

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

ECONOMY AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the **Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in **Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham** on **Thursday 3 November 2016** at **9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor R Crute (Chairman)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors E Adam, J Armstrong, A Batey, J Clare, M Davinson, D Hall, B Kellett, J Maitland, H Nicholson, P Stradling and A Willis

Co-opted Members:

Mr T Batson and Mr I McLaren

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors T Henderson, R Ormerod and A Patterson.

2 Substitute Members

No notification of Substitute Members had been received.

3 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held 26 September 2016 were agreed as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

The Chairman noted that in relation to Item 11 as set out in the minutes, the Review Report of the Support Provided for Skills Development within County Durham had been well received at the September meeting of Cabinet and the Leader of the Council had noted his thanks to the Committee and the Working Group. It was added that the Report would be presented to the Business, Enterprise and Skills Working Group at the County Durham Economic Partnership at the end of November and reiterated that the report was a very good piece of work and had been well received.

4 Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

5 Items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties

There were no items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties.

6 Media Relations

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer referred Members to the recent prominent articles and news stories relating to the remit of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee (for copy see file of minutes).

The articles included: the County's success in terms of skills development; the development of a 4,000 job scheme at Bowburn, Integra 61 project; the plans for a new £8 million bus station for Durham City, and the consultation process on this and proposed improvements to North Road; and Beamish Museum being awarded £10.9 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) which would contribute towards the £18 million "Remaking Beamish" project creating a "1950s town" amongst other improvements and attractions.

Resolved:

That the presentation be noted.

7 EU Funding

The Chairman introduced the Funding and Programmes Manager, Claire Williams who was in attendance to give an update as regards EU Funding (for copy see file of minutes).

The Funding and Programmes Manager reminded Members that the last update in respect of EU Funding had been provided at a meeting of the Committee in March 2016; however a lot had changed since then, especially the result of the European Union (EU) Referendum and the decision of the people for the UK to leave the EU. It was added that there was an amount on uncertainty post-referendum and there was a need for clarity from Government in terms of the position going forward. It was added that there was an announcement from HM Treasury in mid-August as regards money that had been guaranteed, those schemes already in place prior to the Autumn Statement, for example the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI). It was added that the Department of Communities and Local Government had started to issue Funding Agreements for projects endorsed by the European Structural Investment Fund (ESIF) Sub-Committee; however there was still a degree of uncertainty as regards the future. Members noted that the Chancellor of the Exchequer made a further announcement on 3 October confirming that Government would extend the guarantee for EU funding for structural and investment fund projects up to the point that the UK left the EU. It was noted that there was a caveat in terms of the projects must "meet domestic strategic priorities and deliver value for money".

The Committee were reminded that County Durham was a "Transition Region" in terms of EU funding and that the current level of funding for Durham was €157 million, with €537 million for the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP) area.

It was noted that European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) allocations in terms of £9.74 million contracted in County Durham with a further £46.75m ERDF in project applications in County Durham including £11.7m for JEREMIE 2, ensuring there was a strong pipeline in terms of support for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs), innovation and research and development. Members learned that in terms of European Social Fund (ESF) allocations, in County Durham £26.9m is contracted, with the majority of this being the YEI Programme.

Councillors were referred to Appendix 2 which set out the approved County Durham and NELEP projects and it was added that those involving Durham County Council (DCC) would be undertaken with a partnership approach with those submitted meeting our priorities, those being: the YEI; Community Led Local Development (CLLD); the Business Energy Efficiency Project (BEEP); the Durham Business Opportunity Project (DBOP); Technical Assistance (TA) and the development of a North East Water Hub. Members noted open calls for projects, with five currently being assessed by DCLG: The North East Space and Satellite Applications Hub (NESSA); King James Enterprise Centre; Community Enterprise; Digital SME Programmes; and Solid Wall Insulation Innovation (SWii). It was explained that DCC managed LEADER, projects supporting rural development and further projects were being considered by the Local Action Group, to make a total of 16 projects.

It was added that a lot of hard work had been undertaken in terms of the applications and there was a number of projects in the pipeline, with awareness raising through the Council, CDEP and partners to ensure maximum uptake of opportunities for project funding. The Funding and Programmes Manager noted that a governance process was agreed and in place, providing assurance in terms of oversight and match funding requirements.

The Chairman thanked the Funding and Programmes Manager and asked Members for their questions, noting some comfort in terms of the Chancellor's comments as regards funding guarantees.

