

3rd November 2015**Agenda Item: 4**

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR, PLACE THE PROPOSED ROBIN HOOD ENTERPRISE ZONE

Purpose of the Report

1. To offer Committee an overview of a submission to Government by the D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) seeking the establishment of a further 3 Enterprise Zones (EZ) within the LEP area, one of which is for the Robin Hood EZ in Nottinghamshire.

New Call for Enterprise Zones

2. Committee has previously considered reports on the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire EZ, most recently at its June meeting. These reports have included details of the benefits of EZs and the general policy approach so this has not been repeated here. This report confirms that a submission has been made for a new EZ, called the Robin Hood EZ alongside two others in Derbyshire and at the time of writing, a decision is awaited from Government. A verbal update will be offered to Members on the day of the meeting.
3. Within the June 2015 Budget Statement, the Chancellor announced a new wave of Enterprise Zones (EZ) in England, being a competitive process nationally but on this occasion, focussed on a site or a number of sites within rural or small town areas. Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) were asked to co-ordinate the process at a local level with the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and initial submissions were invited to the D2N2 LEP by the 14th August.
4. In order to explore this opportunity, early discussions were held with potential partners including private sector developers, site owners and District Councils. The County Council's Economic Development Team took on the role of co-ordinating and drafting a submission to the LEP, comprising a set of 4 sites, namely Summit Park, Berry Hill, the former Thoresby Colliery and Sherwood Energy Village. This submission was made by the Council on behalf of the three District Councils (Ashfield, Mansfield and Newark & Sherwood) and the respective private sector partners of the sites under the title of the Robin Hood Enterprise Zone.
5. At its Board meeting on the 14th September, the D2N2 LEP prioritised the EZ submission alongside two others (both in Derbyshire) for further development and thence for inclusion within its submission to the DCLG by the 18th

September deadline. This submission has now been made and a decision is currently anticipated around the time of the Autumn Statement on the 25th November. A copy of the completed submission is available under Background Papers, with the exception of Section G of the application form which contains commercially sensitive information on the costs and related aspects of each individual site. A map of the Robin Hood EZ is attached as an Appendix to this report; the following section draws out some of the key aspects of the submission.

Summary of the Robin Hood EZ

6. As referenced in paragraph 4, a total of four sites were agreed by the partners for inclusion within a proposed EZ and they may be summarised as follows:

Site (Developers / Owners)	EZ Size and Details
Summit Park (Sladen Estates)	Serviced site of just over 18 hectares for employment use. Located along the Mansfield / Ashfield Regeneration Route with excellent access to the M1 having great potential for logistic and general industrial uses. Summit Park is a site ready for immediate promotion and occupation with EZ status potentially available from 2016 if approved.
Berry Hill (Lindhurst Partnership)	Just under 24 hectares of employment land, part of a wider sustainable development to the south of Mansfield comprising in addition, housing, commercial centre, open space and community facilities. The EZ aspects can be brought forward in 2017.
Former Thoresby Colliery (Harworth Estates)	The former colliery has a gross size of 186 hectares, of which at this stage, just over 10 hectares is proposed as employment land. The wider site is currently the subject of master planning including proposed housing and community space. Given planning requirements and above referenced conditions of the site, this is a site for development over the longer term, with development from 2020; though some elements of employment land could be progressed more quickly.
Sherwood Energy Village (Nottinghamshire County Council)	The former Ollerton Colliery has experienced a range of issues in recent years but is partially successfully developed. The remainder of the site, subject to remediation and servicing (as well as the location of a new station for the reopened rail line) offers c.10ha for employment development from around 2019.

7. On review with the respective developers and District Councils, the EZ aspects of the sites are proposed to have business rate reductions as the incentive for employment development. Each site has its own potential for sector growth, others have opportunities or restrictions which may limit the density of development but overall, a minimum job potential of over 4,000 looks to be

appropriate, with over 10,000 jobs potentially achievable if all the sites are fully developed in time.

8. Business rates growth will be secured for the LEP for re-investment in the sites as required to further stimulate growth or to address infrastructure / service investment where required. It will be noted from the above sites that the phasing allows for certain sites to come forward quicker than others with the rates growth potentially rolling forward for investment in sites where significant remediation and servicing may be required.
9. The EZ submission to Government was set within a wider strategic economic context, reflecting on its potential contribution to support the D2N2 LEP's Strategic Economic Plan and how the EZ formed part of a wider set of plans and projects for the economic renewal of the wider area.
10. Perhaps of most significance is the relationship with the proposed reopening of the Robin Hood Line from Shirebrook junction through Warsop, Edwinstowe and Ollerton. While not the subject of the bid for the EZ, the submission made strong reference to the proposed re-opening of the line to passenger traffic, reinforcing the mutually supportive economic impact. A report on this issue was taken to the Council's Transport and Highways Committee in October which reflected on the case-building for the reopening of the rail line and the capital and revenue implications, alongside potential sources of finance. At its meeting in July 2015, this Committee agreed a minimum of £40,000 from its budget towards the development of Growth Deal and other potential submissions. Discussions continue with Transport and Highways about how best to support the economic impact assessment of the rail project should a Growth Deal submission be made.
11. More generally, the EZ submission made reference to the following as part of the wider strategic economic context:
 - The potential EZ and Robin Hood Line reopening together offer a significant economic catalyst to an area making positive economic progress following traditional industrial decline and specifically, given the legacy of coal-mining related issues;
 - The above referenced EZ sites plus others along the corridor offer an opportunity to bring forward mixed use residential and employment opportunities;
 - The direct rail access to the sites at Thoresby and Sherwood Energy Village may offer inward investment opportunities to particular companies seeking such transportation requirements;
 - Based on local intelligence and evidence from key sector growth patterns, demand for employment space looks positive and the case for the EZ status reflects this;
 - The rail line reopening offers an opportunity for inward commuting to support access to employment opportunities and increase sustainable travel options to the wider tourism and visitor economy offer – including to the new Sherwood Forest Visitor Centre;

- The Line would also offer an opportunity of residents along the route to access employment opportunities within the conurbations in Mansfield, Nottingham and Sheffield;
 - The capital investment offered by both the EZ sites and the extended Robin Hood Line directly could usefully be exploited to offer related skills training and employment packages to directly benefit the local communities, many of whom continue to experience unemployment rates and skills deficits above Nottinghamshire averages;
 - In the longer term, the development of the freight link from Kirkby to Toton potentially affords the area a possible direct rail link to the HS2 Hub.
12. It should be noted that of the 3 EZ submissions made to Government by the D2N2 LEP, the Board ranked the Robin Hood EZ as third of three and wider, EZ submissions were made by other LEPs across England. It is therefore a highly competitive process but the development partners feel however that they have a strong case and a decision is awaited.

Reason(s) for Recommendations

13. This report is offered to support the Committee's understanding of the submission made for an EZ which is a key part of the Government's growth policy and of importance to the D2N2 LEP and its partners in delivering jobs and investment.

Statutory and Policy Implications

14. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described within the body of the report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

15. It is recommended that Committee notes the contents of the report.

Tim Gregory
Corporate Director, Place

For any enquiries about this report please contact:
 Geoff George ext 72046

Constitutional Comments
 This report is for noting only.

Financial Comments [SES 20.10.20.15]
 There are no specific financial implications arising directly from this report

Background Papers
 The Robin Hood Enterprise Zone – A Submission to Government (September 2015)

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

Summit Park – Sutton-in-Ashfield East Division

Berry Hill – South Mansfield and East Mansfield Divisions

Thoresby – Rufford Division

Sherwood Energy Village – Ollerton Division

Appendix

