

# ECONOMY AND REGENERATION OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 23 November 2009

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	J Hale (Chair)	
	Councillors	AR McLachlan A Jennings P Johnson K Wood	RL Abbey B Kenny A Taylor
<u>Apologies</u>	Councillors	A Pritchard	S Niblock

## 22 MEMBER'S CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to consider whether they had personal or prejudicial interests in connection with any item(s) on this agenda and, if so, to declare them and state what they were.

Councillor B Kenny declared a personal interest in respect of minute 24 (Next Generation Access and Infrastructure) by virtue of his employment with British Telecommunications PLC (BT).

Members were reminded that they should also declare, pursuant to paragraph 18 of the Overview and Scrutiny Rules, whether they were subject to a party whip in connection with any item(s) to be considered and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of the whipping agreement. No such declarations were made.

## 23 MINUTES

Members were requested to receive the minutes of the meetings held on 15 September and 27 October, 2009.

Resolved – That the minutes be received.

## 24 NEXT GENERATION ACCESS AND IT INFRASTRUCTURE

The Director of Regeneration introduced representatives of the consultants, Adit North, who had been invited to provide an overview of their presentation to the Investment Strategy Partnership Board – “ Delivering World Class Communications Technology Across Wirral”. He reported that the consultants had been engaged to provide an assessment of the current communications situation in Wirral, the context across Europe and the United Kingdom, and the scale of investment that was needed to provide the next generation broadband which was critical to the future economic development of Wirral.

Annie Oldfield, Regional Development Manager, gave a brief overview of the Adit North structure and explained that it was a public sector company which had been established to provide a mechanism for aggregating and procuring broadband demand for the public sector with two key objectives:

- Increasing value for money for public service spend on procurement of broadband through aggregation of demand
- Increasing broadband availability for the public and private sectors.

She presented a series of slides showing where BT planned to roll out fibre optic broadband Next Generation Access (NGA) across the U.K. and Europe, the economic and social benefits of NGA, mapping of internet linkages to Wirral businesses and households, and BT Exchange statistics.

Tony Carr, Technical Director, outlined BT's proposals to upgrade 69 Exchanges by 2012 (but noted that none of the exchanges in Wirral were included in these proposals), the network options, and estimates of cost for the provision of NGA to business and residential areas across Wirral.

The Directors of Corporate Services and of Regeneration responded to questions from members regarding the economic benefits and the financial implications associated with this major undertaking. The consultants responded to the technical issues raised by members and noted their concerns regarding problems associated with previous cable laying operations in the borough.

Resolved –

- (1) That the consultants be thanked for their presentation.
- (2) That further progress reports be submitted to future meetings of this committee.

## 25 **EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Resolved - That, under section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by the relevant paragraphs of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act.

## 26 **REGENERATION UPDATE**

The Director of Regeneration provided an update on major development schemes within the borough.

Resolved – That the report be noted and that the officers be thanked for their efforts in continuing to progress these major schemes.

27 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Performance Reporting

The Director of Corporate Services reported that the current quarterly performance report providing an overview of progress made against the indicators for 2009/2010 and key projects which are relevant to this committee was available in the Web Library. The Director of Regeneration would give a presentation on the overall performance to the next meeting of this committee.