Councillor J Armstrong noted that there would be more clarity following the Chancellor's Autumn Statement and that the work undertaken by Officers in clarifying the situation in relation to EU Funding was much appreciated by Members.

Councillor B Kellett noted that on page 14 it referenced 15 year olds in terms of the YEI DurhamWorks programme. The Funding and Programmes Manager noted that the programme could work with young people from that age, as the programme was an EU scheme, those from 15 were eligible if they had left school.

Councillor H Nicholson referred to page 12 paragraph 6 and noted some concern as regards the Autumn Statement and that currently there was more money unallocated than allocated and that there was a need to keep an eye on funding progress. The Chairman reminded Members that EU Funding issues were being centrally led and reiterated that the phrase "strategic priorities" had been used, so indeed it was something that would need to be followed very carefully.

Resolved:

- (i) That the report be noted.
- (ii) That the Committee receive further update reports as the programme progresses.

8 Regional Funding Update - Local Growth Fund

The Chairman introduced the Strategy, Policy and Partnerships Team Leader, Heather Orton who was in attendance to give an update as regards Regional Funding, Local Growth Fund (LGF) (for copy see file of minutes).

The Strategy, Policy and Partnerships Team Leader noted that she would update Members in terms of Rounds 1 and 2 of the LGF and access to Round 3, with details to follow in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement.

Members were reminded that since 2014 the LGF was a single competitive funding pot, with bids being placed by Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), with projects looking to support infrastructure, business and housing development through collaboration between Local Authorities and business. It was added that the project pipeline submitted by the NELEP was developed to support economic growth and was in line with the North East Strategic Economic Plan (SEP). Members noted that Rounds 1 and 2 represented £320 million for the NELEP with an estimated £500 million of additional funding being levered-in, supporting approximately 5,000 additional jobs. The Committee noted that the NELEP had various calls inviting project proposals and highlighted Table 6 within the report setting out the Round 1 and 2 Durham County Council LGF Projects: Infrastructure for Forrest Park; NETPark Infrastructure Phase 3; Horden Rail Station; NETPark Explorer; Auckland Castle Welcome Building and Infrastructure Works; and the Durham City Incubator. It was added that projects were included within the Regeneration and Local Service Capital Programme in terms of forecasting and match funding. Members were reminded that NELEP schemes, while extending beyond County Durham, would have economic benefit for the County. Councillors were reminded of other projects led by partners including: National Centre for Healthcare Photonics Stage 1 and 2; and Rural Skills Development, via East Durham College.

It terms of Round 3, the Strategy, Policy and Partnerships Team Leader explained that it was open to all LEPs with no area being entitled to a particular share of funding. It was added that Government had asked for a prioritised list of potential projects and this was looked at by Local Authorities, the North East Combined Authority (NECA) and NELEP and submitted to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) this week. Members noted that the proposals listed as priorities included redevelopment of North Road in Durham City and the Integra 61 development at Bowburn.

Councillors noted that DCC would continue to monitor and manage its project pipeline and look to develop full business cases and development plans in due course, should projects be successful.

The Chairman thanked the Strategy, Policy and Partnerships Team Leader and asked Members for their questions.

Councillor J Clare asked for clarification in terms of which projects had been submitted on the prioritised list, was it just those mentioned. It was reiterated they were those mentioned, North Road and Integra 61, simply at the time of production of the Committee Report this had not been known. It was added that those not on the prioritised list maybe possible within a longer project pipeline.

The Chairman asked who set the list and the Strategy, Policy and Partnerships Team Leader reiterated that it was developed in line with the SEP, however it was ultimately a decision from Government in terms of those that would be successful, with Government looking at those projects that would support job creation and economic growth, while being deliverable and providing value for money. The Chairman added that it was important that it was not simply a case of looking at what projects were easily deliverable, rather those that were able to support our economy, noting information from Scrutiny at NECA in terms of supporting 6,000 jobs. The Chairman asked how potential benefits were qualified and quantified, for example by looking at GVA. The Strategy, Policy and Partnerships Team Leader explained that each business case was assessed, however, the NELEP would look at the global benefits and it was highlighted that future evaluation of projects would be very important.

Mr T Batson noted he felt that the process of allocating funding should be business led. The Strategy, Policy and Partnerships Team Leader explained that as the NELEP led on this, the process was led by the public sector and business working together.

