

FOR: COUNCIL MEETING
30th SEPTEMBER 2014
AGENDA ITEM 8
(BUFF ENCLOSURE)

**REPORT OF CHAIRMAN OF ECONOMIC GROWTH, ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT
(OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE**

Councillors Mrs Eagland (Vice Chairman in the Chair), Mrs Barnett, Roberts, Mrs Stanhope MBE, and Willis-Croft.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: were received from Councillors Cox (Chairman), Drinkwater (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Fisher, Hogan, Isaacs and Smedley.

(In accordance with Council Procedure Rule No.17 Councillor Pritchard attended the meeting).

At the meeting on the 24th September 2014 the following matters were considered:

1. CABINET FORWARD PLAN

- 1.1 The Cabinet Forward Plan had been circulated and was considered and noted in relation to the responsibilities of the Committee.

2. WORK PROGRAMME

- 2.1 The Work Programme had been circulated and considered. It was reported that a meeting had been scheduled for 11th November 2014 to ensure all necessary Committee items would be covered during the 2014/15 Municipal year.
- 2.2 It was also noted that the item on Parish/Town Council comments on Planning Applications item had been moved to this November meeting.
- 2.3 It was agreed that the Work Programme be noted.

3. LICHFIELD DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN: UPDATE

- 3.1 Members considered a report updating them on progress with the Lichfield District Local Plan, the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans and ongoing work to inform the production of a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging schedule.
- 3.2 It was reported that the legal challenge to the Local Plan, that was received earlier in the year, had been dismissed and that the Planning Inspector had made the decision to resume Local Plan hearings between the 9th and 17th October 2014. It was reported that following these hearings, the Inspector would be issuing a final report and in doing so declare whether or not the Local Plan Strategy was sound and could be adopted.
- 3.3 It was noted that cross boundary work was on going in relation to the Duty to Cooperate with a revised Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the District Council and Tamworth and North Warwickshire Borough Councils almost complete. A separate MOU had been agreed with Birmingham in respect of its emerging Local Plan. It was

reported that there was ongoing participation in a joint housing study being progressed by the GBSLEP. Members noted that the Joint Housing Study was one of three key pieces of evidence intended to inform the development of the GBSLEP Spatial Plan with the others being a Strategic Environmental Assessment/Sustainable Assessment and a Strategic Employment Sites study. It was noted that this work would not affect the progress of the District's own Local Plan but have implications for any subsequent review.

- 3.4 Members asked how close the District Council was to having an agreed and signed MOU with North Warwickshire. In reply it was stated that Officers were confident that this would happen soon. Under the Duty to Cooperate (DtC) it was important to keep dialogue open even if a full agreement could not be found.
- 3.5 On the question of additional housing requirements being generated by Birmingham, members asked for reassurance from the Cabinet Member that he would not agree to unnecessary housing provision where possible. Members asked whether being in the GBSLEP had meant that this cooperation was required and it was reported that it was nothing to do with being in the GBSLEP but because the District was a neighbouring Authority to Birmingham and subject to the DtC.
- 3.6 It was reported that work was continuing with Neighbourhood Planning and it was noted that Hammerwich Parish Council had applied to be designated as a neighbourhood area. Fradley & Streethay Parish Council had applied to have to have two neighbourhood areas with one as Fradley and the other as Streethay. It was also reported that a formal response had been provided to the pre-submission consultation of the Alrewas Neighbourhood Plan. It was advised that many other areas were advanced in the process to be become designated Neighbourhood Areas.
- 3.7 Members sought reassurance that there would be no delay in entering the referendum stage of Neighbourhood Plans if an area was ready and it was reported that there would not be. When asked, it was reported that it could be of advantage to hold a feedback session through the Parish Forum as a means to evaluate the process to date.
- 3.8 In regards to CIL, the Committee was informed that the consultation on the Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule had been completed on the 22nd April 2014 and representations assessed. Work resulting from the representations was being undertaken to inform the next stage which would be to develop a Draft Charging Schedule.
- 3.9 The report was noted.

4. PROGRESS ON SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS (SPD)

- 4.1 Members received a report updating progress of the SPDs and it was reported that the majority of the Historic Environment SPD had been agreed with the final section discussed at a meeting on the 3rd September. It was noted that it was hoped that the final agreement would be soon.
- 4.2 It was then reported that Cllr Mrs Stanhope had attended the last meeting of the Rural Development SPD Task Group to help consider information on flood plain matters.
- 4.3 It was asked what SPD Task Group would consider historic sites such as Wall and it was reported that it would be the Historic Environment SPD Task Group but it would not be site specific unless there was an issue but more a District wide policy.
- 4.4 The progress made to date with the respective Supplementary Planning Documents was noted.

5. HIGH SPEED 2 – PHASES 1 AND 2

- 5.1 Members received a report updating them on the Government's proposals to develop a high speed rail line. It was reported that the Select Committee stage of the Hybrid Bill's proceedings offered the opportunity to make a case before Parliament to address issues with the Bill, which covered Phase 1 of HS2.
- 5.2 It was reported that the Select Committee would consider the District Council's petition on the 14th October 2014 and it was noted that the Select Committee had recently undertaken a series of site visits including within Lichfield District. It was reported that at these site visits, the Select Committee met with interested parties including affected residents who were able to put their views across.
- 5.3 It was then reported that HS2 Limited was actively seeking to engage with petitioners to see if there was scope to address concerns raised so that petitions could potentially be withdrawn. It was noted that the District Council along with other representatives had been approached and discussions were ongoing. It was reported that a difficult decision might have to be made between agreeing a solution with HS2 Ltd knowing not all of the requested amendments would be met versus the risk of the Select Committee deciding no amendments need to be made at all.
- 5.4 It was noted that if the suggested amendments by the District Council and all the parties were duly addressed and deemed legally sound, the Select Committee could agree to that and there would be no need to appear before it.
- 5.5 The following was agreed
- (i) That the position with regards to the Hybrid Bill passing through its second reading and the establishment of a Select Committee to hear evidence from petitioning bodies be noted;
 - (ii) That the on-going dialogue taking place between HS2 Limited and petitioners in advance of planned Select Committee appearances be noted;
 - (iii) That the Cabinet Member for Economic Growth and Development keep the Committee informed of any proposals put before the District Council by HS2 Ltd aimed at satisfying its petitioning points; and
 - (iv) That in the event that the District Council appears before the Select Committee, the Cabinet Member for Economic Growth and Development report back the proceedings to the Committee.

6. COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS

- 6.1 Members received a report giving an overview of the compliments and complaints received corporately during the last financial year with more detailed analysis of those with specific relevance to the Committee.
- 6.2 It was reported that there was a three stage process for complaints and it was also noted that if someone was still not satisfied that their complaints had been dealt with, they were able to make representation to the Local Government Ombudsman who would consider the complaint.
- 6.3 It was noted that 17 complaints were received in respect of Planning and Development with most dealt with at Stage 1 and only one complaint escalated to Stage 3. It was

noted that no complaints had been passed to the Local Government Ombudsman. It was reported that the majority of the complaints focussed on the handling of planning applications and investigations into breaches of planning control.

- 6.4 It was found that overall it was considered a satisfactory number of complaints received especially due to the emotive nature of planning.
- 6.5 It was asked about the role of statutory consultees on planning applications and it was reported that they look at applications and comment within the guidelines set. Members felt that if the statutory consultee was from a County Council then elected Members of that tier of Authority should be consulted too. It was noted that there was only one elected person on the Environment Agency board.
- 6.6 The report was noted.

Mrs J. Eagland
Vice-Chairman

Economic Growth, Environment and Development (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee