

Review Committee – 10 July 2012

Minutes of the meeting of the **Review Committee** held on **10 July 2012** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr Mrs J R Lumley

Cllr Mrs A V Hale

Cllr B T Hazlewood

Cllr J R F Mason

Cllr T E Mountain

Cllr Mrs C E Roe

Cllr I H Ward

VISITING MEMBERS

Cllrs K J Gordon and M Hoy.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr R D Pointer.

OFFICERS PRESENT

S Scrutton - Head of Planning and Transportation

P Gowers - Overview and Scrutiny Officer

M Power - Committee Administrator

136 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2012 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

137 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr I H Ward declared a personal interest in the Shop at my Local item of the Agenda by virtue of being a member of the Rayleigh Chamber of Trade.

138 SHOP AT MY LOCAL – UPDATE

Members considered the report of the Head of Planning and Transportation, which provided Members with details of the purpose and function of the Shop at my Local (SAML) campaign, and an update as to the direction of travel and plans for the future.

In response to Member questions, the following was noted:-

- The Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Tourism, Heritage, the Arts, Culture and Business advised that the Shop At My Local scheme is a partnership run by a steering group and that the steering group would have information on future plans for the scheme's progress. Rochford District Council is a member of the partnership and provides funding and administrative support. The Council's Economic Development Officer has a co-ordinating role between the Council and the steering group.

- The steering group is planning a major re-launch of the SAML website within the next 12 months, which it anticipates will make the website more user-friendly and broaden its usage. A consultant has been funded by Rochford District Council to develop and redesign the website, which will be reviewed by the steering group prior to going live. Membership of the SAML steering group includes the local Chambers of Trade, the Essex Federation of Small Businesses, Town and Parish Councils and the District Council Economic Development Officer. All Parish/Town Councils had been invited to join the Steering Group but only a proportion had opted to do so.
- There has been no adverse feedback on usability of the website from the public and a recently held SAML fashion show, which was advertised on the website, had been a success.
- The SAML has the potential to be a building block to help support local businesses but businesses themselves must play a major role in progressing the scheme. The steering group recognises the need for greater monitoring of the outcomes of the scheme.
- Businesses must be located in the Rochford District to be eligible to join the scheme. Regular email updates are sent by the Economic Development team to all members of the scheme; if an email is undeliverable a check is made to see if the business is still operating. Any additional monitoring in this respect would be too resource intensive for the Council to consider.
- All businesses in the District have been advised of the scheme and approximately 13.5% of the traders in the District have signed up, including a small proportion from shops in local neighbourhood parades. The large supermarket chains have been invited to join the scheme.
- The scheme is advertised in Rochford District Matters (RDM), at the Rochford Business Breakfasts, farmers' markets and events where shoppers are likely to be, such as the switching on of Christmas lights. Leaflets have been distributed to businesses throughout the District, which has highlighted the existence of the campaign. Traders that sign up for the scheme are provided with a SAML sticker for the shop window and leaflets for distribution. The onus is on the traders to advertise the scheme further as necessary.
- SAML is primarily an internet campaign; residents with no internet access at home can access the website via public library computers.
- A Member advised that Rayleigh market has a stall available once a month for advertising schemes such as SAML; this information can be passed to the steering group.

- There is potential for the steering group/traders to develop the scheme in accordance with what is required at the time. Traders upload the offers to the website to promote business and shoppers log in to the website to view the discount vouchers available.
- The steering group can consider additional ways of raising income for the scheme. There is currently no financial contribution from the steering group members.
- The cost to the Council of running the scheme now that it is established is modest.
- The steering group has not met regularly and has no constitution or quorum for attendance at meetings. The steering group could be encouraged to meet regularly and take ownership of the scheme.

Resolved

That representatives from the Shop At My Local steering group be invited to attend a meeting of the Review Committee and that in advance of this meeting a list of steering group members, details of how frequently the group meets and minutes of previous meetings be provided.

139 THE FORWARD PLAN

The Committee reviewed the Forward Plan and noted its contents.

19/12 Voluntary Grants Process

Further clarification was requested on the application process to increase the Committee's understanding. This information would be sent to Members by email.

140 WORK PLAN

Members considered and approved the Committee's Work Plan. It was noted that the Citizens Advice Bureau had agreed to attend the Review Committee meeting on 11 September 2012.

Resolved

That the Work Plan be approved.

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm.

Chairman

Date

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