Councillor J Armstrong asked as regards projects, such as the Western Relief Road, that had not featured on the prioritised list. The Strategy, Policy and Partnerships Team Leader noted that projects which had not been put on the prioritised list would remain on the long-list for 2019 onward.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

9 Local Transport Plan

The Chairman introduced the Sustainable Transport Manager, Andy Leadbeater and the Traffic Management Section Manager, Dave Lewin who were in attendance to give an update as the Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) (for copy see file of minutes).

The Sustainable Transport Manager reminded Members that initially LTPs were for durations of 5 years, however the Transport Act (2008) removed this requirement and the latest update was LTP3, approved by Cabinet in March 2011, and introduced in April 2011. Councillors recalled that the role of LTP3 was to set out a transport strategy and delivery plan to support the economic growth of the County with the Department for Transport (DfT) setting out within their National Transport Goals challenges/objectives the overarching national priorities, and LTP3 being a local interpretation to align with our DCC priorities.

The Committee noted that there were a number of priorities, under the five national transport goals, as set out on page 26 of the report pack, and it was added that an additional goal had been included with the six areas as follows: a stronger economy through regeneration; reducing our carbon output; safer and healthier travel; better accessibility to services; improving the quality of life and a healthier natural environment; and maintaining the transport asset. It was explained that the priorities were aligned to the Council strategies including the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS), Regeneration Statement (RS) and the County Durham Plan (CDP) core strategy and prioritised in line with those.

It was noted that the main priority was supporting the economy and the 36 policies set out under the six areas were set out at Appendix 4. Members noted that the core programme had five delivery areas: sustainable travel; economic/transport corridors; whole-town approach; revenue support; and maintaining the transport asset and the split by budget heads was set out at Appendix 2 to the report.

The Sustainable Transport Manager noted that major schemes could be funded in a number of ways: developer contributions; DfT funding bids; the DCC Capital Programme; and the NECA, Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) and LGF.

The Committee learned that there were a number of DCC activities, including areas such as Road Safety, and supported by the LSTF including encouraging walking and cycling. Members noted LTP Capital Funding provided by the DfT was via two blocks, an Integrated Transport Block (ITB) and a Maintenance Block. It was added that at the start of LTP3 the ITB allocation was significantly reduced and while Government increased the overall transport funding nationally this was effectively “top-sliced” to allow for the formation of the LGF scheme Local Authorities could bid into. Councillors noted other funding outside of LTP was required for schemes such as new roundabouts or bus stations, and that the Council’s Capital Programme had funded improvements at Sunderland Bridge Roundabout, SCOOT and Northlands Roundabout. It was added that the Council had been awarded Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) funding to introduce further electric vehicle charging points at County Council offices. Members noted Local Pinch Point Funding from the DfT and success in securing this for schemes to reduce congestion at A1(M) Junction 63 and Picktree Lane Roundabouts at Chester-le-Street.

The Traffic Management Section Manager referred Members to Appendix 2 and explained that schemes that had been delivered had included sustainable transport, with community transport, for example minibuses being provided in East Durham. It was explained that other elements included contributions from Local Members in terms of bus infrastructure such as bus stops and bus priority in order to make bus travel an attractive choice for commuting and travelling. Councillors were reminded of the work in terms of Road Casualty Reduction, looking at Police data to highlight areas where there maybe issues. It was explained that a road fatality had an associated financial cost of around £1.8 million and that the works to try and prevent accidents and fatalities included: schemes at the A167 Pity Me Roundabout; signage and road markings at Forest-in-Teesdale following road resurfacing; and signage on the C12 west of Pitlington. It was added that there were 13 Accident Investigation and Prevention (AIP) schemes for 2016/17.

The Committee were informed of the work in terms of Urban Traffic Management and Control (UTMC), with the installation of 9 variable message boards, the majority on the main approaches into Durham City, which provide useful driver information, most recently highlighting works being carried out to Leazes Bowl in the City.

It was added that there would be improvements to the car park management system in Durham and further cameras installed at Bishop Auckland in being able to understand issues with traffic, assessing the impact of Kynren. It was noted that cameras in Durham City Centre could allow drivers to be able to look at live images in terms of journey planning. Councillors noted issues of demand management, with the use of Traffic Regulation Orders where appropriate in response to new signage, road markings and other issues. Members noted another area of work included encouraging walking and cycling, linking to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, Cycling Strategy and County Durham Plan.

Members were informed as regards local accessibility, with staff having come together from Neighbourhood Service into the new Regeneration and Local Services Directorate, and the recent works to improve the economic/transport corridors including: A167 Sunderland Bridge Roundabout; A167/A693 Northlands Roundabout improvements; and the A693 Pelton/Perkinsville Junction Improvements.

