

Minutes of a Meeting of the Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 24 July 2007

Present: Councillor Mick Jones
" Gordon Collett
" Josie Compton
" Anne Forwood
" Eithne Goode
" Richard Hyde
" Pat Henry
" Philip Morris-Jones
" John Ross
" Mick Stanley

Also Present: Councillor Chris Saint, Portfolio Holder for Economic Development.

Officers: Andy Davis, Warwickshire Observatory Manager, Environment and Economy Directorate.
John Deegan, Strategic Director for Environment and Economy.
Janet Fortune, Regeneration Strategy and Europe Skills, Environment and Economy Directorate.
Jean Hardwick, Principal Committee Administrator, Performance and Development Directorate.
Paul Kerr, Principal Officer for Tourism, Environment and Economy Directorate.
Cheryl Mann, Senior Investment Officer, Environment and Economy Directorate.
Andy McDarmaid, Environment Systems Management, Environment and Economy Directorate.
Jane Pollard, Scrutiny Manager, Performance and Development Economy Directorate.
Ron Tennant, Warwickshire Observatory, Environment and Economy Directorate.
John Scouller, Head of Skills, Tourism and Economy, Environment and Economy Directorate.

Also present: Tom Clift, Opportunities Co-ordinator, Coventry and Warwickshire 2012 Partnership and Peter Banham, Warwickshire College

1. General

(1) Apologies.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Peter Barnes, Michael Doody and Bernard Kirton.

(2) Members' Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

Councillor Richard Hyde declared a personal interest as a Member of Advantage West Midlands.

(3) Minutes

(a) Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2007 be agreed as a correct record and be signed by the Chair subject to an apology for absence being recorded for Councillor Richard Hyde.

(b) Matters Arising

Peugeot Update

John Scouller reported that the new owners of the Peugeot site were expected to submit a planning application to Rugby Borough Council in mid-August and he hoped to report details of this application to the Committee's September 2007 meeting.

2. Public Question Time

None

3. Olympic 2012 Presentation (2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games)

Tom Clift (presentation material attached) on behalf of the Coventry and Warwickshire 2012 Partnership highlighted –

(1) the following facts –

- this was the 26th Olympics and 20th Paralympics.
- a total of 31 venues would be used – Villa Park nearest to Coventry and Warwickshire, Olympic Park, Stratford East London.
- 17,000 athletes, 6,000 coaches/officials and 2,000 judges/referees.
- 7,000 official sponsor representatives.
- 70,000 volunteers would be needed.

(2) achievements and progress in year 1.

(3) how Partner contributions had been spent

(4) the benefits of a 2012 Co-ordinator

(5) the Next Steps – Preparing for Beijing 2008

(6) London 2012 - Why get involved?

Contact details: Website: www.performancefromtheheart.com, email tom.clift@cswp.org.uk, telephone 0247670 7431

Peter Banham gave a Warwickshire perspective on the 2012 Games (presentation material attached) and highlighted –

- (1) The background to, and history of, the 2012 Games.
- (2) The list of Warwickshire facilities submitted for official training and holding camp LOCOG Guide.
- (3) the benefits for Warwickshire.
- (4) Proposals for the future for the 2012 Games and key recommendations including the presentation of a Business Plan to the College Board.

In reply to questions Tom Clift and Peter Banham said that –

- (1) it was too soon to predict the impact the proposed sale of Stoneleigh Park would have on 2012 proposals but, hopefully, the Park would be included in any future plans (as a training holding facility).
- (2) there would be tourism opportunities for both the south and north of the county in terms of opening up business opportunities, not necessarily tourism attractions, but in connection with the supply chain. Two of the training facilities identified were located in North Warwickshire, i.e. The Belfry and the Pingles Athletic Track.
- (3) the cost to the County Council to date was its contribution to the Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership. The County Council would need to give guidance about what it wanted to do further in preparation for the 2012 Games in order to calculate any further costs. The only cost calculation that had been undertaken related to the business plan prepared for Warwickshire College Board
- (4) it was not envisaged that any new facilities would be built in preparation for the Games. If any facilities were to be built, however, they would need to be an integral part of future plans and of lasting benefit for Warwickshire.

