

**REGENERATION AND NEIGHBOURHOODS
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Monday 28th November 2016**

PRESENT – Councillors *Surve (Chair), Entwistle, Mulla, Shorrocks, Wright, Tapp and Neil Slater.*

Also Present –

Phil Riley	Executive Member for Regeneration
Brian Bailey	Director for Growth & Prosperity
Clare Turner	Economic and Regeneration Business Manger
John Addison	Principal Scrutiny Officer

RESOLUTIONS

17. Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the fourth meeting in the municipal year of the Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Apologies were received from Councillors, Jan-Virmani, Khonat, Hardman and Hollings.

18. Minutes of the meeting held on 25th October 2016

It was noted that prior to the beginning of the last Committee meeting held on the 26th October 2016, Members held a minute silence in honour of Councillor Michael Johnson who had sadly passed away. Cllr Johnson had been a former Chair of the Regeneration and Technical Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 25st October 2016 be agreed as a correct record, subject to the inclusion of the above.

19. Declarations of Interest in items on this Agenda

There were No Declarations of Interest received.

20. Growth Agenda and Evening Economy

The Committee received an update presentation on the Council's plans to grow the boroughs economy, in particular around Blackburn's evening economy and Darwens' Daytime economy. Included with the Agenda was a detailed presentation from the Director for growth and prosperity and the Executive Member for Regeneration.

Members were reminded that Blackburn town centre's night time economy had suffered from a lack of investment over the last 20 years. A period of ASB linked to the rise of binge drinking and zero tolerance enforcement impacted on the commercial viability of the businesses in the town centre and the perception of safety and negative press.

It was report that a Lack of good quality restaurants and bars in the town, coupled with strong competition from nearby towns including Darwen, Whalley and Clitheroe as well as Manchester and Preston has meant a wide and quality choice is elsewhere. It was noted that the Development of the Vue cinema and leisure complex at the edge of the town centre didn't benefit the core town centre

Members were informed that the Council had 3 strategic objectives, to improve perceptions of the town centre and tackle any issues, improve the current offer by supporting independent operators and encouraging cultural events and to invest in the longer term development of the town centre and providing quality sites and spaces for new restaurants, leisure and bars.

Members were then provided with a breakdown of progress so far, this covered;

- Perceptions and safety;
- Improving the town centre offer;
- Supporting independents
- Providing new high quality space for operations
- Emerging clusters of activity - Cathedral Quarter area and King William Street/Northgate area
- Clear areas of development and growing commercial interest from operators and developers
- Significant increase in Visitor economy year on year – Best ever visitor numbers in BwD in 2015 - with 4 million visitors in 2015, up 2.5% on 2014, generating £160 million value to the local economy, an increase of 7.5% from 2014

Continue to deliver the activities which have been successful, including:

- Empty property rates incentives and small grants
- Deliver Blackburn Fab Lab/Making Rooms
- Making the most of our existing assets – Museum, Library, Market, College, Businesses, Public Space

Working in partnership with Blackburn BID to:

- Support BID to deliver exciting programme of events
- Support BID to deliver commercial marketing campaign to promote the town centre offer to visitors

- Deliver improved town centre environment and safety initiatives
- Support development of BIDs business plan for next 3 years

Encourage Further Development:

- Support developments that attract new occupiers and maintain investment and encourage Mall to open later to encourage dwell time
- Bring forward new council sites for development through an Investment and Growth Strategy e.g. Former Waves Site, Former Markets Site
- Support partners and the private sector to invest in the town centre e.g. Thwaites site, Blakey Moor Building, The Mall, Blackburn College
- Deliver Northgate Townscape Heritage Project to improve heritage building including King George's Hall, Blakey Moor shops, independent shops on Northgate and surrounding public realm

Darwen

Members were informed that Darwen town centre's night time economy had suffered from a lack of investment and growing competition from nearby attractions with the town's evening offer mainly consisted of traditional pubs and a handful of smaller low quality clubs. It was noted that the Impact of the smoking ban and general downturn in the pub trade left existing businesses struggling and many pubs closed.

Members were informed that the Council had 2 strategic objectives, improve property and the public realm and events and marketing. Members were then provided with a breakdown of progress so far, this covered;

- Private investment
- Reputation (food and drink)
- Support for development
- Encouraging a thriving and vibrant economy

It was noted that the Council had 3 priorities for Darwen, the former 3 day market site, former petrol station site and the church street site.

Members then held a round table discussion with the Executive Member and the officers in particular around the growing the boroughs economy and the difficulties the Council faced.

RESOLVED –

That the Executive Members and Officers be thanked for their presentation.

21. Committees work programme

The Principal Democratic Services Officer presented the Committee’s work programme report which highlighted the key priorities and risks which had been outlined by the Executive Members at the beginning of the municipal year.

It was noted that at the next meeting in January 2017, the Committee would be provided with a presentation on Volunteer and Asset Based Working and Capital Programmes.

Members were also reminded that the Committee would, as part of its work programme for the remainder of the year be looking at the Growth Agenda, the evening economy and Volunteer and Asset Based Working and Capital Programmes.

RESOLVED –

That the Committee’s work programme for the remainder of the 2016/17 municipal year be noted.

Signed.....

Chair of the meeting at which the Minutes were signed

Date.....