

# **ECONOMIC GROWTH, ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE**

**19 MARCH 2019**

## **PRESENT:**

Councillors Cox (Chairman), Ball (Vice-Chair), Warfield (Vice-Chair), Mrs Baker, Mrs Boyle, Mrs Lax, Marshall and Mrs Stanhope MBE.

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

## **49 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Mrs Eagland, Drinkwater, Mrs Fisher and Smith

## **50 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Warfield notified the Committee that he would declare a disclosable pecuniary interest and would leave the room if any reference to the Lichfield Greenhill Bower was made during discussions.

## **51 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes from the previous meeting were signed as a correct record.

## **52 WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee noted that this was the last scheduled meeting of the Municipal year. Members also noted the items that would be rolling over into the next Council cycle including the review of the operation of Planning Committee.

**RESOLVED:** That the work programme be noted.

## **53 EVENTS AND FESTIVALS IN LICHFIELD CITY - ECONOMIC IMPACT**

The Committee received a report on the work that had been taken to date, as part of a commission to assess the economic impact of key events and festivals that take place in the city. It was reported that the Council delivered some of the events but most were carried out and funded by partner organisations. It was then noted that the assessment would determine the impact of the growing events and festivals were having on the city, local businesses and Council services.

The Committee discussed safety at the events and wished to know how they were managed as Members had received complaints from residents. There was concern that there could be bad press that would impact on the success of event. It was reported that there had been no incidents and that was in part due to the work of the Environmental Health team. Hot spots for bottle necking of crowds were known and ways to manage this were discussed with event organisers and partners of the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) but it was noted that access for emergency vehicles was required.

The Committee then discussed the benefits of visitors returning to the district after coming to events and it was noted that did happen and this was the positive for local businesses. When

asked, it was noted that the businesses in the BID would be surveyed as part of the wider commissioned work. It was requested that email reminders to fill out the survey be sent to maximise return.

Subsidising events was discussed and it was noted that when events began, the Council supported them as part of the normal day to day regime for example street cleaning however these events had grown and charging for these services were happening and although not well received by organisers, no subsidies were possible. It was noted that the data from the commissioned work would guide and justify any decision.

Benefits come from whether shops stay let and we get rates etc. if they closed through lack of support we would in the end lose as couldn't keep services going.

Members had concern regarding a saturation point of events where it becomes harmful to the area and only eatery/public houses prosper. Members quoted issues seen in York, Devon and Venice as examples. It was noted that this would be kept under review and the number of empty shops would be an indication to this saturation. It was noted that currently the level of empty shops were lower than the national average.

Members recognised the lack of hotel accommodation in the District and it was noted that this was being addressed but it was requested that the subject be part of the survey. It was agreed that provision would attract more visitors and potentially coach operators to do offer full weekend trips and not just quick stop offs.

The Committee noted that general operational issues would be considered by the Leisure, Parks and Waste Management (Overview & Scrutiny) Committee.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

## **54 LOCAL PLAN AND RELATED SPATIAL POLICY MATTERS UPDATE**

The Committee received a report giving an update on the Main Modifications consultation, Local Plan review, Statement of Community Involvement and Neighbourhood Plans.

It was reported that the responses received for the consultation on the Local Plan Allocations Main Modifications had been submitted to the Planning Inspector for his consideration and it was noted that the next steps would for the Inspector to finalise his report and submit it for fast checking by the Council. The Committee noted that there was no timeframe for this to happen.

The Committee went through the responses, specifically those from the Main Modifications consultation and the following observations were made.

Comments were made regarding the representation received by Birmingham City Council and there were concerns that it could be interpreted as an assumption that Lichfield District Council would take their housing requirements. It was noted however that there was a duty to cooperate but not capitulate and discussions were continuing and positive. It was noted that housing numbers had reduced over time and there could need to be some concession to prevent the Government dictating what area provided what level of housing for the greater Birmingham area. The comments made by Walsall Metropolitan Council were also noted and there were concerns as they had objected to the modifications.

The green belt was discussed further and there was consensus that although there was desire to keep it, there was nationally pressure to re draw the lines and there may be need to lose some to keep the rest. Members noted that there could be difficult decisions to make on this in the future.

Regarding the Statement of Community Involvement consultation it was asked if the request from Lichfield City Council to publish its list of consultees be reconsidered and it was agreed to look at this again and get back to Members.

Neighbourhood plans was discussed and it was agreed for the Cabinet Member to encourage Burntwood Town Council as much as possible to move forward with their plan. It was asked if any feedback from early plan adopters as this analysis may give some insight as to why other areas are not as forthcoming as hoped. It was noted that there would be a review of the CIL charging and this may help as there had been concerns over the two tier system. It was also agreed that managing expectations was required as many had been disappointed that they could not fully dictate what development happened in their area but shape instead.

**RESOLVED:** (1) That the summary of Local Plan Allocations Main Modification responses, and Council responses be noted;  
(2) That the progress associated with the Local Plan Review be noted;  
(3) That Cabinet be recommended to approve the summary of comments and officer responses in respect of the Statement of Community Involvement;  
(4) That Cabinet be recommended to approve the updated Statement of Community Involvement for adoption subject to the changes identified;  
(5) That the recent progress in relation to neighbourhood plans within Lichfield District be noted; and  
(6) That the minutes of the 19<sup>th</sup> December 2018 Local Plan Sub Group be noted.

## **55 SUSTAINABLE DESIGN SPD APPENDIX A UPDATE**

The Committee received a report on the results of the consultation on the draft revision of Appendix A of the Sustainable design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) entitled 'Space and Dwellings and Amenity Standards for all Development'.

Members welcomed the update and agreed that it would be of great help especially in Planning Committee. It was suggested that it be sent to all Parish Council Clerks as an aid in their Planning committee's also.

Members felt that there was a lack of imagination in development currently and developers do not have concerns regarding using best light available or consider which way a property is facing to get best light. It was noted that it would be difficult to enforce to that level.

When asked, it was confirmed that the legal right to light is separate and needs to be dealt with through different routes to the planning system.

**RESOLVED:** That the contents of the report be noted and Cabinet be recommended that the revised Appendix A of the Sustainable design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) entitled 'Space and Dwellings and Amenity Standards for all Development' be formally adopted by the Council.

## **56 BRS WORKING GROUP UPDATE**

The Committee received the notes from the last BRS Working Group. It was noted that engagement events had been held for both stakeholders and the public. Regarding the public event, it was reported that there were three sessions with 300 people attending with the overall feedback being positive with appreciation of views being sought by the Council.

Thanks to Chair and Vice Chairs and Members. Thanks to Officers for their support.

Thanks to former VC Drinkwater

**57 VOTE OF THANKS**

It was proposed, duly seconded and

**RESOLVED:** That the sincere thanks of the Committee be recorded to all the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen including Councillor Drinkwater as past Vice-Chairman for their work during the past year.

(The Meeting closed at 7.35 pm)

CHAIRMAN