

**REGENERATION AND NEIGHBOURHOODS  
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2016**

**PRESENT** – Councillors *Surve* (Chair), *Ali*, *Casey*, *Connor*, *Entwistle*, *Hollings*, *Khonat*, *Whalley*, *Whittle* and *Wright*.

***Also Present*** –

Cllr Phil Riley	Executive Member for Regeneration
Cllr Brookfield	Assistant Executive Member for Regeneration
Tom Flanagan	Executive Director for Place
David Proctor	Team Leader, Planning Policy
Mebz Bobat	Head of Service Support to the Committee
John Addison	Principal Scrutiny Officer
Rebekah Mottershead	Scrutiny Officer

**RESOLUTIONS**

**26. Welcome and apologies**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Apologies were received by Councillor Julie Slater.

**27. Minutes of the meeting held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2015**

**RESOLVED –**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2015 be agreed as a correct record.

**28. Declarations of Interest in items on this Agenda**

There were No Declarations of Interest received.

**29. Growth Agenda**

The Chair reminded Members that as part of their work programme, throughout the municipal year they had received presentations on, and completed site visits to, the Town Centre Capital Projects, and as these projects were nearing completion, the Committee had asked for an overview of the future prosperity plans for the Borough.

The Chair welcomed the Executive Director for Place to the meeting and invited him to take Members through his presentation on the Growth and Development Programme from now until 2020.

It was reported that a new Local Plan had been presented to Council Forum in December 2015 which promoted growth, self-dependency and target marketing to increase investment.

Members were informed that the department was holding discussions around the 're-branding' of Blackburn with Darwen with the Local Strategic Partnership 'Thinking Place' in the aim to counteract any negative perceptions, and to attract visitors and businesses from the Ribble Valley and M6 Corridor to the Borough.

The Executive Director for Place advised Members that the key prosperity themes for the Borough through until 2020 were;

- Infrastructure, housing and town centres
- Business development and innovation
- Employability
- Quality of life
- Image and marketing

It was reported that in achieving success in these key themes, the department intended to create a prosperous Borough where residents were in employment, education or training, and where businesses created innovative products for international markets.

The Committee was provided with an overview of how the department intended to promote growth in the Borough. Members discussed how increasing the Council Tax and Business Rates base, creating more jobs and the production of quality housing would attract (and retain) those with skills to the area, improve financial self-dependency and ultimately strengthen Blackburn with Darwen's position within Lancashire and the wider region.

The Committee was informed that key decisions were being taken around investment and income generation for the Borough. Members noted that sites such as Blakey Moor and the old Waves building had received initial interest and the department was currently in discussions with Blackburn College regarding development opportunities for these areas.

Members noted that a Growth Board had been formed with support from the Leader of the Council, Executive Members and the Senior Officer Team to help the department to achieve its goals.

The Executive Director indicated that each project development case would go through 5 components, each of which was dynamically reviewed at each stage of the process. Members noted that these components were as follows;

- Strategic Case; was it needed, did it align with strategy and would it further aims and objectives?
- Economic Case; was it of benefit, what were the GVA and revenue benefits and was it the best balance of benefit cost and risk?

- Commercial Case; was it viable, was there a supplier to meet demand and could a deal be secured which would offer value for money in the current market?
- Financial Case; was it affordable, were the Capex and Opex costs realistic and affordable and was further funding available and supported?
- Management Case; were we capable of delivering the project, and did we have robust systems and processes in place?

Members received a synopsis of the pipeline of this development process, its Governance and an outline of the strategic summary of project benefits. A discussion took place around how the department and Growth Board explored each case put before it to ascertain which areas would offer value for money, would support the overall growth agenda and would be viable options to take forward.

Questions were raised by Members around which sites had been identified as target areas for development and growth. It was indicated that there were 10 Council owned sites designated for Growth Priority Projects which included; Roe Lee and March House development sites, the former Blackburn Market and Thwaites site (subject to agreement) and the Darwen Market redevelopment.

It was reported that there were also 10 non Council owned areas earmarked for potential development including; Gibb Lane and North Blackburn for housing, Blakey Moor and Phase 2 of the Cathedral Quarter for business use and the Premier Way business site for employment.

The Committee was provided with projected tax revenue estimate that could be generated through the development of housing and employment in the Borough. The Executive Director indicated that the department felt optimistic that it could achieve the 'realistic' figure of £11,645,000 income for the Borough once all projects had reached completion, though this was subject to the 2% levy on council tax, being allowed to keep a proportion of business rates and the £1.47 million new homes reserve bonus.

It was noted that this figure was subject to change, and that the department was in the process of re-calculating the Financial Benefit Profile to feed into MTFs. It was reported that updated figures would be brought back to the Committee once available.

Members raised concerns that although many sites had been granted planning permission for new homes, building work had not yet commenced. It was reported that this was something being targeted by the department, and that as the new homes bonus would now only be applied for those built within 4 years it was hoped that housing developments would progress more rapidly, which would in turn increase the council tax base for the Borough.

The Committee noted that the projective income was based on the completion of key growth projects and questioned the impact of the impending budget

efficiencies on the deliverability of such projects. The Executive Director of Place advised that budget reduction was a cause for concern, but that the team, together with the Growth Board, was analysing the 10 key priorities to ensure those that were taken forwards were the ones which would generate the most income and offer the best value for money moving forwards.

It was reported that Blackburn with Darwen was already ahead of neighbouring Authorities and the department was in a good position to bid for additional funding. Members were informed that a presentation of an agreed development programme would be taken to the Local Enterprise Partnership in the spring and that updates would be brought to the Committee accordingly once available.

**RESOLVED –**

That the Growth and Development Plan for the Borough be noted.

**23. Car Parking**

The Executive Member for Regeneration provided the Committee with a further update on the Council's car parking provision that included free after 3 parking and Blue Badges. The Executive Member reminded the Committee of some of the information that had been provided at the last meeting and provided them with an overview of the departments' current position.

It was reported that there was a large percentage of residents throughout the Borough that qualified for a Blue Badge. The Committee discussed the enforcement and removal of residential disabled bays. It was noted that the parking department completed annual reviews of badge holders to assess if outer bays were still required, with removal authorised on a case by case basis.

The Executive Member indicated that the high level of Blue Badge ownership had a subsequent impact on the town centre parking, and that the department was currently completing an impact assessment on the potential effects of any changes to town centre parking provisions on the most vulnerable residents.

The Executive Member advised that the Committee would be provided with an update on any changes to disabled parking provision once the impact assessment information was available.

A discussion took place around the viability of the current 'Free After 3' scheme, with Member questioning if this was likely to continue moving forwards. It was reported that the department was looking at all options around this provision.

It was noted that the Executive Member for Regeneration was considering changes to the Council's parking provision as a whole and would report back potential options to Members when he was in a position to do so.

**RESOLVED –**

That the Executive Member provides the Committee with updates on parking provision for the Borough when information is available

**25. Committees Work Programme**

The Committee was provided with a report on the work completed to date on its work programme for the municipal year 2015/16.

It was agreed that for its final meeting of the municipal year, Members wished to receive a presentation on the Town Centre Vision for the future. It was agreed that the Executive Director of Place be invited to the final meeting of the Committee.

The Principal Scrutiny Officer informed Members that a comprehensive list of recommendations would be brought to the final meetings for Members consideration and agreement.

**RESOLVED –**

That the Committees Work Programme be noted.

Signed.....

Chair of the meeting at which the Minutes were signed

Date.....