

Scrutiny Panel Mini Review

Economic Development and Links to Planning

February 2016

INTRODUCTION

1. For 2015/16, the Scrutiny & Audit Committee decided to undertake one full scrutiny review and a suite of mini reviews. The purpose of the mini reviews is to identify key issues and priorities, highlight good practice, find improvements and develop an action plan to progress those improvements.
2. The members who participated in the mini reviews scrutiny panel were:
 - Cllr Brian Boyd (Chair)
 - Cllr Jeanette Gaul
 - Cllr Rob Murray
 - Cllr Jim Houston
 - Cllr Bob Myles
3. At the initial meeting of the panel, the members agreed that the first review should look at economic development and the links with planning. The panel agreed two key questions for consideration:
 - *How do Economic Development and Planning work together to promote inward investment into Angus, and what more could be done?*
 - *Are there any policy and legislative barriers to economic development and how can they be overcome?*
4. The panel agreed that a Scrutiny Rapid Improvement Event (SRIE) should be held to discuss the key issues and identify a way forward.

SCRUTINY RAPID IMPROVEMENT EVENT

5. The SRIE was held at Hospitalfield House, Arbroath on 25 November 2015. The event was facilitated by Janine Wilson, Service Manager Governance & Consultancy and Philip Atkinson, the council's Delta Lean advisor. A full list of delegates is included at Appendix 1.
6. To provide the Scrutiny Panel with some background, contextual presentations were delivered by:
 - Iain Mitchell, Service Manager Planning
 - Len Murray, Building Standards Manager
 - Alison Smith, Service Manager Economic Development and Mark McGee, Senior Investment Officer.
7. Question and answer sessions followed each presentation and a number of key issues were identified at that point

- What weight is there in the consultation between Planning and Economic Development or does law always come first?
 - At what point does flexibility kick in?
 - Developer Contributions – have we got it right?
 - At what point does Economic Development involve Planning, and vice versa?
 - How do we collectively get better at involving all parties at pre application stage?
 - How do we sell our location and value for money?
 - How do we know what land is available for businesses coming in to the area?
 - How do we sell our advantages – not focus on the barriers.
8. In the final session of the SRIE, delegates split into three groups to consider the following question, which was developed from the key issues in 7 above:
- In what ways can we better develop cross-service working to improve economic development in Angus?*
9. In the feedback session, it was noted that it is the elected members' views that prevail when considering planning applications; decisions may be swayed by public opinion over officer recommendations.
10. Key improvement actions were identified by each group and were brought together in a final summary session. The SRIE agreed improvement actions can be summarised as:
- Document the procedures for identifying what development land is available.
 - Document operational arrangements to link ports of call in different services.
 - Document the current pre application process, including all players.
 - What is best practice, what do others do?
 - Multi disciplinary teams should be involved as early as possible. Consider developing guidance re multi-disciplinary teams / consultation protocol.
 - Consider introducing cross-service training / seminars to improve understanding
 - Consider de risking for small businesses / town centre / business park developments.
 - Consider how we allocate development land.
 - How much weight is given to Ec. Dev. views/advice in planning?
 - We need to understand our customers. Can others learn from Building Standards approach to customer care?

- Myth busting – we need to work to dispel the myth that Angus is not open for business. Facts and figures show that Angus is open for business.
11. The scrutiny panel agreed that a short-life cross-service officer working group should consider these points and develop an action plan, which would be submitted to the final meeting of the scrutiny panel. The action plan is attached.
 12. The action plan will be delivered by the identified officers and the discharge of the plan will be monitored by the Scrutiny and Audit committee.

SECTION 3 – ACTION PLAN

ACTION	LEAD	WHEN
PROCEDURES		
1. We will prepare a briefing note detailing sources of available Development Land and the status and details of land from each source.	Planning: Kate Cowey	End February 2016
2. We will improve data gathering on trends and demand and forecast to feed in to future Local Plan development and meet to discuss at least annually	Ec Dev: Mark McGee	End February 2016
3. We will prepare a briefing note on pre-application/enquiry process	Planning: Alan Hunter	End February 2016
4. We will review and revise current information sharing on pre applications and planning application consultations so as to be more frequent, consistent and effective	Ec Dev: Mark McGee	End February 2016
5. We will explore best practice in other local authority areas	Planning: Iain Mitchell	End March 2016

ACTION	LEAD	WHEN
COMMUNICATION AND AWARENESS		
6. We will establish a regular programme of staff briefings to share information and updates	Ec Dev: Fiona Cameron	End February 2016
7. We will establish a yammer group online to share knowledge, new policy and developments and encourage dialogue	Ec Dev: Fiona Cameron	End February 2016
8. We will investigate customer service training for all staff	Ec Dev – Alison Smith	End March 2016
9. We will develop Invest in Angus campaign as part of wider Business Angus message reinforcing message that Angus is Open for Business	Ec Dev – Business Angus – Mark McGee	End May 2016

APPENDIX 1 – SRIE DELEGATES

Cllr Brian Boyd

Cllr Bill Duff

Cllr Jeanette Gaul

Cllr Jim Houston

Cllr Rob Murray

Cllr Bob Myles

Fiona Cameron Business Manager, Investment & Skills

Merlyn Dunn Business Manager, Industry Sectors

Mark McGee Senior Investment Officer

Alison Smith Service Manager, Economic Development

Kate Cowey Development Plan Manager

Alan Hunter Development Standards Manager

Iain Mitchell Service Manager, Planning

Len Murray Building Standards Manager

Philip Atkinson Learning Strategies Ltd

Janine Wilson Service Manager, Governance & Consultancy

Shân Coombs Senior Governance & Consultancy Officer

Janet Hutchison Governance & Scrutiny Officer