The Chair thanked Tom Clift and Peter Banham for their presentations and said he hoped that they would attend a future meeting to report further on work being undertaken in preparation for the 2012 Olympics.

4. Presentation by Warwickshire Observatory – Warwickshire Economic Update.

Andy Davis referred to the briefing paper circulated to Members, which presented the latest economic data relating to Warwickshire and compared it with 'benchmark' neighbouring authorities to the south within the context of the sub-region. The report and presentation covered economic performance with regard to key indicators such as Gross Value Added (GVA) unemployment and enterprise and provided an overview of what was happening in the Warwickshire economy.

He highlighted that –

- (1) on the basis of the latest GVA estimates the relative performance of the Warwickshire economy had declined since 2000.
- (2) The Warwickshire GVA per worker was on par with the national average but below that of most neighbouring authorities.
- (3) The decline in manufacturing was a major contributory component to this trend.
- (4) There remained significant inequalities across Warwickshire.
- (5) Unemployment was rising in some parts of the county whilst worklessness rates remained high.
- (6) There had been some success in establishing more diversity in the local economy.

Discussion followed during which Andy Davis and John Scouller answered Members' questions and concerns about the information contained in the briefing note.

The Chair expressed concern about the worrying trends detailed in the paper and thanked Andy Davis for alerting Members' attention to the issues and for his presentation.

5. The Future of the Ansty Site

John Scouller presented the report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Economy, which updated the Committee on the proposed development of the Ansty Major Investment Site, including progression of a medical technologies park.

During discussion the following comments were noted –

- (1) Concern was expressed about the need for Government support for local business whereas overseas companies were being offered assistance.
- (2) A Member welcomed the future proposals for the site and the benefits that it would bring in terms of job creation and Government investment.
- (3) That the County Council should place a higher priority on job creation and economic development.

In response to concern expressed John Scouller advised that the County Council provided a wide range of support for small business, which included a portfolio of business premises.

Councillor Richard Hyde commented that assistance from AWM, via RSA grants, was equally open to indigenous UK businesses as to foreign investors.

Following which the Committee –

- (1) noted the proposed developments at the Ansty site and expressed support for the progression of the medical technology park at the site over the coming years.
- (2) agreed that, taking account the messages emerging from the previous agenda item, the Warwickshire Economic Update, that Cabinet be asked to give greater priority to the services provided by the County Council in supporting economic development.
- (3) agreed that a special meeting be held in August 2007 to consider the Government's review of the Sub-National Economic Development and Regeneration in England (Note: meeting to be held on 23rd August 2007 at 2:15 p.m.)

6. Full Year Performance Plan 2006/7

Andy McDarmaid presented the report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Economy, which detailed the full year performance outturn with respect to the objectives of the Environment and Economy Directorate.

In reply to questions John Scouller –

- (1) updated Members on milestones not achieved in relation to –
 - The Hub – in connection with the termination of regeneration funding.
 - Phase 3 of the Centenary Business Centre – clarification of state aid issues, EU rules and the possibility of clawback in future years. These issues would be considered by AWM on 4 August 2007 and Cabinet on 6 September 2007.
 - Bayton Road, Business Improvement Districts concept – whilst this did not receive a sufficient number of positive votes, a significant proportion of the businesses wished to move forward on certain elements of the BIDS proposals to make improvements to the area.
- (2) Reported that a meeting was pending to review the future of Stoneleigh Park.

The Committee -

- (i) noted the performance report submitted by the Environment and Economy Directorate for the full year 2006/07.
- (ii) endorsed any proposed remedial actions.

7. Local Area Agreements – Indicators and Targets

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director for Performance and Development and noted the Local Area Agreement indicators and targets, which the Committee might particularly like to focus on for future analysis and discussion.

8. Future Work Programme and Forward Plan Items Relevant to the Work of this Committee.

(a) Future Work Programme

The Committee noted the future work programme and the additional meeting to be held on 23rd August 2007 to consider the Government's review of the Sub-National Economic Development and Regeneration in England.

(b) Forward Plan

Members noted the Forward Plan items relevant to the work of this Committee.

9. Any other Business

None

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Chair of the Committee

The Committee rose at 4:30 p.m.