

## Minutes of Economic Development Committee

Meeting Date: Thursday, 14 November 2019, starting at 6.30pm  
Present: Councillor S Hirst (Chairman)

Councillors:

D Berryman	S Fletcher
S Bibby	M French
D Birtwhistle	M Hindle
I Brown	S Hore
B Buller	G Mirfin
J Clark	J Rogerson
R Elms	

In attendance: Director of Economic Development and Planning, Head of Regeneration and Housing, Head of Culture and Leisure Services, Senior Accountant, and Gemma Johnson and Nick Kershaw (Lancashire County Council).

Also in attendance: Councillor T Austin.

### 371 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillor R Baxter.

### 372 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### 373 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interest.

### 374 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

### 375 AN UPDATE ON RURAL BROADBAND

The Chairman welcomed Gemma Johnson and Nick Kershaw from Lancashire County Council to give an update on rural broadband.

A presentation was given outlining current progress throughout Lancashire and in Ribble Valley specifically.

Committee were informed that back in 2013 an open market review had identified premises below 24mbps that were eligible for investment. Project 1 of the Lancashire programme took place from 2013 to 2017 with BT and Project 2 from 2015 to date had achieved 99% broadband throughout Lancashire. There were

now 2,467 premises identified left to do in the Ribble Valley. However, this only included fibre to the box and not necessarily fibre from the box to the premises.

The current funding opportunity by use of a gigabit voucher scheme where residents could claim up to £500 was highlighted for Committee's information.

Committee were also informed of a future funding initiative called "Outside In" that would address rural digital connectivity where Lancashire County Council would be working with BD UK to provide full fibre coverage in rural areas.

It was now considered that another open market review was required to address individual levels of digital connectivity.

Members asked questions with regard to specific areas within their own wards and also with regard to power fluctuations and how developers and BT interact.

Of most concern was that generally members of the public do not understand that in order to have full connectivity they are required to request fibre from the box to their own premises.

The Chairman thanked Gemma Nick for their comprehensive update and informed Committee that they would be circulated with a copy of the presentation.

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#### UPDATE ON THE ECONOMIC PLAN

The Director of Economic Development and Planning submitted a report updating Members on the actions contained within the Economic Plan 2019 to 2022. She reminded Members that they had agreed the Economic Plan at their meeting on 29 September 2019 and that in order to ensure that the plan acts as an enabler to the economy of the valley it needed to contain a series of suitable actions. There was also a need to identify the priorities for the Council and establish mechanisms for delivering the actions.

The report outlined several short-term priorities:

- Action area 1: People – undertake Housing and Economic Needs Assessment.
- Action area 2: Places – develop a key service centre action plan for Longridge.
- Action area 2: Places – deliver more choice for more modern working arrangements.
- Action area 2: Places – undertake place branding.
- Action area 3: Business Support and Growth – work Ribble Valley.
- Action area 3: Business Support and Growth – utilise the Ribble Valley Economic Partnership.
- Action area 4: Connectivity – rail improvements.
- Action area 4: Connectivity – develop a digital strategy.
- Action area 5: Tourism – Develop and one-stop events directory.

The Director of Economic Development and Planning expanded on the short-term priorities and explained to Committee why these particular short-term

priorities had been chosen and how she proposes to move forward on each one of them.

The report also outlined several medium-term priorities that would be worked upon in due course.

Committee discussed the proposed short-term priorities and suggested that as well as progressing a rail study, that the Director of Economic Development and Planning look further into also progressing a bus study as it was felt parts of Ribble Valley may be better served by adequate bus services.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the short and medium-term priorities as set out in the report and specifically that officers are asked to:

1. commence the action plan programme with the Longridge key service centre action plan;
2. progress with Blackburn College to develop a piece of work with their students in respect of an economic development place branding exercise and engage with them to develop a piece of work with their students in respect of the final design of the Economic Plan document; and
3. progress a rail study with key partners.

377 TOURISM PERFORMANCE STATISTICS 2018 AND ACTIVITY 2019/20

The Director of Community Services submitted a report for Committee's information on the latest tourism performance statistics and a general progress report on tourism activity. It was noted that tourism was flourishing in Ribble Valley and a number of visitor related businesses achieving recognition awards and accreditation increases each day.

Latest statistics show that the value of the tourism and hospitality to the local economy was growing steadily and tourism was providing new opportunities and employment.

It was noted that accommodation provision appeared to be lower, however this was due to a more accurate survey of providers in the borough.

The report outlined the current initiatives being undertaken working with Marketing Lancashire, the Ribble Valley Tourism Association and the Ribble Valley Wedding Partnership.

The report also highlighted the key events where Ribble Valley was promoted each year and the Walks with Taste series of walks that had been developed in partnership with local businesses.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

378 CAPITAL MONITORING 2019/20 AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME REVIEW AND NEW BIDS

The Director of Resources submitted a report providing Members with information on the progress of this Committee's 2019/20 Capital Programme for

the period to the end of September 2019, as well as the outcome of this Committee's Capital Programme for 2020/21 to 2024/25.

At the end of September 2019 there had been no spend on the two schemes in this Committee's Capital Programme and there was no existing Capital Programme for 2020/21 to 2023/24 and to date no new bids had been submitted for 2024/25.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

379 REVENUE MONITORING 2019/20

The Director of Resources submitted a report informing Committee of the position April to September 2019 of this year's revenue budget as far as this Committee was concerned.

The comparison between actual and budgeted expenditure shows an overspend of £765 on the net cost of services for the first 6 months of the financial year 2019.20.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

380 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies.

The meeting closed at 8.00pm.

If you have any queries on these minutes please contact Nicola Hopkins (414532).