

(Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting of the sub-committee scheduled to held on 14 February 2018)

Economic Prosperity Sub-Committee

17 January 2018

Present: Councillor Janet Hunter (Chair)
Councillors J Cassidy, D Cox, S Day, D McMeekan
J Walker and F Weetman.

EP22/01/18 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Earley, K Lee and M Madden.

EP23/01/18 Substitute Members

Pursuant to the Council's constitution the appointment of the following substitute member was reported:

Councillor D McMeekan for Councillor P Earley

EP24/01/18 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no Declarations of Interest or Dispensations reported.

EP25/01/18 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the previous meeting held on the 11 October 2018 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

EP26/01/18 Inward Investment

Sean Collier, Senior Manager: Business Enterprise attended the meeting to present details of the Council's approach to attracting inward investment.

North Tyneside had a number of strengths in attracting inward investment including its transport connections, productive people, cost effectiveness, property offer, universities and quality of life. The benefits of attracting investment included strengthening the local economy, job growth, increased standards of living, lower levels of crime, less benefit dependency, benefits for health, local services and retail, access to customers & local supply chain and increased business rates for the authority.

Over the past 4 years 6,816 new jobs had been created in the borough. Many of these jobs were located on Cobalt Business Park. With 2 million square feet of office space and 3 datacentres it represented the largest office park in the in UK. It was now 90% occupied with a workforce of 14,000 people. Quorum Business Park in Longbenton provided 1 million square feet of office space. It was 65% occupied with a workforce of 5,500. There were

development sites suitable for future inward investment at the Swan Hunters site, Whitehill Point, near the Royal Quays, and Indigo Park. As yet there were no confirmed investment plans for Indigo Park due to the construction costs and timescales associated with new build facilities.

The Council had a small team of 6 officers who promoted and marketed North Tyneside among potential investors, particularly in the energy, digital, financial, professional and business and advanced manufacturing sectors. The methods used included using digital and social media, attending events and exhibitions, producing marketing materials and advertising and providing soft landing support to help businesses move into the borough.

The Council worked in partnership with a range of organisations including the Department for International Trade, Invest North East England, property developers and intermediaries such as property agents, consultants, accountants and solicitors to identify potential investors and promote North Tyneside. The Council were also pro-active in maintaining contact with existing large businesses to support any expansion plans and to allow them to work with scale up businesses.

The sub-committee were presented with a number of case studies where businesses had received support from the Council to create new jobs in the borough. Smulders had established an offshore wind jacket manufacturing facility at the Hadrian Yard, Wallsend. Members of the sub-committee had visited the yard in November 2017. In the face of competition from Prague and other EU sites, Accenture had expanded its operations on Cobalt Business Park and increased its workforce from 250 to 1,200 because funding had been brokered in to cover the wage difference.

The sub-committee considered the likely implications of Brexit. It was reported that some investors had decided not to invest in the UK and some had delayed decisions. The North East Combined Authority had asked that an analysis be undertaken of the funding likely to be lost by the region as a result of Brexit, although European funding tended to be in the form of smaller grants for small and medium sized enterprises.

Larger scale grant funding came directly from central government on a sporadic basis, based on job creation. Many regions and nations within the UK had their own grant funding schemes but there was none in the North East and therefore there was not a level playing field across the country. The proposed North of Tyne devolution deal could be a means to provide such a scheme but it risked disrupting the existing business support infrastructure organised across the wider North East region.

There were skills shortages particularly in the digital and engineering sectors. The Council did not have a talent attraction programme but instead it sought to attract inward investment and then talented people would be attracted by the employment opportunities created.

Members examined the range and availability of smaller incubator units such as those at Quorum and Cobalt Business Exchange.

The development of the Swan Hunter site had not progressed according to the expected timescales because of the down turn in the oil and gas industries. However oil prices had begun to recover and if these increases were maintained over a period of time investment was more likely. The offshore wind industry was buoyant, particularly with progress expected on the proposed Dogger Bank wind farm. The River Tyne would be an ideal site to support the development and a recent offshore wind exhibition organised by NOF

Energy had been well attended.

It was **agreed** that the presentation in relation to the Council's approach to inward investment be noted.

