

## **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE REGENERATION DELIVERY TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

Officer contact: Catherine Whitehead (Head of Democratic, Legal & Policy Services)  
01494 421980 catherine.whitehead@wycombe.gov.uk

### ***What is the Commission being asked to do?***

What is the Commission being asked to do?

- i) To consider the recommendations of the 'Regeneration Delivery' Task and Finish Group as outlined below;
- ii) To decide whether to endorse, amend or reject these recommendations for referral onto the Cabinet Meeting of 14 November 2016; and
- iii) To note that the Regeneration Delivery Task and Finish Group has now completed its work

Task and Finish Group Recommendations:

### **Transportation Theme**

That Cabinet be recommended:

- a) To further engage with Buckinghamshire County Council (as the Highway Authority) and the Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership in respect of the problems of getting commuters / deliveries / visitors on and off of the Cressex Industrial Estate.

Reason for this Recommendation

This was a major barrier to commerce and the attraction of further quality 'blue chip' companies. The need of Wycombe District Council to meaningfully engage with BCC (as the Highway authority) on this issue and effect improvements was noted. A report to be brought back to the Improvement & Review Commission within 6 months on progress.

Within any implementation of these works, the Task and Finish Group encouraged Highways Officers and Planners here at WDC (Wycombe District Council) to investigate a much needed specified HGV (Heavy Goods Vehicle) parking site at or around the Cressex area. This could be included in any major re-modelling of roads, to relieve the considerable current parking of HGV's in residential areas and possibly provide a sizeable income stream.

- b) To similarly engage with Buckinghamshire County Council in respect of work to solve Globe Park / Westhorpe Junction (Marlow) entrance / exit problems.

Reason for this Recommendation

As with Cressex Business Park, easing congestion on these important business sites in the Wycombe District was seen as key to the vibrancy of these commercial hubs.

### **Economic Theme**

- c)** For new businesses for Estates to be able to help with a specified time to offer either a rent free period and or be able to offer rate relief of anything between 25% and 80% rate relief for a specific period of time.

#### Reason for this Recommendation

This would provide a valuable offer to small new businesses to ensure they have a good start. It might also be one of the reasons for a small company to stay rather than move away, or indeed fold in the first year.

- d)** To ensure continued liaison and proactive dialogue between Planning & the Council's Major Projects Team.

#### Reason for this Recommendation

This co-operation was seen as key, the need for the Planning Service's engagement with the Council's Commercial section on a progressive communicative basis (as with all applicants) was essential to ensure successful fruition of the Council's Major Projects and Estates team's planned projects. A suitable sized dedicated Planning Team to be in place.

- e)** To ensure that pre-worked up infrastructure plans / economic regeneration initiatives for Wycombe District were ready to submit to Central Government via the Local Enterprise Partnership in respect of each funding bid series.

#### Reason for this Recommendation

Well-scoped viable initiatives ready to insert in to each funding bid series would increase the likelihood of securing valuable regeneration funding for the District. Opportunities for such joint funding not being missed.

- f)** To involve Members and particularly local ward members at the embryonic stage of any regeneration scheme e.g. as schemes were worked up for inclusion in Buckinghamshire Infrastructure Investment Plan (i.e. LEP 'bid-ready' schemes), and similarly re WDC only prototype schemes.

#### Reason for this Recommendation

The involvement, were possible, of local members was seen as invaluable to regeneration, that local knowledge could well prove crucial. The support of these members could well influence successful implementation.

- g)** To continually monitor the commercial expertise available to the Major Projects & Estates team, and to expand / contract appropriately as and when major new projects initiated / completed.

#### Reason for this Recommendation

The ability of the Major Projects and Estates team to respond to opportunities was seen as key to delivery of the major revenue streams by the Council's commercial activity envisaged.

- h) To consider the establishment of an appropriate delivery model as and when each residential provision scheme is initiated, on a case by case basis.

#### Reason for this Recommendation

The Task and Finish Group had identified that Delivery Vehicles could well be an efficient and effective way of regeneration by the Council particularly in respect of housing / residential schemes, Commercial opportunities were currently well served by the in-house set up.

- i) To set up a £50K concepts fund to enable swift employment of consultants / architects etc. to consider schemes for viability prior to any major investment.

#### Reason for this Recommendation

Task and Finish Group members noted the officers' concerns that current in-house resources were not always quickly accessible to explore the various ideas presented. The proposed fund would ensure no such viable concepts were missed. The Group felt that schemes / projects assessed under this provision should proceed if a minimum 6% return was estimated or valid community reasons were established.

- j) To explore further the plans / proposed scheme for the Old Brunel Engine Shed at the High Wycombe Railway Station.

#### Reason for this Recommendation

This site represented a key 'gateway' to the town for visitors arriving by Rail, a smart effective scheme epitomising the 'ready for business' feel of the District would speak volumes. This type of project was exactly the kind the Commercial team thrived on and the Group were confident they could repeatedly deliver.

