



ECONOMIC REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

BURNLEY TOWN HALL

Wednesday 5th December 2012

PRESENT MEMBERS

Councillor Liz Monk in the Chair.

Councillors Tony Harrison, Mathew Isherwood, Marcus Johnstone, Anne Kelly, Arif Khan, Peter McCann and Lian Pate

OFFICERS

Mike Cook	- Director of Economic Regeneration
Paul Gatrell	- Head of Housing and Development Control
Colin Hill	- Head of Facilities Management
Kate Ingram	Head of Regeneration and Planning Policy
Imelda Grady	- Democracy Officer

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor Andy Tatchell – Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic Development

18. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Tracy Kennedy.

19. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 10th October 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

20. Additional Items of Business and Order of the agenda

In accordance with the provisions of Section 100(B)(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chair agreed that the following item could be considered to assist the Committee with its work programming.

IT WAS AGREED

That the Mid year performance report 2012/13 be consider as item 7 (a) on the agenda.

21. The Notice of Key Decisions and Private Meetings

Members gave consideration to the Notice of Key Decisions and Private Meetings for the four month period commencing 9th November 2012 and were invited to make comments on those items relating to the remit of the Committee.

In response to questions members were updated on the Business Support Programme which was aimed at increasing business competitiveness and securing new jobs in the borough.

The Executive Member suggested that members might wish to undertake site visits to look at the many new regeneration developments in the borough.

**IT WAS
AGREED**

That at the next meeting Members of the Committee plan a programme of site visits to regeneration projects in the borough.

22. Mid Year Performance 2012/13

Members gave consideration to the mid year performance results for those services within the committee's remit.

The results showed where performance against key strategic indicators had been strong or where performance had not met targets specified by managers.

The report showed that targets were being met and member had no concerns about the performance of the service units within their remit.

**IT WAS
AGREED**

That the report be noted.

23. State of the Local Economy

Members received a report on the state of the local economy which showed emerging trends at the local, regional and national level in respect of job vacancies and support for businesses.

Members noted that the number of JSA claimants had fallen slightly but that they were still higher than the same period last year.

The Annual Population Survey showed a higher figure for those unemployed but the survey was based on very small samples and could not be relied to any great extent. The Head of Regeneration and Planning Policy agreed to check the figures in the report.

There had not been any updated figures on worklessness released by the Department for Work and Pensions since the August report to committee and the next release would be in February 20113.

Members noted the activity in support for businesses and welcomed the relocation of businesses especially those from outside of the borough.

Members were also encouraged that Burnley town centre seemed to be holding its own in the current difficult economic times.

**IT WAS
AGREED**

That the report be noted.

24. Presentation on Homelessness

The Head of Housing and Development Control gave a presentation on the Council's statutory duty in respect of homelessness which covered eligibility for housing assistance and actions that the council could take for those who were classed as homeless or under threat of homelessness.

Other tests were applied to assess priority need, vulnerability and local connections. The local authority has a duty to provide accommodation to any person they believe to be homeless, eligible for assistance or in priority need and in Burnley this could be at Elizabeth Street, by interim accommodation at one of three properties leased from Calico and as a last resort at a bed and breakfast establishment.

In all cases help and advice was given to people to help them secure permanent accommodation and preventative measures taken to help avert the threat of homelessness.

It was estimated that over 1,000 approaches for housing advice were received per annum and around 150 households would qualify for homelessness assistance. *(a correction to the figure was made after the meeting to 100 households qualifying for assistance in the past year)*

Members commented that the introduction of the bedroom tax in 2013 along with other benefit changes could impact on this service and asked that they be kept informed of the development of the Prevention of Homelessness Strategy.

**IT WAS
AGREED**

That homelessness be considered for scrutiny at the next meeting.

25. Work Programme 2012/13

Literacy and Numeracy

The Democracy Officer asked members of the review group to respond to a questionnaire which would be circulated to them before the next meeting which would be sent to the providers of literacy and numeracy courses to assess the numbers of people receiving basic skills training and highlight any gaps in provision. The questionnaire would then be sent out the first week of January. A visit to the Job Centre would also be made in January and February to find out what the customer experience was like.

Homelessness

Members had previously agreed to start a piece of scrutiny work in January on the homelessness strategy and agreed that welfare reforms, would be built into this review.

**IT WAS
AGREED**

That the work programme be as follows -

30th January - Homelessness - to consider a review of homelessness and feed into the the Homelessness Prevention Programme
Notice of key decisions and private meetings
State of the Local Economy
Site visits
Any emerging issues