

At a meeting of the PROSPERITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on WEDNESDAY, 26TH OCTOBER, 2011 at 5.30 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor Mordey in the Chair

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

Apologies for Absence

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Councillor S. Foster.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Mordey declared a personal interest in item 7 – ‘Visit to the Port of Sunderland – Feedback’ as a Council appointed member of the Port Board.

Minutes of the Last Meeting of the Committee held on 12th September, 2011

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 12th September, 2011 be confirmed and signed as a correct record subject to the inclusion of Councillor Snowdon as Chairman in the list of attendees, replacing Councillor Mordey whose apologies had been correctly recorded.

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

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided background information to a visit to the Committee from David Donkin of the University of Sunderland regarding the role and relationships that the University had developed with local businesses.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Andrew Perkin, Lead Policy Officer – Economy, presented the report and advised that unfortunately Mr. Donkin had been unable to attend the meeting.

Members were briefed on Aim 1 of the Economic Masterplan which sought to develop a new kind of University City, together with the role played by the University in the City's future economic development. This included the Business Gateway, the Sunderland Science Park, the Software Hatchery and the Knowledge Transfer Partnership.

Members welcomed the report however felt it had been remiss in not including the nationally recognised role undertaken by the University in field on pharmacology.

The Chairman having thanked Mr. Perkin for his presentation, it was:-

2. RESOLVED that the report provided by Mr. Perkin be included as part of the evidence for the Committee's Policy Review and Final Report into 'University City'.

University City Policy Review 2011/12 – Chamber of Commerce

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided background information in relation to a presentation to the Committee from Jonathan Walker, Head of Member Relations, North East Chamber of Commerce (NECC) on the role of the Chamber and its views on Aim 1 of the Economic Masterplan.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr. Walker provided the Committee with a briefing note which outlined the work of the North East Chamber of Commerce, the north east perspective on the role of the area's universities within the regional economy and the development of Sunderland as a university city.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor P. Gibson, Mr. Walker confirmed that the Chamber actively signposted businesses towards the services provided by the University. In this regard the Chamber championed the Business Gateway as a one stop shop for businesses and organisations requiring specialist support from the University.

The Chairman having thanked Mr. Walker for his presentation, it was:-

3. RESOLVED that the report and presentation be included as part of the evidence for the Committee's Policy Review and Final Report into 'University City'.

Policy Review – Monitoring of Recommendations

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided the Committee with details of the progress made with regard to the implementation of the recommendations contained in its policy review final report into Tourism and Marketing in Sunderland.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Karen Marshall, Tourism Development Manager, presented the report and in response to an enquiry from Councillor P. Gibson, advised that the decision on whether to defer World Heritage Status on Wearmouth/Jarrow was expected some time during July 2012. Officers from UNESCO had undertaken a further three day visit the previous month. They would produce a final report and recommendation. The Council would have an opportunity to view the report prior to its submission to the judging panel.

4. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Visit to the Port of Sunderland

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided the Committee with feedback following their visit to the Port of Sunderland on 21st September, 2011.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Members having welcomed and praised the work being undertaken by Matthew Hunt, the Port Manager, to revitalise business at the Port of Sunderland, placed on record their thanks to Mr. Hunt for taking time out of his busy schedule to host the visit.

5. RESOLVED that the report 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).

6. RESOLVED that the information contained within the Work Programme be received and noted.

Forward Plan – Key Decisions for the Period 1st October, 2011 – 31st January, 2012

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 October, 2011 to 31st January, 2012 which related to the Prosperity and Economic Development Committee.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

7. RESOLVED that the contents of the Executive's Forward Plan for the period 1st October, 2011 to 31st January, 2012 be received and noted.

Urgent Item

In accordance with Section 100(B) of the Local Government Act 1972 the Chairman stated that the following item was to be considered at this meeting as a matter of urgent business as the proposed visit was to be undertaken prior to the next meeting of the Committee.

Policy Review – Visit to Sheffield Hallam University

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy tabled) which sought approval for the Committee to undertake a visit to Sheffield Hallam University as part of the evidence gathering process for its Policy Review into Aim 1 of the Economic Masterplan.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Jim Diamond, Scrutiny Officer, presented the report advising that discussions were still taking place with the University as to the detailed arrangements for the visit. However, the programme was likely to include:-

- an overview of the University of its wider role in the City's economy/city region's economy. Any medium challenges and goals and their approach to collaboration;
- an overview of the University's role in economic leadership (City/LEP, etc);
- a discussion of any research undertaken into the local economic impact of the University;
- an overview of the process of engagement with business;
- visits to 2-3 departments/facilities with the most developed business interface and to any specific start-up of enterprise activity/programme/facilities;
- discussions with a small number of partners (e.g. Council, NHS, other) on the nature of University collaboration;
- a meeting with business people engaged in the University's governance and direction.

8. RESOLVED that approval be given to Committee attendance on a Policy Review visit to Sheffield Hallam University on a date to be arranged.

The Chairman then closed the meeting having thanked Members and officers for their attendance and contribution to the meeting.

(Signed) M. MORDEY,
Chairman.