

At a meeting of the PROSPERITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on WEDNESDAY, 12th SEPTEMBER, 2011 at 5.30 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor Mordey in the Chair

Councillors Ball, Bell, S. Foster, Gallagher, P. Gibson, Howe, Snowdon, Walton and Wilson.

Also Present:-

Councillor Charlton – Portfolio Holder for Prosperous City

Apologies for Absence

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Councillor Mordey.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

Minutes of the Last Meeting of the Committee held on 27th July, 2011

With regard to the nomination of a co-opted representative from the University, Mr. Diamond advised further discussions were being held with the University around how they could best contribute to the policy review.

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 27th July, 2011 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Response from Cabinet, 22nd June, 2011 – Policy Review – Low Carbon Economy

The Deputy Chief Executive and the Portfolio Holder for Prosperous City submitted a joint report (copy circulated) which provided feedback from the Cabinet meeting held on 22 June, 2011, which considered the Committee's policy review report into the Low Carbon Economy.

(for copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Charlton, Portfolio Holder for Prosperous City, presented the report thanking Members for the opportunity to attend the meeting to provide feedback from the meeting of Cabinet and advised that Cabinet had approved the Committee's recommendations in their entirety. Councillor Charlton then introduced Ms. Janet Snaith, Head of City Business and Investment Team and Mr. Matthew Hunt, Port Director, and between them they provided progress updates on the work underway to move forward on the Committee's recommendations as set out in the action plan.

In response to a query from Councillor Howe regarding the opportunities offered by the development of the North Sea offshore wind industry, Mr. Hunt advised that the Port was actively engaged in developing to the full the potential of the Port both in terms of maintenance work, manufacturing and as part of the supply chain. Councillor Howe noted that the Port's location should help to facilitate the Port's involvement in the renewable industry.

Councillor Gibson referred to action c) within the plan and the installation of solar PV and commented that on a recent site visit to Portland School he had been informed that a local company had contacted them to install solar PV which would provide electricity to the school for the next 25 years and asked for an update on the outcome of this query. Ms. Snaith agreed that in the absence of Mr. Andrew Atkinson she would take the issue back and get an Officer to contact Councillor Gibson directly with an update.

The Cabinet Member having left the meeting, it was:-

2. RESOLVED that the proposed actions detailed within the Action Plan be received and noted.

Policy Review – Monitoring of Recommendations

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided the Committee with progress in relation to the Working Neighbourhood Strategy and Tourism and Marketing in Sunderland Policy Review recommendations.

(for copy report – see original minutes).

Ms. Karen Alexander, Employment and Training Manager, presented the report advising that following Cabinet consideration of the Committee's recommendations from the Working Neighbourhood Strategy Policy Review, they had agreed that progress towards the completion of the actions would be monitored through the Action Plan, with standardised six monthly monitoring reports, which this was one of.

Mr. Jim Diamond, Scrutiny Officer, advised that no Officer was currently present to provide an update in relation to the Tourism and Marketing in Sunderland Policy Review. It was suggested that in these circumstances, consideration of the recommendations be deferred until the next meeting of the Committee.

Councillor Gibson referred to the recommendation regarding Job Linkage and commented that they had received various funding from the Council's Area Committees but had not returned to advise Members of how many people they had been successful in getting back into work. Ms. Alexander advised that a report was being submitted to the West Area Committee advising of the work undertaken during the Working Neighbourhood Fund and the findings were quite impressive.

The Chairman having thanked Ms. Alexander for her attendance it was:-

3. RESOLVED that the progress towards completion of the actions detailed within the Action Plan for the Working Neighbourhood Strategy Policy Review be received and noted and that the Tourism and Marketing in Sunderland Policy Review recommendations be considered at the next meeting of the Committee.

University City Policy Review 2011/12 : Role of the University

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) the purpose of which was to receive a report from Mr. David Donkin of the University of Sunderland in relation to the Committee's Policy Review into Aim 1 of the Economic Masterplan – A New Kind of University City.

(for copy report – see original minutes).

Mr. David Donkin, Assistant Director Business Development Team and Mr. Martin Finlayson, University of Sunderland presented the report, giving an overview of developments between the university and partners in establishing a new kind of University City. They advised that there were currently two strategies, the Enterprise and Innovation Strategy and the Creative Industry Strategy, which had been put on hold whilst the new government had embedded and any changes were put in place, but were now being developed further.

Councillor Gibson referred to the university graduates who started up a business and then used the university for research and was advised that usually the graduate would already have the links with the university staff and would use their network to access the partner agencies across the city to help build their business.

Councillor Snowdon asked how the new business start ups were recognised and celebrated and was advised that there was an annual Blue Print competition that was held every year and Members would be welcome to attend the next event.

In response to a question from Councillor Howe regarding providing a ballpark figure as to how many students were studying engineering and science at the university, Mr. Donkin advised that there were approximately 500 students in total, 420 studying science and 80 engineers and offered to provide more exact figures if required.

Councillor Howe then went on to ask if the university turned any potential students away and was advised that students needed to reach a number of tariff points to be enrolled on a course. Mr. Donkin also advised that the university worked with

partner colleges to have work based foundation degrees available and higher level apprenticeships which could be topped up to a bachelor degree after they had been completed.

The Chairman thanked the Officers for their attendance at the meeting, and it was:-

4. RESOLVED that information received be included as part of the evidence for the Committee's policy review and final report.

Performance Report Quarter 4 (April 2010 – March 2011)

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided Members with a performance update against the former national indicators relating to the period April to March 2011.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Ms. Kelly Davison-Pullan, Lead Officer for Corporate Performance, presented the report advising that in October 2010 the Government announced that from April 2011 there would no longer be a requirement for Council's to produce an LAA. They also announced the demise of the National indicator set and as a consequence the performance framework is being reviewed. A new framework is being developed that focuses on local priorities and will form the basis of future performance reporting to the Committee.

The Chairman having thanked Ms. Davison-Pullan for her report, it was:-

5. RESOLVED that the continued good progress made by the Council and the Sunderland Partnership and the areas that require further development to ensure performance is actively managed be received and noted.

Visit to the Port of Sunderland

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) considering the arrangements for a proposed visit to the Port of Sunderland.

(for copy report – see original minutes).

Mr. Diamond, having advised that he would let Members know of any specific dress code for the visit, it was:-

6. RESOLVED that the arrangements for the visit to the Port of Sunderland be received and noted.

Work Programme 2011-2012

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) appending the current work programme for the Committee's information.

(for copy report – see original minutes).

The Chairman having advised that Ms. Murphy would be invited back to give her monitoring report as soon as possible, it was:-

7. RESOLVED that the information contained within the work programme be received and noted.

Forward Plan – Key Decisions for the Period 1st September, 2011 – 31st December, 2011

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide Members with an opportunity to consider those items on the Executive's Forward Plan for the period 1st September, 2011 to 31st December, 2011 which related to the Prosperity and Economic Development Committee.

(for copy report – see original minutes).

8. RESOLVED that the contents of the Executive's Forward Plan for the period 1st September, 2011 – 31st December, 2011 be received and noted.

The Chairman then closed the meeting having thanked everyone for their attendance and wishing them a safe journey home.

(Signed) D. SNOWDON,
Chairman.