

# COUNCIL MEETING

28 JANUARY 2014

## PRESENT:

D. J. Leytham (Chairman)  
D. S. Smith (Vice-Chairman)

Allsopp, Mrs J. A.	Greatorex, C.	Salter, D. F.
Arnold, Mrs S. P.	Hancocks, Mrs R.	Smedley, D.
Awty, R. J.	Heath, H. R.	Stanhope MBE, Mrs M.
Bacon, B. F.	Hogan, P.	Strachan, R. W.
Bacon, Mrs N.	Humphreys, K. P.	Taylor, S. D.
Barnett, Mrs S. A.	Isaacs, D.	Tittley, M. C.
Boyle, Mrs M. G.	Marshall, T.	Tranter, Mrs H.
Constable, Mrs B. L.	Mosson, R. C.	Warfield, M. A.
Constable, D. H. J.	Mynott, G.	White, A. G.
Cox, R. E.	Norman, S.G.	Wilcox, M. J.
Derrick, B. W.	Pearce, A. G.	Wilks, J. N.
Drinkwater, E. N.	Powell, J. J. R.	Willis-Croft, K. A.
Eadie, I. M.	Pritchard, I. M. P.	Wilson, B.
Eagland, Mrs J. M.	Pullen, D. R.	Woodward, Mrs S. E.
Evans, Mrs. C. D.	Richards, Mrs. V.	Yeates, B. W.
Fisher, Mrs H. E.	Roberts, N. J.	

**(APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were received from Councillors Mrs Flowith, A. F. Smith, Spruce, Thomas and Walker MBE)

## PRAYERS:

Prayers were said by the Chairman who made particular reference to the recent death of Mrs M. I. Roberts, the wife of Councillor Roberts.

## 210 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

The following declarations of interest were made: -

Councillor Mrs Boyle – Personal interest in any proposed development in South Lichfield

Councillor Hogan – Personal interest in any proposed development affecting Fradley schools

Councillor Mrs Stanhope – Personal interest in any proposed development near Dark Lane, Alrewas

## 211 MEMBERSHIP OF LOCAL PARKING BOARD:

It was proposed, duly seconded and

**RESOLVED:** That Councillor Pritchard replaces Councillor Mrs Flowith on the Local Parking Board.

## 212 LICHFIELD DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN STRATEGY (MAIN MODIFICATIONS)

It was proposed by Councillor Pritchard that:

- “a) The District Council endorses the main modifications (APPENDIX A) to the Lichfield District Local Plan Strategy (as submitted) having regard to the appraisals (APPENDICES B to E).
- b) That authority be delegated to the Strategic Director of Democratic, Development and Legal Services, in consultation with the Economic Growth and Development Cabinet Member, to agree any minor modifications to the document.”

In submitting the proposal, Councillor Pritchard reminded Members that the Local Plan was currently in the hands of the Planning Inspectorate following an Examination In Public in 2013, which had lasted some three weeks. The initial findings of the Inspector had been received in September 2013 which had stated that the sites put forward were sound, however, not enough housing provision had been made to deal with the assessed need and therefore a further 1,330 homes needed to be delivered over the extended plan period of 2008 – 2029. Councillor Pritchard accepted that this was not an easy task but emphasised that it would be difficult to deliver strategic infrastructure and implement a Community Infrastructure Levy without an adopted plan in place and therefore over the last few months, Officers had been working on assessing different options for delivering the additional housing requirements. Information provided by developers up to and including the end of the hearing sessions had been considered with no new information being looked at in order that a fair and consistent approach was adopted.

Councillor Pritchard informed Members that a town focused approach had been adopted with options being assessed against each of the strategic priorities of the Local Plan to ensure that there is a good continuity without a fundamental change in the principles of the strategy and the options had been assessed to ensure that they were in line with the National Planning Policy Framework. As some options included Green Belt land, a review of the Green Belt had taken place and that had assessed different parcels of land to identify how well they scored in terms of their importance against a range of national and local criteria. Finally, in line with European Law, a sustainability appraisal of the Plan had been undertaken with sites and options being scored against a range of criteria to identify which of the sites are the most sustainable in terms of environmental, economic and social objectives. Details of all the assessments undertaken were submitted for consideration.