The Traffic Management Section Manager reminded Members of the Whole-Town Approach, focusing on the 12 main settlements within the County, in line with the RS ambition for “vibrant and successful towns”. Associated works included: CCTV for Bishop Auckland and Peterlee Bus Station; subway upgrades; motorcycling parking “wave and pay machines”; access to Kynren; and a pedestrian refuge at Bishop Auckland for Glaxosmithkline staff. It was reiterated as per the additional goal added by DCC, there was ongoing works to maintain the transport asset, including Highways, Bridge and Streetlight maintenance.

The Sustainable Transport Manager noted there was a variety of work ongoing in terms of LTP3 and noted issues for the future such as the NECA and changes to the Authority’s legal status as a Local Transport Authority with the NECA manifesto being out for public consultation and Local Authority colleagues working to develop a new Transport Strategy for the next financial year. The Sustainable Transport Manager concluded by noting that Internal Audit had looked at the management of risk in terms of the Integrated Transport Block and had given a rating of “substantial assurance”.

The Chairman thanked the Officers for their report and asked Members for their questions.

Councillor J Armstrong expressed concerns as regards funding and costs associated with the Metro and commented that members need to receive regular updates on the work being undertaken by NECA in relation to transport and any implications for County. Councillor J Armstrong added that smart ticketing was a good idea, working in London and should be a good idea for Durham. The Chairman added that he had attended NECA earlier in the week and noted discussions as regards the replacement of the Metro rolling stock, at an estimated cost of £1 billion.

Councillor A Batey noted the works in terms of congestion improvement in urban areas, however it was added that accessibility in the rural areas was important to ensure our rural communities were not isolated, noting bus routes to High Handenhold being lost. The Sustainable Transport Manager explained that Officers were very conscious of the issues in terms of NECA and the Metro and that the smart ticketing was part of a regional initiative which includes the “pop-card”. It was added that he would look into the issues in terms of any loss of provision of bus service and noted that the Council and NECA worked hard to ensure access to services.

Mr T Batson noted strategies often tended to be high-level documents and that there needed to be engagement with our local communities, especially rural areas, to be able to see how those strategies affect the people in County Durham. The Chairman noted that care needs to be taken as regards how strategies/policies impact in our rural communities, such as street-lighting changes, to ensure those communities are not isolated and to ensure social-cohesion.

The Sustainable Transport Manager noted that congestion was an urban issue, however rural infrastructure was important to enable accessibility to services, though accepting the pressures on income/revenue streams associated, such as bus sustainability.

Councillor J Clare noted the example of Newton Aycliffe in terms of a growing town, which has transport issues, what was done in terms of works to improve traffic and pedestrianised areas and did colleagues working on the LTP speak to those working on Regeneration Plans to make sure works were integrated and met people's needs.

The Community Economic Development Manager, Wendy Benson noted that Officers worked well together and linked in terms of issues when looking at Masterplans for the main settlements.

Councillor D Hall asked, in terms of sustainable transport, how performance was measured in respect of subsidised services noting in his area there appeared to be no coordination between Arriva and Go North East in terms of the services provided and wondered whether putting the services back together under one public operator may be beneficial.

The Sustainable Transport Manager noted that the services were provided by private operators on a commercial basis and therefore operators would make decisions on services based upon commercial factors and then the Council would look to fill in any gaps in service provision, where they considered it socially necessary and financial budgets will allow, by inviting operators to tender for a service. While operators already providing services in an area would be the preferred solution, other operators may be successful in the tender process and this is a reason why some areas may have multiple operator providing services. It was highlighted that there would be significant risks in terms of any Local Authority which would take services back into public operation. Councillor D Hall noted within the LTP there were strategic priorities in terms of accessibility, communities and low carbon, with some difficult work in terms of removal of streetlights, and asked how was performance measured and when was it evaluated in terms of effectiveness. The Sustainable Transport Manager noted any issues in terms of any unique situations would be addressed, with Councillor J Armstrong suggesting that the Council's Public Transport Network Manager, Simon Day may have more information in this regard.

Councillor E Adam noted he felt there was contradiction in the policy in terms of reducing carbon and healthier lifestyles while focusing on employment and growth, more people representing more CO₂. Councillor E Adam asked whether industry should be encouraged to move to more rural areas to secure investment in those communities. The Chairman noted it was a similar situation in terms of street lighting, where energy reduction was a goal, however, balanced against the needs of communities; it was an issue of how policies were applied.

