

MEETING:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Growing Barnsley Workstream
DATE:	Tuesday 27 June 2023
TIME:	2.00 pm
VENUE:	Council Chamber, Barnsley Town Hall

MINUTES

Present

Councillors Ennis OBE (Chair), Barnard, Bellamy, Booker, Bowler, Christmas, Denton, Eastwood, Fielding, Hayward, Lodge, Markham, Mitchell, Morrell, Osborne, Peace, Sheard, Tattersall, Webster, A. Wray and N. Wright

70 Apologies for Absence - Parent Governor Representatives

No apologies for absence were received in accordance with Regulation 7 (6) of the Parent Governor Representatives (England) Regulations 2001.

71 Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interest

Councillor Tattersall declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of the Berneslai Homes Board.

Councillor Lodge declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member working within the Third Sector in Barnsley.

Councillor Osborne declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of the Berneslai Homes Board.

Councillor Sheard declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of the Hospital Board.

Councillor Peace declared a non-pecuniary interest as an employee of the Department for Work and Pensions.

72 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 6th June were received.

73 One Inclusive Economy Strategy Report

The following witnesses were welcomed to the meeting:

- Kathy McArdle – Service Director Regeneration and Culture, Barnsley Council
- Tom Smith – Head of Employment & Skills, Barnsley Council
- Ken Coupar – Economic Policy Officer, Barnsley Council
- Sarah Cartwright – Head of Strategic Housing, Barnsley Council
- Mark Hempshall – Place, Policy & Equalities Manager, Barnsley Council
- Dr Andy Snell – Public Health Consultant, Barnsley Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- Carrie Sudbury – Chief Executive, Barnsley & Rotherham Chamber of Commerce
- Sarah Harrison – Chair of More & Better Jobs Sub-Group of the IEB and Careers Advisor at Horizon Community College, Barnsley
- Ben Hindley – Keep Moat (Housing Developer)

K McArdle presented the Committee with the One Inclusive Economy Strategy and the Action Plan for Barnsley including the proposed strategy, partners involved, and objectives identified. The Barnsley Involved Economy Board (IEB) was set up following a Peer Review in 2019 of the Barnsley Economic Partnership which subsequently disbanded.

The role of the IEB specifically focuses on delivering an Inclusive Economy for Barnsley, it will ensure opportunities are maximised and inequalities are reduced to allow everyone in Barnsley to benefit from its economic growth and prosperity.

Councillor Eastwood asked if there were any opportunities or development in the upcoming years that Barnsley would benefit from. K McArdle explained that in the current economic climate there would be both opportunities and challenges due to the danger of recession and rising interest rates. Winning Council of the Year with the LGA has put Barnsley on the map, the focus is on maximising the accreditation and gathering momentum for Barnsley 2030 work with a variety of partners. Additionally, Enterprising Barnsley will continue operation and have a flexible funding model to support even more business types.

Members expressed concerns around the housing market and the need for affordable housing. S Cartwright explain that the local plan included areas for growth in Barnsley which would ensure housing was created in the right areas linking to demographic need and job opportunities. There are strong partnerships in place with developers to address the areas of need in terms of housing. The assessment from 2021 showed that some areas of the borough have an oversupply of housing and other have an undersupply, there are hopes that housing applications will align with the needs in each area. Work with Berneslai Homes was underway to focus on a future council housing strategy and the funding available to those in need.

B Hindley added that the housing market had currently slowed but there was a clear vision in terms of the Council working closely with developers on projects including shared ownership properties and affordable rent.

Councillor Denton queried the information on page 14 of the report relating to the membership of the Inclusive Economy Board. K McArdle explained membership review was underway as it was essential that a mix of perspectives were included to create disruptive thinking across the business matrix.

C Sudbury added that diversity was key and that the IEB retention rate was at 92%. Overall engagement with local businesses was very positive but on reflection it would be beneficial to include more sole traders, start-up businesses and 2–3-year-old businesses which often fall into a grey area as they are not classed as established or a start-up businesses.

Dr A Snell explained that the current economic landscape was challenging, synergy should also be focused on the health and wellbeing of individuals in the borough alongside job opportunities and finance.

