

## **Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**Monday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2020**

Present: Councillor Khonat (Chair) in the Chair, Councillors Khan, Z., Hardman, Kay, Batan Julie Slater, Shorrocks Sidat and Taylor

Also present: Councillor Phil Riley, Executive Member

Martin Kelly Director of Growth and Development

Paul Conlon, Democratic Services.

### **1. Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed members present to the meeting and outlined the procedure for the meeting in line with the regulations relating to Covid19. Apologies were submitted on behalf of Councillor McFall and Marrow

### **2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **3. The Councils Response to COVID19 and Support to the Economy.**

The Committee were received a report and presentation from the Executive Member and Director of Growth and Development on the support that had been given to business in the borough try to maintain and support the economy of the borough. The Committee were reminded of the progress of the Boroughs economic strategy which had seen 5,000 new jobs created & 1,300 new homes delivered in last 3-years. There was a strong enterprise culture, diverse economic base, cash-rich business community with growing international trade links and a large health economy mitigating COVID impacts. Key employers continue to invest & grow such as Heritage Envelopes, Star Tissue, Assystems, WEC, etc. and key developments were progressing at Milking Lane, Wainwright Way, Carl Fogarty Way, Reel Cinema to open by Christmas, with enquiries for new business space

The Committee were informed that the Mall / Markets had re-opened in June with fewer occupiers. Footfall was rising but was 50% below pre-COVID levels with national retailers withdrawing from all high streets. New housing developments were progressing at Griffin, Alaska St, Baileys Field, Fishmoor Drive and Holden Fold. No major redundancies had been made in the Borough to date but severe difficulties elsewhere including Rolls-Royce at Barnoldswick and Safran in Burnley.

There had been a significant increase in benefit claimants from 4.9% in February to 8.2% August with over 7,600 claimants in the Borough and 30% of the workforce (20,000) furloughed with Government support ending soon. This may result in delayed unemployment as many firms may not survive.

The Committee were informed of specific measures that were put in place to support businesses including working with HIVE, BID, Chamber, Growth Lancashire to identify business issues. Question and Answer sessions, surveys and surgeries had been held and £40M in mandatory COVID grant support to over 3,700 businesses distributed. £2M in discretionary COVID grant had been awarded to support over 300 businesses. Additional financial support package had been available for market traders in Blackburn and Darwen and support given to hospitality & retail sector to adapt to COVID restrictions. The Council was working on new marketing initiatives to encourage workers, shoppers and visitors to return to our town centres and leveraging COVID secure expertise. A joint bid had been submitted to the government with Lancashire County Council, Blackpool and the LEP entitled Reimagining Lancashire – An Economic Recovery Framework to engage and secure Government support and a BWD/Pennine Economic Recovery Plan was Being Developed.

The Committee were updated on work that was ongoing to promote growth in the economy and the key outcomes included in the Growth Programme for 2020/21 agreed. Other progress included-

- New Local Plan in development
- Developing the Blackburn Growth Axis framework
- Darwen Town Deal aiming to submit a £25M Town Investment Plan in early 2021
- Developing East – West connectivity case-making to influence Transport for the North
- Realising international trade opportunities & leveraging market connections
- Reshoring NHS supply chains
- Accessing HS2 and other major infrastructure supply chain opportunities
- New zero carbon & clean technology opportunities
- Working with LCC, Blackpool & LEP on Independent Economic Review & Greater Lancashire Plan
- Working with LEP on developing Lancashire's Local Industrial Strategy
- Leading approach on new local governance arrangements

The Executive Member and the Director assured the Committee that the Council would support the recovery of the economy in any way possible and ensure whilst ensuring that the maximum support made available nationally was accessed fully.

RESOLVED- 1 That the Executive Member and Director be thanked for their presentation and work on supporting the economy of the borough and that they be asked to pass these thanks on to all members of the department and partner agencies.

2 That the Committee be kept informed of the progress at regular intervals when appropriate.

### **3. Work Programme for the Year**

The next meeting of the Committee would revisit the issue of recycling and look at the progress following the start of the new contractual arrangements. The Committee would also look at the issue of fly tipping and the perception that this had increased during the

pandemic given the closure of the civic amenity sites and subsequent restrictions on entry due to the virus. The Committee would agree a focus and scope for the meeting for submission to the Executive Members for response as the focus of the meeting.

Signed.....

Date.....

Chair at the meeting where the minutes were confirmed.