

Report to  
**Council**

Agenda  
Item

11(iii)(b)

Meeting Date: 16<sup>th</sup> July 2019

Public/Private\*: Public

Title: **Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Panel – Councillor Lisa Brown**

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Prior to our first round of briefings and meetings, I met with the Policy and Communications Manager and Overview and Scrutiny Officer to get a more in depth look at the Panel remit. I would like to thank them both for taking the time to meet with me, and for providing insight into the previous work programme. Whilst it's important to continue the hard work of the previous Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Panel, the change in membership of the Panel gives us an exciting opportunity to look at the work programme with fresh eyes and draw on the diverse experience amongst ourselves.

### **Pre-meeting Brief and Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel 13<sup>th</sup> June**

During discussions, members raised questions about the previous minutes. We felt that as nobody on the current Panel was present at that meeting we would seek clarification on some points, mainly regarding the incinerator.

After discussion on the work programme for the coming year the Panel was interested in looking at how the small to medium size enterprises can be supported, a further look at our environmental policies and we have requested a more in-depth exploration of the term "inclusive" from the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal, to be included in the upcoming presentation.

Our first Panel meeting was brief but nevertheless productive. It was clear our members felt passionately about housing and we have asked for the Housing Strategy Update Report to be presented to the Panel as soon as possible.

The Panel also look forward to the Joint Inquiry Day on Highways to be held with the members of the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Panel and the visit to the Kingmoor Park site.

I would like to thank all members of the Executive and Officers for attending. Full details of all the discussions that took place are included in the minutes.

## **Call – In**

Five days after our First Economic Growth Panel had met, notice of the Individual Portfolio Holder Decision came through announcing a trial of free car parking after 3pm in edge of centre car parks. I was surprised by this, considering just a few days prior when questioned about support for the high street, no indication at all was given that ideas were being developed along these lines. Had that been mentioned at the time I feel the Panel would have welcomed the opportunity to discuss such a measure and monitor the progress by including the scheme in the work programme.

I was contacted by several members and substitutes from the Panel and had a meeting with the Deputy Chief Executive before making the decision to call this in. The most common causes for concern which made up the reason for the Call-In were:

- The process and how consultation will be carried out
- How success of the trial will be measured
- What other options to support high street business will be considered
- What consideration has been given to the environmental impact.

Taking everything into account, I felt that it would be of benefit to all to ask these questions at a Call-In before the consultation started. It was disappointing to read claims of political game playing in the press. However it did give a couple of local businesses a chance to air views, and points raised by business such as disc zone parking were passed on to the Portfolio Holders at the Scrutiny meeting, to highlight the need to make sure the consultations should involve business so we listen to their views.

The meeting was informative, and I believe the Call-In only served to enhance the decision. I hope that the Portfolio Holders will value the input, experiences and ideas put forward by Panel members.

The Panel agreed unanimously to add Free After 3 to the Work Programme and we look forward to it being a success.

**Cllr Lisa Brown**

**Chair – Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Panel**