- k) To support plan of future projects in the region of £20m\* and remain aware of the conflict between future capital requirements and commercial schemes.

(\*Officers to look into the required further regeneration fund required for the next three years and apply appropriately to Cabinet, the £2m presently included in above £20m having been fully allocated for utilisation).

#### Reason for this Recommendation

The Group supported the major projects schemes outlined by the Commercial Team and presented at the various Task and Finish Group meetings; Cabinet in prioritising budgets should ensure that the commercial side, with its ability to secure considerable revenue, should not lose out.

#### **Communities Theme**

- l) To encourage the Buckinghamshire / Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership to implement the available Up-Skilling programmes for residents, in particular wards, where required.

#### Reason for this Recommendation

Bucks Business First (an arm of the Local Enterprise Partnership) provided these programmes which would prove invaluable to equipping residents with the key skills needed by local employers.

- m) To seek what skills are required by holding an annual business meeting to seek business input to Regeneration and upskilling.

#### Reason for this recommendation

Informing the Business Community on plans of major updating of roads, important changes to funding, seek support on things WDC wish to see done for the regeneration, or be told such is not required? We need businesses to inform WDC of requirements, as we are not truly aware of the requirement ourselves.

### **Background and Issues**

The Regeneration Delivery Task and Finish Group was set up by the Improvement & Review Commission on 11 November 2015 with the following Terms of Reference being established at the Commission's 13 January 2016 meeting:

To investigate and help shape the emerging arrangements for the delivery of the Council's Regeneration and Infrastructure priority in order that the Council can make the smooth transition to financial self-sufficiency, specifically focusing on:

- (a) The prioritised regeneration programme to deliver the scale of recurring annual income required by 2018;
- (b) The organisational resources, decision-making and project delivery arrangements in place to ensure delivery of the regeneration projects on time and on budget; and
- (c) The partnership arrangements in place to ensure delivery of the regeneration projects on time and on budget, in particular with Buckinghamshire County Council and the Bucks (Thames Valley) Local Enterprise Partnership.

The Group Membership was as follows:

Chairman: Councillor Alex Collingwood

Vice-Chairman: Councillor Mrs Lesley Clarke OBE

Membership:

Councillor Ms Suzanne Brown

Councillor Harry Bull

Councillor Matt Davy

Councillor David Knights

Councillor Tony Lee (withdrew from Group on appointment as Deputy Cabinet Member for Housing)

Councillor Sarfaraz Khan Raja (withdrew from Group on appointment as Deputy Cabinet Member for Community)

Councillor Rafiq Raja

The following meetings and visits were carried out by the Group:

Monday 21 March 2016

- Presentation by Charles Brocklehurst (Major Projects and Property Executive), Karen Satterford (Chief Executive) and Paul Shackley (Corporate Director – Growth and Regeneration) on Cabinet's Regeneration and Infrastructure Priorities including the Prioritised Major Projects Programme.

Wednesday 13 April 2016

- Update on Delivery Vehicles and formulation of questions ahead of LEP (Local Enterprise Partnership) and BCC (Buckinghamshire County Council) representatives visit.

Tuesday 10 May 2016

- Visit from Richard Harrington (Chief Executive) Buckinghamshire / Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership

Monday 23 May 2016

- Visit from:
  - Karen Satterford (as Director of Bucks Advantage); and
  - Councillor Mark Shaw (Portfolio-holder for Transportation (BCC)) and Mark Freestone (Director of Transport TEE (BCC)).

Tuesday 31 May 2016

- Visit to Mr A Smith Chairman of Buckinghamshire / Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership at Pinewood Studios.

Monday 11 July 2016

- Presentation to all members by Bevan Brittan – Workshop on Commercial Models in Local Government.

Wednesday 17 August 2016

- Consideration of Bevan Brittan – Workshop on Commercial Models.

Wednesday 11 October 2016

- Further presentation by Charles Brocklehurst (Major Projects and Property Executive) and Paul Shackley (Corporate Director – Growth and Regeneration) on progress of the Regeneration and Infrastructure Priorities including the Prioritised Major Projects Programme.

## **Conclusions/ Recommendations**

The Group having taken evidence from a considerable number of sources and identifying a number of opportunities arrived at the recommendations featured at the head of this report based around the following themes:

- Transportation;
- Economic; and
- Communities.

Transportation recommendations focusing in on the access and egress to two of the District's major industrial estates seen as a barrier to economic development and vibrancy by the Group. In scrutinising the Commercial / Economic state of the District recommendations arrived at, focused on the strength and robustness of WDC to deliver; via its current team, with consideration given to concept consultancy and delivery vehicle options. Along with the need for ready schemes for LEP funding bid series and local member involvement in schemes. The crucial, Community themed recommendations being in respect of skill development of local residents and dialogue with the Business Community.

## **Next Steps**

Referral to Improvement & Review Commission Wednesday 9 November 2016 for onward referral, with endorsement, amendment or rejection, to Cabinet 14 November 2016.

## **Background Papers**

Held in Democratic Services.