that were provided were of a high quality and would provide each apprentice with a robust programme of training to give them the skills needed to succeed in the jobs market. Members also welcomed the focus of the action plan being to help local people access the new skilled jobs that would be created by inward investment in the borough as there had been concerns expressed by local residents in Staveley that the skilled jobs created by the HS2 Maintenance Depot would not be accessible to, or benefit local people.

Members asked whether the Skills Action Plan could be used to target armed forces leavers who often struggled to gain employment and utilise and build on their skills developed in the armed forces in civilian life. The Senior Economic Development Officer advised that as this group had specific needs, education partners would be alerted to the needs of this group and encouraged to target support at this group and subsequently be actively promoted to potential employers. Members also welcomed the changes to apprenticeship provision that meant that apprenticeships would become accessible to older people as well as to people looking to retrain in new areas who already had some qualifications.

The Committee thanked the Cabinet Member for Economic Growth, the Economic Development Manager and the Senior Economic Development Officer for attending and for answering their questions.

RESOLVED –

1. That the draft Skills Action Plan be supported.
2. That a progress report on the implementation of the Skills Action Plan be considered at the February, 2018 meeting of the Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.

5 SCRUTINY PROJECT GROUPS

Councillor Derbyshire, Lead Member for the Play Strategy Scrutiny Project Group provided a progress report on the groups work. The Play Strategy had now been drafted and was with the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing for comment before being submitted to the project group for their consideration and comments. Councillor Derbyshire noted that the strategy was scheduled for public consultation during August after which the project group would meet to review the consultation responses that had been received.

Councillor Sarvent provided an update on the Leisure, Sport and Cultural Activities project group. Councillor Sarvent advised that a review meeting with Executive Director Michael Rich, the contractors, key individuals and project group members was being scheduled where project group members would have the opportunity to ask questions, review how the scheme and be implemented and to consider if there were any key learning points for the council to consider when thinking about significant future capital projects. After this meeting had taken place the project group would make a full report back to the committee on its findings.

Councillor Sarvent advised that the new Scrutiny Project Group on the future use of the site of the old Queen's Park Sports Centre had been established and that the project group would be starting work soon.

RESOLVED –

1. That the progress reports be noted.
2. That the project start report for the new Scrutiny Project Group on the future use of the site of the old Queen's Park Sports Centre be considered at the September, 2017 meeting of the Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.

6 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered its Work Programme.

RESOLVED –

1. That the Work Programme be approved.
2. That the unscheduled work programme item on Homelessness be considered at the October, 2017 and April, 2018 meetings of the Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.

7 FORWARD PLAN

The Forward Plan was considered.

RESOLVED –

That the Forward Plan be noted.

8 CORPORATE WORKING GROUPS

Councillor Sarvent provided an update from the meetings of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan steering groups.

Councillor Sarvent advised that four sub-groups had been tasked with looking at different aspects of the HRA Business Plan in order to address revenue gaps and to put forward suggestions of how these could be addressed in a revised business plan. The sub-group that she was a member of had been tasked with looking at how repairs and maintenance could be delivered in a more cost effective manner. Councillor Sarvent noted that the groups needed to finalise their proposals by August to enable them to be fed into the development of the revised HRA Business Plan.

RESOLVED –

That the progress report be noted.