Councillor J Clare added that there is a relationship between Regeneration and LTP and that policies and strategies need to be formulated and developed taking into account this relationship.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

10 Masterplans

The Chairman introduced the Regeneration Projects Manager, Chris Myers, the Community Economic Development Manager, Wendy Benson and the Community Economic Development Team Leader (South and West), Jackie Donnelly and the Spatial Policy Team Leader, Graeme Smith who were in attendance to give an update presentation as regards Masterplans (for copy see file of minutes).

The Regeneration Projects Manager explained to Members that all County Towns have an approved document, prospectus updates were taking place and the documents were being used to bid for monies through the Capital Programme. The Spatial Policy Team Leader noted that the ongoing programme of Masterplans ran through until 2020 and there was consultation with Members, Area Action Partnerships (AAPs) and residents as part of the development process. It was added that Masterplans helped to focus on priorities for an area and direct resources accordingly. Members noted Masterplan updates would go to Cabinet in 2 tranches with:

- 14 December 2016 – Consett, Crook, Newton Aycliffe, Durham, Chester-le-Street and Stanley
- 18 January 2017 – Peterlee, Seaham, Spennymoor, Shildon, Barnard Castle and Bishop Auckland

The Regeneration Projects Manager explained that recent examples of delivery included the Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership, a £2.7 million programme that completed in October 2016. Members noted many achievements from the programme, including: 17 hectares of invasive species cleared; 35 hectares improved through environmental volunteering and 16 structures having been restored, including bridges, lime kilns and ancient wells. It was added that the programme was such a success, the local MP had raised the matter with the Department for the Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

The Committee noted that in terms of progress at Bishop Auckland, a bid for public realm works had been successful at the NECA, a grant of £2.1 million, and work was ongoing with the Auckland Castle and Eleven Arches Trusts. Members learned that funding bids were being submitted to both the ERDF and the HLF in terms of restoration of the King James building, approximately a £6.8 million project.

The Community Economic Development Team Leader (South and West) explained that for Chester-le-Street a Prospectus was being developed, an update to the 2012 Masterplan. It was noted that a scoping report would look to identify potential opportunities for further development works, for example working with LTP colleagues if an issue is identified in terms of transport.

The Community Economic Development Manager explained that public realm works had been completed at Front Street at Consett with Fairhursts having been commissioned produce a design concept and delivery framework for Middle Street in the town.

The Regeneration Projects Manager explained that a lot of work was ongoing within Durham City, including works to refurbish the public toilets at Palace Green, scheduled to be completed November 2016.

It was added that lighting along the vennel alongside St. Nicholas' Church had been replaced and there would be continuing work in terms of accessibility and safety along the riverbanks. Members were reminded of the works beginning in respect of The Gates, with expected completion being in 2018. It was added that a number of public realm works were being undertaken and consultation as regards regeneration proposals and the new bus station had started, with a planning application to be submitted early 2017. Members noted a North Road Target Business Improvement scheme had been launched, with 4 expressions of interest so far.

Councillors noted the work ongoing at Eden Field, Newton Aycliffe with the Council's Chapter Homes looking to construct 125 houses on the site, with as at the end of October there were 3 full reservations, 37 initial deposits and 5 properties had been rented. Members noted the various options and scheme to help buyers, with a 10% affordable homes provision. The Community Economic Development Manager added that other projects in the town included a new Customer Access Point and works to the Library, all of which were nearing completion. Members were shown a brief promotional video for Chapter Homes, to demonstrate the high specification to which the new properties were being built.

The Community Economic Development Manager noted that Peterlee public realm works had begun, with the Bus Station having been taken into the Council's ownership and work was ongoing in terms of access points to the bus station. The Regeneration Projects Manager added that for Seaham, the construction of the watersports centre were ongoing and on schedule, with funding having come from DCC and the Coastal Communities Fund. It was added that it was a £832,000 project and was due for completion Winter 2016/17. It was added that improvements at the rail station should also help people to navigate to the shops and the Church green easier.

The Community Economic Development Team Leader (South and West) noted that Shildon had a series of public realm works completed, in time for the arrival of the Flying Scotsman train, and public consultation was underway as regards the Arches. Members were reminded of the ongoing support for development at Festival Walk, Spennymoor and the public realm works to the south of Front Street, Stanley. Members learned of "Smart Stanley" a project aiming to increase digital activity across Stanley, with a new Town Centre website launched on 12 September and noted links with LTP3 in terms of new car parking and technology.

