

FOR: COUNCIL MEETING

14th APRIL 2015

AGENDA ITEM 8

(BUFF ENCLOSURE)

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

PRESENT

Councillors Cox (Chairman), Mrs Barnett, Mrs Boyle, Drinkwater, Mrs Eagland, Mrs Evans, Mills, Mosson, Rayner, Miss Shephard and Mrs Stanhope MBE

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors Mrs Baker (Vice-Chairman) and Smedley.

(In accordance with Council Procedure Rule No.17 Councillors Mrs Fisher and Pritchard attended the meeting).

At the meeting on the 16th June 2015 the following matters were considered:

1. CABINET FORWARD PLAN

- 1.1 The Cabinet Forward Plan had been circulated and was considered in relation to the responsibilities of the Committee. It was noted that the Strategic (Overview & Scrutiny) Committee had set up a Task group to consider the Civic function at the Council.

2. WORK PROGRAMME

- 2.1 The Work Programme had been circulated and considered. It was noted that the Chairman would soon be conducting triangulation meetings with Cabinet members to discuss what matters would be coming forward in the future which would help inform the work programme. It was reported that it was also planned, following the recent training session, for agendas to become less heavy with items, especially ones for noting which would now become briefing papers. It was agreed by the Committee that such update reports on the Local Plan and Review of the 2015 Lichfield Festivals and Events Programme.
- 2.2 Members asked for confirmation that the District Council had a policy for Affordable Housing following confusion at a recent Planning Committee and it was reported that there was and calculations for how much affordable housing a development should provide was calculated taking a number of factors into consideration including the value of the land. It was noted that the policy said that it was up to 40% of dwellings to be affordable.

3. TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 3.1 Members were reminded of the Terms of Reference for the Strategic (Overview & Scrutiny) Committee. Members noted that Cabinet Portfolio responsibilities had changes and Councillor Mrs Fisher was the Cabinet Member for Tourism including Car Parking.

4. LICHFIELD DISTRICT COUNCIL & THE LICHFIELD BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

- 5.1 The Committee received a report on the work carried out by the Lichfield Business Improvement District (BID) Steering Group to establish a BID in the City Centre, the financial impact of the proposed BID along with key milestones.
- 5.2 The concept of a BID was reported to the Committee and it was noted that it was a business led initiative in a defined centre in which the businesses vote to pay for an additional levy on top of their business rates which is used to deliver improvement projects for example marketing.
- 5.3 It was then reported that the current position of the Lichfield BID was that there was a steering group made up of business representatives including the Cabinet Member for Economy who had produced BID Business Plan for 2015-2020. It was then reported that the ballot to all rateable businesses on whether to become a BID area would commence on 31st July and would be run by the Electoral Reform Society and it was hoped for a 30% turnout to prevent any challenge.
- 5.4 The Committee then noted that if a 'Yes' result was returned all businesses within the BID area would be subject to the levy. It was also reported that the BID would then create a management board and become a Limited company.
- 5.5 The financial details of the BID were then discussed and it was reported that in total, it would generate £200k per year and £1million over the 5 year term of the BID. It was also reported that the amount of levy each business would pay would be a percentage of their rateable value with a cap of £3k. It was then reported that Cabinet would be asked to approve an upfront payment of 80% of the annual BID income which would then be recouped over the term of the BID and it was noted that this was commonplace and allowed for delivery of projects straight away.
- 5.6 It was noted that the District Council had been and would remain involved in the BID as it was a business rate payer and therefore would be subject to paying the levy but more importantly, because economic growth was a high priority for the Council.
- 5.7 Members asked why Burntwood had been mentioned in the Lichfield City BID and whether there would be an effect on trading in Burntwood. It was reported that there was nothing stopping Burntwood businesses starting a BID and the information of the Lichfield one had been sent to the Burntwood Business Crew for information. It was also noted that talks had begun with a rural area about setting up a BID. It was noted that the Council would give support to any area in the District that wished to create a BID
- 5.7 Some Members commented that they had seen BID's in action in other areas and how successful they had been and thanked Officers for their work to date on the project.
- 5.8 Members then asked whether the levy percentage could change and it was reported that it had been agreed by the BID steering group to keep it at 1.5% for the whole of the five year term however it could change if a further term was agreed. When asked it was also

noted that if a business ceased trading, the responsibility for paying the levy would remain but be transferred to whoever was responsible for paying the business rates.

