

REPORT FROM THE ECONOMY AND TOURISM SELECT COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN TO THE MEETING OF FULL COUNCIL ON WEDNESDAY, 20 JULY 2016

At the Tourism and Economy Select Committee on the 24th September 2015 we had an overview and update from Visit IOW representatives Simon Dabell and David Thornton on the Destination Business Improvement District (D-Bid) proposal. We noted the £80k loan from IWC to VIW for consultants to run the process that began requesting feedback from stakeholders in October; our bid is unique as it will represent an entire county rather than a town.

A task group comprising of 12 individuals from relevant sectors will help create a 5 year improvement plan; the prospectus will end in December 2015 needing approval from the Isle of Wight Council.

Levies will only be collected if there is sufficient support from relevant sector business.

We ask for Town and Parish Councils to be included in discussions.

Our officers recognised they had an important role in the D-Bid process.

Members were assured that local growth was a key part of the bid and small business would be guarded from negative impact.

The Committee will be updated regularly via email so it can continue to monitor the process.

We supported the D-Bid that took on our recommendations and comments.

Solent Local Enterprise

We received a presentation from the Deputy Managing Director that provided a brief overview of the SLEP and key details (structure, membership, governance, funding and terms of reference).

Headline key strategies and strategic priorities, targets were outlined, we looked at a section of SLEP bodies in detail and had discussion about how it related to the Isle of Wight and the Isle of Wight Council's role.

It was noted that it was a private sector led organisation that would play a significant role in devolution.

Concerns were raised by the committee around the lack of projects and bids thus far due to fear of wasting valuable Isle of Wight Council time and resources in the process.

Officers explained that although capital could be used to finance preparation of a bid, if the bid failed those costs would then be charged to revenue budget.

The committee suggested S.106 money be used to finance bids.

It was stressed by Members that more help was needed for the Island's kaleidoscope of small business.

It was recommended by the committee that resources were urgently allocated to prepare bids before we miss further opportunities for relevant funding.

It was recommended by the committee that a member task group reviewing corporate priorities also look at identifying and recommending SLEP projects which should be taken and allocated resources.

A Task Group will be set up once the chairman is provided with requested information from the Isle of Wight Council and PSP to look at corporate priorities and identify recommended schemes to be resourced and put forward for SLEP funding.

At the last Economy and Tourism Select Committee meeting on Monday, 14 March

Our members received and noted a presentation from Public Sector Partnership (PSP) where Mr Richard Smith and Mr Adam Cunnington of Public Sector Plc gave a presentation to provide context, an overview of PSP activities and other limited liability partnerships (LLPs), and to highlight the potential activities of the PSP Isle of Wight LLP. Members were advised that the main purpose of the PSP was to facilitate joint property projects with local authorities in order to bring finance, skills and resources together.

They went on to say PSP have a network of 11 councils with partnerships formulated around a hybrid model entitled 'relational partnering'. The difference in this approach to others was that it emphasised the creation of a relationship in advance of any contractual commitment.

All partnerships had a robust governance structure to ensure political input, and operated through a structured 4 stage process: explore, examine, evaluate and engage. Further information was provided on the detail of each stage, and the purpose of this process was to ensure that each authority met all of its requirements.

Members were advised that there were three main commercial outcomes requested by partners as a priority. These were the generation of revenue savings, the generation of revenue income, and the creation of capital value. Such outcomes enabled clear targets for review, mitigated budget cuts, and created capital for re-investment.

Questions were raised regarding the role that PSP played and the financial split between the council and PSP. Members noted that PSP was the investor and that results could be delivered earlier and quicker with a partnership. The financial split would be dependent on the percentage of the input from the council and PSP.

Destination Business Improvement District (D-BID) Update

The Committee also received and noted an update from Mr Simon Dabell and Mr David Thornton of Visit Isle of Wight who advised the Select Committee that the initial consultation regarding the progression of a D-BID proposition had ended. Having taken on board the responses received, a draft D-BID proposal had been created and all details of this were available to view online until the middle of April 2016.

They also explained that a tourism conference had recently been held and those in attendance were pleased with the initial outlook of the proposal. Levy payers had also been sent a paper copy of the draft proposal in order to provide any feedback. Any further comments would be incorporated and the final proposal would be made available online.

It was hoped that a 4 week postal ballot would then be held with a final date of 12 July 2016. The importance of members reading the draft proposal was emphasised.

Sunday Trading

Members were advised that in the enterprise bill to the House of Commons, the government had proposed to devolve the responsibility to change Sunday trading which would have allowed stores to trade beyond the current six hour limit.

Although members were reminded that the government had voted against the proposals, there was a concern that larger retailers were still pushing for it to be agreed. It was proposed that the Select Committee would need to have a position on the matter if it were to arise again.

A discussion was held and members felt that a 'forced rest' on a Sunday was often needed for employees. There was also the view that an extension in trading hours was inevitable and only a matter of time.

Councillor Wayne Whittle
Chairman of Economy and Tourism Select Committee