EP27/01/18 North Tyneside Cycling Strategy (Previous Minute EP21/10/17)

The sub-committee had previously examined the North Tyneside Transport Strategy 2017-2032 and had noted the Council's intention to replace the existing North Tyneside Cycling Strategy. It was reported that on 15 January 2018 the Cabinet had agreed to commence a process of public engagement on a draft revised North Tyneside Cycling Strategy and a process of engagement with user groups on the associated draft North Tyneside Cycling Design Guide.

The sub-committee were presented with a copy of the draft strategy. Whilst cycling was growing in North Tyneside: the proportion of residents who cycled to work increased by 20% in the ten years to 2011, a strategic approach to cycling was considered to be essential in order to deliver aspects of the Our North Tyneside Plan, the Local Plan and the North Tyneside Transport Strategy. It was proposed that the Council's approach would focus activity on:

- i. growing everyday cycling so that more people benefit and the environment does too;
- ii. wherever possible, improving the borough's infrastructure and information to support that growth; and
- iii. providing some design guidance to make sure that infrastructure is in line with best and emerging practice.

The strategy had in part been shaped by the findings and recommendations of a scrutiny sub-group who had reported in September 2015.

The sub-committee heard that the engagement process would involve discussions with other neighbouring local authorities, cycling user groups and by seeking the views of members of the public through the Council website and press releases. In noting that the strategy sought to promote everyday cycling, Members highlighted the importance of engaging with the wider community as part of the process, not just cyclists. The Council did not currently have a nominated cycling champion but this was under review.

The sub-committee queried whether the design of replacement metro trains would allow for the carriage of bicycles and whether there was any analysis of the proportion of transport investment spent on cycling. There were frequently conflicting demands from different road users in relation to the design of road improvements. The draft cycling design guide had been prepared to provide guidance for use by designers for new developments and designers implementing highway improvement schemes within North Tyneside.

It was suggested that the sub-committee give further, more detailed, consideration to the draft strategy at its next meeting when the responses received during the engagement process could also be taken into account. The sub-committee also agreed that in order to prepare for the meeting the cycling design guide and the report of the Cycling Strategy Sub Group from 2015 be sent to members of the sub-committee.

It was **agreed** that (1) the Cabinet's decision to commence a process of public engagement on a draft revised North Tyneside Cycling Strategy be noted;

- (2) the sub-committee give further, more detailed, consideration to the strategy at its next meeting with a view to submitting its comments to Cabinet; and
- (3) as part of the scrutiny exercise the sub-committee also give consideration to the cycling design guide, the responses received during the engagement process and the extent to which the recommendations of the Cycling Study Group have been incorporated into the strategy.

EP28/01/18 Travel Safety Strategy (Previous Minute EP21/10/17)

The sub-committee had previously examined the North Tyneside Transport Strategy 2017-2032 when it had noted the Council's intention to prepare a Travel Safety Strategy to replace the Road Safety Strategy. The sub-committee received an overview of the work to prepare the strategy which was due to be submitted to Cabinet for adoption in March 2018.

The strategy was to be broadened to become a Travel Safety Strategy and to include public transport safety, trips/falls on the adopted highway and users perceptions of safety. Bus operators and Nexus had been approached to obtain information around assaults and anti-social behaviour incidents but further work would be required to better understand users perception of safety on, and access to, public transport. As perceptions were difficult to quantify members of the sub-committee were invited to contribute any information or experiences from their local wards. Members suggested that members of the public could also be asked directly to submit their own views through the Council's newsletter Our North Tyneside.

In terms of road safety, the strategy would seek to deliver against the North East Combined Authority's collision reduction targets and to focus collision reduction around training and education for future generations. Collision monitoring would be carried out against more specific categories including children, cyclists and pedestrians, schools, town centres and 20mph zones.

The strategy would provide for speed management through various mechanisms including the use of driver feedback signs, conversion of traffic signals to record speeds, criteria for setting speed limits and improved enforcement in conjunction with the Police and Safety Camera Partnership. The sub-committee discussed a number of options for recording and enforcing speed limits and officers gave advice on the relevant regulatory frameworks that applied.

It was **agreed** that work to prepare a Travel Safety Strategy be noted.