5.9 The following was agreed

- (1) That the work of the Lichfield City BID Steering Group to develop a BID within the Lichfield City Centre be noted along with the content of the BID Business Plan;
- (2) That the role of the Council will play in delivering the BID ballot and entering into a Memorandum of Understanding with the BID following a successful ballot be noted;
- (3) That the role the Council will play in collecting the BID levy over a five year period be noted;
- (4) That the financial impact of the BID on Lichfield District Council be noted;
- (5) That support be given for an upfront payment of 80% of the annual BID levy income to the Lichfield BID Steering Group/successor organisation in September 2015; and
- (6) That support be given for Lichfield District Council voting in favour of a Business Improvement District.

5. RURAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

- 6.1 The Committee received a report on the Rural Development Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and noted that it was part of a suite of SPD's which supported the recently adopted Local Plan Strategy. It was noted that it had been prepared by a Member Task Group with the help of Officers and chaired by Councillor Mrs Eagland who thanked all that had been involved in its creation. It was then reported that a formal consultation was required to enable the SPD to be given due weight in the consideration of Planning applications.
- 6.2 When asked it was noted that the SPD would help Officers and the Planning Committee in determining applications of lone buildings where the applied for extension was disproportionately large than the dwelling.
- 6.3 Members welcomed the section of the SPD on 'Rural Exception Sites' and believed this would be invaluable. Members asked if there was provision to protect against losing housing stock through the Right to Buy scheme and it was noted that it was a government policy and so the District Council could not influence it however it was reported that some of the Housing Associations had challenged the scheme as they were registered charities. It was also asked if the provision of small bungalows had been considered as the percentage of older residents in the district was on the increase with no suitable housing for them. It was reported that although not specifically bungalow type dwelling but specialist housing needs were encouraged to developers.
- 6.4 Drainage and flowback was discussed especially in the Alrewas and Fradley area and it was asked for the Cabinet Member to investigate claims that the septic tanks and the National Memorial Arboretum was being emptied into the Alrewas pumping station making the smell and other issues worse. It was reported that Seven Trent Water had been contacted to no resolution.
- 6.5 It was agreed that the draft SPD on Rural Development be published for public consultation.

7. FIT FOR THE FUTURE REVIEW – CAR PARKS MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 The Committee received a report informing them of a review of the Council's Car Parks Management arrangements under the Fit for the Future Programme. The Committee noted the Project Initiation Document (PID) which was attached to the report.
- 7.2 It was asked if the review incorporated working with the Lichfield City BID and it was reported that it did and the team had been actively engaging with them.
- 7.3 Members noted that the completion of the review was for 2016 and asked if the Friarsgate development could be a factor that affected the results of the review. It was noted that Officers were already discussing car parking matters with the Friarsgate Developers and so would not be an issue.
- 7.4 Members discussed car parking in Burntwood and it was felt there was not enough Council run car parks in the area. It was asked that charging at the Burntwood car parks be considered as part of the review with a mind of it remaining free to help retail footfall.
- 7.5 It was agreed that the Project Initiation Document including the scope of the review be noted and agreed as the basis for taking the review forward

8. FIT FOR THE FUTURE REVIEW – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICE

- 8.1 The Committee received a report informing them of a review of the Council's arrangements for delivering economic development services under the Fit for the Future Programme. The Committee noted the draft Project Initiation Document (PID) which was attached to the report.
- 8.2 It was reported that it was proposed to ensure economic development was aligned with all services of the Council and be a whole Council priority. It was noted that the service was currently shared with Tamworth Borough Council.
- 8.3 Members asked if Officers were liaising with the LEP's and it was reported that it was part of the scope of the project to investigate whether delivery reflected at a local level and ensure the Council was getting something out of being in the LEP's.
- 8.4 The Committee agreed that the Project Initiation Document including the scope of the review be noted and agreed as the basis for taking the review forward