Councillor Pritchard reported that having looked at the outcomes of all the different assessments, the conclusion was that two of the Green Belt sites in South Lichfield, namely those at Cricket Lane and Deans Slade Farm would be the best fit for the strategy and would comply with the National Planning Policy Framework as being the most sustainable, being close to services, facilities and jobs, would make good use of infrastructure and would have the least overall impact upon the environment.

Councillor Pritchard informed the Members that if the proposals were agreed the consultation period would commence on Thursday 6 February 2014 and whilst he did not like to see the release of Green Belt Land, the sites put forward would enable housing and employment to be delivered, together with the ability to deliver the final stretch of the Lichfield Southern Bypass and a new Country Park for the City of Lichfield. Councillor Pritchard hoped that this would soften the impact of the Green Belt release. Councillor Pritchard reminded Members that the Environment and Development (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee had recently considered the options in detail and had concluded that they were supportive of the proposals having regard to all information received.

Councillor Cox as Chairman of Environment and Development (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee confirmed that his Committee had undertaken a detailed analysis of the proposals and that a strong debate had resulted. Whilst he was reluctant to release Green Belt land, Councillor Cox felt that the options put forward were the best that could be achieved.

Councillor White asked Members to remember that action should be taken for the benefit of the District as a whole as he considered that the consultation process was to seek advice and input into the process rather than regarding that as a referendum.

Councillor Marshall informed Members that whilst he would be voting in favour of the proposals,

he did have concern about the future quality of life in the City of Lichfield in the next 15 years having regard to the scale of developments proposed in the Plan.

Councillor Norman asked Members to bear in mind that Green Belt land around Burntwood were vulnerable and hoped that those areas would remain protected.

Councillor Mynott asked for clarification about the amount of social housing that would be provided within the Local Plan proposal as, to him, that was not clear. Councillor Mynott also asked for confirmation that the District Council would make the decision about development proposals rather than the Solihull and Birmingham Local Enterprise Partnership. In response to Councillor Mynott, Councillor Pritchard reminded Members that the District Council were the Local Planning Authority and would therefore make planning decisions and that existing policies determined the amount of social housing in schemes put forward.

Councillor Mrs Woodward stated that she still had some concern about the potential influence of the Solihull and Birmingham Local Enterprise Partnership Board, particularly as the District Council has signed up to that Partnership, however, Councillor Pritchard reminded her that whilst the District Council were signed up to the Partnership, that did not over-rule the role of the District Council as Local Planning Authority. Councillor Pritchard stated that as the District Council had boundaries with other council areas there is a legal duty to cooperate and which Local Enterprise Partnership the District Council are in is irrelevant in this context and does not affect the duty to cooperate.

Councillor Drinkwater considered that the main problem was that the Government had introduced a duty to co-operate and hoped that this would not reduce the ability of the District Council to determine planning applications correctly as he considered that Green Belt land should be protected. Councillor Mrs Stanhope, in agreeing with Councillor Drinkwater, recognised the danger of eroding the Green Belt Policy but reminded Members that the sites at Cricket Lane and Deans Slade Farm in Lichfield had been put forward for adoption in previous local plans and had been rejected and thus those sites had been reprieved in the past. Councillor Mrs Stanhope added that whilst it was regrettable that those sites would now be used for housing, times changed and difficult decisions were having to be made.

Councillor Wilcox, in seconding the motion wished to put on record the thanks of the Council to the hard work of those Officers involved in getting the Plan to the stage that it was and reminded Members that the thorough consideration of the issues at both the Environment and Development (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee and Cabinet, meant that the proposed modifications should be endorsed. Councillor Pritchard added that the consultation process needed to be proceeded with to ensure that a Local Plan was in place that the Inspector would find sound in all respects and that this could be done with the modifications put forward.

It was then

**RESOLVED:** a) The District Council endorses the main modifications (APPENDIX A) to the Lichfield District Local Plan Strategy (as submitted) having regard to the appraisals (APPENDICES B to E).

b) That authority be delegated to the Strategic Director of Democratic, Development and Legal Services, in consultation with the Economic Growth and Development Cabinet Member, to agree any minor modifications to the document.

(The Meeting closed at 6.35 pm)

CHAIRMAN