Councillor Fielding queried the support for start-up/new businesses and asked what support was already available. K Coupar answered that the Enterprising Barnsley Service was an essential tool for new businesses, it is a core service within the Council. The service has an open-door policy and is based in the DMC, it supports businesses across the whole of South Yorkshire.

Councillor Denton asked what the growth ambition was for Barnsley going forward. K McArdle explained that the strategy had a three-pronged approach, growing the current businesses in the borough, attracting new businesses to the borough and also investing in skills. S Harrison added that it was important that businesses know that more opportunities are available in Barnsley.

A discussion was taken around the redevelopment of the town centre, officers explained that Barnsley being a market town would always be a fundamental factor in its identity. In previous years footfall had increased which put Barnsley on the map, additionally collaborative work was ongoing with Wakefield Council on the Barnsley Wakefield Economic Partnership. M Hempshall added that town centre footfall was a third higher than pre-pandemic, the local aspiration was to continue with the growing trend.

Councillor Christmas asked how closely the IEB was working with academic institutions to ensure vacancies would be filled and new businesses started. T Smith explained that there are strong relationships in place with the school's alliance. The aim was to help young people in schools and post 16 to push the jobs available and encourage good qualifications. Results were showing that more young people in Barnsley were surpassing the Level 3 and 4 qualifications, this was also down to

good quality careers advice which highlights the opportunities available to students. S Harrison added that although there had always been a statutory duty to give independent careers advice it was now taken very seriously in schools.

Dr A Snell added that the hospital celebrates the fact that a high percentage of its workforce are Barnsley residents, the health and social care sector has a huge role within the community. There are people in the borough with fantastic lived experience which can contribute greatly to a variety of areas.

T Smith continued that not all young people engage with learning, key areas of focus include the successful transition from school to post 16 in Barnsley and how to assist students with special educational needs.

Councillor Fielding queried the challenges faced by young people and the high unemployment rates in the borough. T Smith explained that Covid-19 had proved challenging for students coming out of education and not feeling prepared for the working environment, there are ongoing issues around confidence and wellbeing.

Councillor Haywood asked if people were leaving Barnsley due to a lack of opportunities. K Coupar highlighted that both graduate retention and return rates were being monitored and communication with universities was ongoing.

Councillor A Wray queried the need for more bungalows in the borough for residents considering downsizing. S Cartwright explained that working closely with developers was essential, creating the right products at that right price for residents was key in the affordable housing strategy.

Councillor Fielding asked how deprived communities would be supported to improve the lives of residents. K McArdle explained that ensuring the employment and skills services across the borough was essential. Councillor Osborne added that in Barnsley there were some stark differences in terms of unemployment in the differing wards which highlighted a clear need for skills in the borough.

RESOLVED that:-

- (i) Witnesses be thanked for their attendance and that the report be noted.
- (ii) Whilst the committee appreciates that there is a limit to the number of members on the IEB, they would like the Board to consider input from a more diverse group of people to include, but not limited to entrepreneurs, sole traders, SME's, so that a wider range of experience, opinions and views can be gathered which can then contribute to the development of the One Inclusive Economy and the work of the Board.
- (iii) Witnesses to consider expanding the I Know I Can project over two days and also to consider the introduction of a similar programme for working age adults.

- (iv) Witnesses to deliver an All Member Information Briefing on Apprenticeships, both those employed by the Council and other organisations so that members can understand:-
- How the Strategy will support Apprenticeships and how they are involved in shaping the strategy.
 - What organisations (including the Council) are doing to grow their own workforce.
 - How successful the apprenticeship scheme has been in securing employment for residents.
 - How Barnsley compare to other authorities.
- (v) Witnesses to provide a written response to the following:-
- What are the key elements that need to be considered to become a 'business-friendly' town?
 - With regard to inclusivity and the Armed Forces Charter, what consideration is being given to homes for disabled ex-service personnel as well as mental health support and retraining?
 - What is being done to improve the skills and education/training needs for those within the most deprived areas? How is support being targeted?

Chair