9. UPDATE REPORT ON VARIOUS PARKING MATTERS

- 9.1 Members received a report providing updated information on the operation of the District Council operated car parks and on progress with the preparation of a parking strategy for Lichfield District. Members were also informed on the current position regarding on street enforcement in the District.
- 9.2 It was reported that there had been two developments since the last update to the Committee in January 2015 which were that a parking strategy was being developed and that tat on street enforcement had changed. It was reported that on street enforcement was entirely the responsibility of Staffordshire County Council and that the

local County Councillor should be contacted with any concerns. Members felt that there were still problems with on street parking in the District and felt pressure should be put onto the County Members. It was noted that the County Council could be invited to a meeting of the Committee to discuss the matter.

- 9.3 Members discussed of parking matters and felt the size of parking bays were not big enough for modern larger vehicles. It was noted that newer built car parks including Friary Outer had taken this into account and tested to ensure the spaces were adequately sized and that older car parks could be re-lined if desired. It was also discussed that the policy for two parking spaces per dwelling in rural area were not enough impacting on the street scene. Members felt that charging disabled blue badge holders for parking could be investigated as it had previously been discussed at a Parking Board meeting and reported that overall, disabled drivers indicated that it would be acceptable to be charged as the current free parking was deemed unfair.
- 9.4 It was reported and noted that car park enforcement was now enforced by Stoke on Trent Council on behalf of the District Council and would be subject to 12 monthly reviews.
- 9.5 It was agreed that, on behalf of the Committee, Officers continue to monitor the off street parking operation in order to ensure best value and customer satisfaction.

10. END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW 2014/15 FOR DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

- 10.1 The Committee received and noted a report on the progress against the relevant activities and projects set out in the District Council's One Year Action Plan for 14/15. Targets for proposed activity and performance indicators for 2015/16 were also reported.

11. TOWNSCAPE HERITAGE (TH) PROGRAMME FOR FAZELEY AND BONEHILL

- 11.1 Members received a report providing a detailed explanation relating to the refusal of the Round One Application for Fazeley and Bonehill Townscape Heritage (TH) programme to the heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). The report also gave information relating to subsequent actions in respect of Fazeley and Bonehill Conservation Area.
- 11.2 Members noted that it had been a highly competitive bidding environment with an over subscription to the TH programme. It was reported that the main reasons for the refusal given to the District Council centred around that the HLF did not feel that the level of funding requested was not deemed sufficient enough for this size of buildings of the proposed works to achieve a positive visual impact. These buildings included Tolson's Mill and Bonehill Mill complex.
- 11.3 It was then reported that HLF had concerns if the District Council were to request a higher grant as this would mean the Council finding a larger amount of match funding and the avenues available to do this were every narrow.
- 11.4 It was asked and reported that the HLF had recommended however that both Tolson's Mill and Bonehill Mill complex would better fit the criteria of a HLF Heritage Enterprise grant which focused on helping repair costs to single buildings and not whole areas.
- 11.5 Members were disappointed that the TH application had been unsuccessful along with the HLF conclusion that there was not a strong geographical link between Fazeley and Bonehill. Members did however welcome news that other grant avenues had been

suggested by HLF as the Committee expressed their wish to see the area preserved for future generations.

11.6 Members asked if there was a way to ensure owners of listed buildings like Tolson's Mill were held to account of their responsibility to safeguard the building and it was agreed that this would be discussed with Conservation Officers. Members wished to be kept informed of any progress.

11.7 The following was agreed

(1) That the report be noted;

(2) That no further applications be made to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a Townscape Heritage in Fazeley and Bonehill Conservation Area;

(3) That Officers approach the land owners at Tolson's Mill and Bonehill Mill complexes to bring to their attention the wider funding opportunities available to them through the Heritage Lottery Fund;

(4) That Officers provide advice and guidance to those owners if applications to the Heritage Lottery Fund are taken forward; and

(5) That Officers investigate further the potential for small historic grant schemes to secure the sustainability of listed buildings within Fazeley and Bonehill Conservation Area and that any future applications to those funding sources could be supported by the Historic Buildings Grant Fund.

R. E. Cox
Chairman

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