

At a meeting of the ECONOMIC PROSPERITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE, SUNDERLAND on TUESDAY 11TH SEPTEMBER, 2018 at 4.30 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor D. MacKnight in the Chair

Councillors Blackburn, Curran, M. Dixon, Foster, Galbraith, E. Gibson, Jackson, Marshall, O'Brien, Taylor and Turner

Also in attendance:-

Mr Jim Diamond, Scrutiny Officer, Sunderland City Council

Mr Philip Dorian, Landscape Architect, Sunderland City Council

Mr Dan Hattle, Regeneration Manager, Sunderland City Council

Ms Judith Miller, Bishopwearmouth Townscape Heritage Project Officer, Sunderland City Council

Mr Richard Reading, Trading Standards and Licensing Manager, Sunderland City Council

Mrs Christine Tilley, Governance Services Team Leader, Sunderland City Council

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence as all Members of the Committee were present.

Minutes of the Last Ordinary Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 17th July 2018

A copy of the minutes of the last ordinary meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 17th July, 2018 was submitted.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last ordinary meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 17th July, 2018 (copy circulated), be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Declarations of Interest (including Whipping Declarations)

There were no declarations of interest made.

Licensing Act 2003 – Proposed Publication of a Cumulative Impact Assessment

The Executive Director of Economy and Place submitted a report (copy circulated), asking the Scrutiny Committee to consider and comment on the proposed publication of a Cumulative Impact Assessment in accordance with Section 5A of the Licensing Act 2003.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chairman invited Mr Richard Reading, Trading Standards and Licensing Manager, Sunderland City Council to present the report to the Committee.

Mr Reading briefed the Committee on the report highlighting that a cumulative impact assessment did not prevent the grant or variation of a licence and a responsible authority would still need to make a representation to challenge an application. However the existence of the assessment would give rise to an assumption that an application for a licence that would be likely to add to the existing cumulative impact would normally be refused or subjected to limitations, unless the applicant could demonstrate that there would be no negative cumulative impact on the licensing objectives.

In response to Councillor Dixon, Mr Reading advised that Newcastle City Council had introduced a similar policy and in Jesmond Road this had resulted in the area quietening down. On Westgate Road, Newcastle the Local Authority had focussed on off licences. Durham had also applied a similar policy which had been beneficial for a couple of areas in the city.

In response to Councillor Foster, Mr Reading advised that measures in Jesmond Road included restricting the hours that people were able to drink outside on the terraces of the pubs and bars in the area and they had also refused a number of licensing applications for the locality.

In response to Councillor Jackson, Mr Reading advised that there were different characteristics in a Cumulative Impact Assessment area, however if a characteristic was in relation to 'late opening hours' then it would affect shops selling alcohol if they wanted to vary their opening hours.

Councillor Marshall commented that she supported the proposal to have a Cumulative Impact Assessment and that she was pleased to see that it had to be reviewed no later than three years after its publication, as in this way any hotspots could be reviewed.

Mr Reading stated that the Cumulative Impact Assessment was based on the data the Local Authority had at present and that it would be reviewed as required. He advised that it was a live document and other areas of the city might be identified whereas others might be discounted.

In response to the Chairman, Mr Reading advised that the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly had introduced minimum unit pricing on alcohol. There was however, nothing in place in England at the moment.

Mr Reading advised that Newcastle City Council had introduced a voluntary minimum unit price condition of 50p for all new licences and applications for licence variation.

In response to Councillor Dixon who asked whether the Licensing Act 2003 had made a difference, Mr Reading stated that the introduction of Cumulative Impact Assessments and other factors in relation to licensing had redressed the balance and he felt that the situation was now heading back in the right direction.

Full consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

2. RESOLVED that the Cabinet be advised that the Scrutiny Committee were all in agreement with the proposed publication of a Cumulative Impact Assessment in accordance with section 5A of the Licensing Act 2003.

Bishopwearmouth Townscape Heritage Scheme: Town Park Improvement Project and Third Party Grant Applications

The Executive Director of Economy and Place submitted a report (copy circulated), to update Members on a forthcoming Cabinet report to request approval of the delivery of the Town Park Improvement Project, delegated authority for the procurement of the Town Park Improvement Project, and delegated authority to make all third party grant offers, as part of the Bishopwearmouth Townscape Heritage Scheme funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms Judith Miller, Bishopwearmouth Townscape Heritage Project Officer briefed the Committee on the current position with regards to the Town Park Improvement Project and the proposed process to make third party grant offers. In response to Members Ms Miller advised that it was anticipated that the project would be completed by the end of 2019.

In response to Councillor Jackson, Ms Miller advised that consultation on the proposed Town Park Improvement Project had already started. There was a list of statutory consultation groups and an event was booked to reach the wider public with the intention of gaining support for the forthcoming application to the Secretary of State to undertake works within the village green. A planning application would be submitted within the next 2-3 weeks in respect of changes to the village green and consultation would be undertaken around that. Liaison would also be undertaken with local business operators.

In response to Councillor Blackburn, Mr Philip Dorian, Landscape Architect advised that planting would be similar to what had been done at the seafront.

Ms Miller advised, in response to Councillor Blackburn, that it was anticipated that the authorisation of the Chief Operating Officer to make all third party grant offers would result in the process taking 2 weeks rather than 8 weeks if the application was to be considered by the Cabinet.

In response to Councillor Curran, Ms Miller advised that the Mowbray almshouses were tenanted and discussions had been held with the people living there and with the Trust.

In response to Councillor Dixon, Mr Dorian advised that the process of procuring a contractor to carry out the proposed works to the Town Park would go out through the NEPO portal. It would be a 2 stage rigorous process where contractors would be shortlisted and the submissions evaluated. There would be lots of checks and balances to ensure specialist contractors were selected to carry out the required works with regards to stonework, railings etc. and this would also be monitored by HLF.

The Chairman having commented that she looked forward to having a visit to the Town Park and having thanked the Officers for their attendance, it was:-

3. RESOLVED that the proposal be noted and supported by the Committee.

Waste Management Visit

The Head of Member Support and Community Partnerships submitted a report (copy circulated), to confirm the arrangements for the Committee's visit to the Waste Transfer Station at Jack Crawford House and the Energy from Waste facility based in Teesside.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr Jim Diamond, Scrutiny Officer, Sunderland City Council briefed Members on the visit and confirm their attendance.

4. RESOLVED that arrangements for the Waste Management Visit to a facility in Teesside be received and noted.

Annual Work Programme 2018/19

The Head of Member Support and Community Partnerships submitted a report (copy circulated), setting out the current work programme of the Committee for the 2018/19 Municipal year.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr Jim Diamond, Scrutiny advised that Mr John Seager, Chief Executive of Siglion would be in attendance at the October meeting of the Committee. The Committee would also receive a feedback report on the Waste Management Visit to Teesside.

5. RESOLVED that the information contained in the work programme for 2018/19 and detailed above be noted.

Notice of Key Decisions

A report providing Members with an opportunity to consider the items on the Executive's Notice of Key Decisions for the 28 day period from 21st August, 2018 (copy circulated), was submitted.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr Jim Diamond, Scrutiny Officer reminded Members to contact him if they required further information on any of the items included in the notice.

6. RESOLVED that the Notice of Key Decisions be received and noted.

The Chairman closed the meeting having thanked Members and Officers for their attendance.

(Signed) D. MACKNIGHT,
Chairman.