The Committee noted the support for the retail sector in general, with enquires having been received from 106 businesses, with Economic Development dealing with 44 businesses, delivering 35 projects. The Community Economic Development Team Leader (South and West) noted support for street market trading, new stalls, home businesses, providing a relatively low-cost, low-risk opportunity for people to start their own business. It was added that this was a 2 year pilot, currently 6 months in and if evaluation is positive then the programme would be rolled out further.

The Chairman thanked the Officers for their presentation and asked Members for their questions.

Councillor J Armstrong asked when the consultation on the new bus station for Durham City finished. The Regeneration Projects Manager noted it was tomorrow, 4 November. Councillor J Armstrong asked if there had been any positive comments from the MP for Durham City, the Regeneration Projects Manager noted a meeting with the MP was scheduled for later in the week. Councillor J Armstrong noted there was some frustration in terms of the positive work carried out by the Council in the City. The Regeneration Projects Manager noted that feedback had been received, with the Methodist Church being used as a point of contact, and in general people had been very supportive of the new scheme.

Mr T Batson agreed with Councillor J Armstrong in terms of the positive approach being taken in Durham City, however, he asked where were the rural areas, the smaller towns and the larger villages. The Community Economic Development Manager noted that the Masterplans focused on the 12 main settlements, however regeneration covered the entire County, and if people were to approach the Council with any specific ideas for an area then it would be looked at. The Chairman noted it was a case of understanding how the gaps were filled, with some areas feeling left behind while understanding the economic reasons why the focus was on the 12 main settlements. The Regeneration Projects Manager noted that while Barnard Castle was highlighted, the regeneration projects covered a larger area than just the town.

Councillor J Maitland noted that the regeneration work carried out at Seaham was excellent, however, she had a concern as regards the level of parking provision to enable the numbers of people required to make the facilities sustainable, for example the watersports centre. The Regeneration Projects Manager noted that parking during construction was limited, however once building materials and site cabins were removed an appropriate parking provision would be in place.

Councillor H Nicholson noted the 12 main settlements and noted that in Shildon since 2013 a lot of improvements have been delivered via the Masterplan and now there were opportunities for people, lots of high quality work and he thanked all those involved with the projects. Councillor H Nicholson added that the next step was business development and convincing people to come to the town.

Mr I McLaren noted he had three concerns as regards Spennymoor: the roundabout at Thinford, which he felt did not work; the ongoing issues as regards Festival Walk; and "The North Eastern" which had been derelict for a number of years. The Community Economic Development Team Leader (South and West) noted that there was a meeting with developers in terms of moving The North Eastern site along with a quality development, and issues as regards Thinford and Festival Walk were noted. It was agreed that an update on the areas identified would be provided by the officer following the meeting.

Councillor M Davinson commented that he represented South Moor and suggested that the Committee need to continue to receive updates on the RS, Housing Strategy to ensure that our smaller settlements are represented and supported.

The Principal Overview and Scrutiny Officer noted that it was important that the Committee inputted into such strategies and Members were reminded of the input Members had into the previous version of the CDP and when the new developing CDP comes back to Committee Members will once again have the opportunity to input.

Councillor D Hall noted he would welcome an update on the situation with the old Durham Baths site, which had remained derelict, especially as it occupies a prominent site along the river. The Regeneration Projects Manager noted he would speak to colleagues and report back.

Councillor J Clare thanked the Community Economic Development Manager as regards explaining the support being offered to retail as a previous update to Committee on SMEs had been all sectors except retail. Councillor J Clare added he felt the help DCC provided to SMEs in the retail sector could be a topic for the work programme of the Committee. The Community Economic Development Manager added that there were activities such as “Small Business Saturday” and “Do it Digital” where DCC was supporting SMEs in retail with promotion via the Council’s social media channels. It was added there were case studies as regards what DCC offers and added there were national campaigns that DCC tapped into. Member agreed it was an area of interest and noted that the number of people employed in the retail sector was significant. The Chairman added that 80% of jobs were within the service sector nationally.

The Chairman noted good broadband provision was essential for rural communities, and the Overview and Scrutiny Officer noted that there would be an update on the Digital Durham Programme at the February 2017 meeting which would identify the type of support provided to the business sector in the county.

Resolved:

- (i) That the report be noted.
- (ii) That the Committee is kept updated on an annual basis on the development of the various Masterplans and Masterplan updates within County Durham.
- (iii) That included in the Work Programme of the Committee for 2017/18 is an overview of the support provided to the retail sector in County Durham by Durham County Council.