

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

12 NOVEMBER 2018

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 Councillor Pritchard attended the meeting).

31 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

32 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were received.

33 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved and signed as a correct record. It was noted that the Environment Agency had, as yet, not come back to Members regarding their queries and it was agreed that Officers would follow this up.

34 WORK PROGRAMME

The work programme was considered by the Committee. When asked if there was scope to bring forward the review of the operation of the Planning Committee, it was noted that it was agreed to allow a full 12 months operation of the new structure before evaluating it.

RESOLVED: That the Work Programme be noted.

35 SUSTAINABLE DESIGN SPD APPENDIX A UPDATE

The Committee received a report proposing an update to Appendix A of the Sustainable Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). It was noted that the document and the standards included in it have been used in determining planning applications since its adoption in 2015 but following comments received, had been reviewed and clarification added to ensure a more consistent and transparent approach. It was noted that the amendments proposed were minor and subject to consultation.

Members felt that the diagrams added were clear and helpful especially to non-technical readers.

There was concern that using the term adequate could lead to ambiguity however it was reported that a level of flexibility was required as developments and circumstances differ from case to case, plus the document and Appendix needs to be read as a whole. It was also felt that Officers and the Planning Committee would make subjective judgements on whether the standards had been adhered to and the acceptability of proposals.

It was noted that when considering use of obscure glazing that the level of obscure glazing should be clarified to ensure it is effective to neighbouring properties. The wording 'to appropriate level' to be included in the paragraph under the title 'overlooking' at page 19 (page 27 of SPD Appendix) after the words, "...they should be obscure glazed"

Also, clarification of the word affected rather than effected to be used at paragraph 15 page 19.

- RESOLVED:** (1) That the report be noted;
- (2) That the updated Sustainable Design SPD Appendix A 'Space about Dwellings and Amenity Standards for all Developments' be referred to Cabinet for agreement to undertake public consultation as part of the review of this.

36 PLANNING ENFORCEMENT RESOURCE REVIEW

The Committee received a report advising the Committee of the current planning enforcement status (workload) and resource. It was reported that although a discretionary service, it was a vital part of planning.

Members were pleased to note how well the department was performing but had some concerns that the level of cases closed compared to the number received was reducing. It was reported that there were other factors involved including complexity of cases and some do take years to resolve and other cases are purposely kept open to allow for ongoing monitoring.

Clarification was sought as to why the number of Planning Contravention Notices from Lichfield District Council had dropped over the last two years and it was reported that these notices were for gathering information only and not imperative to the process and it may be that a different and more effective method of gaining the evidence was being used.

The Committee recognised that only with more resources could a proactive approach to enforcement take place and were reassured by the Cabinet Member that this was being considered. The Committee agreed to keep the monitoring of resources in the service under review.

- RESOLVED:** (1) That the current status and resource of the planning enforcement team be noted; and
- (2) That the implications of such resource in the context of the delivery of the Local Enforcement Plan and government policy set out in the National Planning Policy Framework remain under review.

37 ENFORCEMENT PLAN UPDATE

The Committee received a report on an update to the Planning Enforcement Plan that was dated April 2013. It was reported that the update ensured it was in accordance with the updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and good practice guidance.

It was noted that a new target to close 80% of cases within 12 weeks of their registration had been set as this was a more achievable target, subject to adequate resources. It was agreed to monitor enforcement performance using the targets set within the revised document as the benchmark going forward.

It was asked if Environmental Health could also be included in paragraph 2.4 of the Plan and this was agreed.

Members questioned whether a note be included within the Plan to highlight the seriousness of flouting the planning rules and that action would be taken where necessary.

- RESOLVED:** (1) That the contents of the report be noted; and
- (2) That the proposed updated Local Planning Enforcement Plan be approved.

38 DESIGNATION OF A NEW CONSERVATION AREA FOR DRAYTON BASSETT

The Committee received a report on the results of the public consultation on the proposals to designate a new Conservation Area in Drayton Bassett.

Members were supportive of the proposal.

- RESOLVED:** (1) That the results of the consultation be noted and support be given to the designation of a new Conservation Area in Drayton Bassett and Cabinet and Full Council be recommended to approve;
- (2) That the results of the consultation and support be given to the final appraisal and management plans and Cabinet and Full Council be recommended to approve; and
- (3) That the properties proposed for addition to the Register of Buildings of Special Local Interest be noted and these additions be recommended to Cabinet and Full Council for approval.

39 CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISALS AND MANAGEMENT PLANS

The Committee received a report on the results of the public consultation on the draft Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans for Wall Conservation Area and Wiggington Conservation Area.

The Committee were supportive of the proposals and pleased that Wall had been given status of 'special architectural or historic interest' due to its national historic importance.

- RESOLVED:** (1) That the results of the consultation and support be given to the final appraisal and management plans and Cabinet and Full Council be recommended to approve;
- (2) That the proposed boundary changes to the Conservation Areas be supported and recommended to Cabinet and Full Council for approval; and
- (3) That the properties proposed for addition to the Register of Buildings of Special Local Interest be noted and these additions be recommended to Cabinet and Full Council for approval.

40 ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE UPDATE

The Committee received a report providing an overview of Lichfield District's current economic development performance and the impact of the Council's Economic Development service's activities in this area. It was noted that economic growth was an important priority of the Strategic Plan and progress was being made due to dedicated Officer support.

It was noted and there was concern that failure of business were high but it was noted that further investigations as to why would be done with how the Council could help to prevent this. It was noted that Enterprise births were still greater than the county average. It was asked to look at the age profiles of people setting up businesses and the circumstances to why they have set them up as it is possible that they have been forced to due to redundancy and lack of jobs in their relevant field and support could be given better by reducing this issue.

It was asked if the data gathered took into account industrial development as there are problems in that sector too. It was reported that Officers were in discussions regularly with developers and were helping signpost businesses to opportunities.

It was recognised that there was a skills gap especially in the STEM sector but it was noted that it was a national problem not just a local one and jobs in these fields were not attractive to younger people and employees were not as willing to take on unskilled individuals and train them up.

RESOLVED: That the current performance of Lichfield District's economy and the actions being undertaken to support this and local business including by the District Council be noted.

41 BRS WORKING GROUP - NOTES OF MEETINGS

The notes of the recent BRS Working Group were circulated.

RESOLVED: That the information received be noted.

(The Meeting closed at 7.50 pm)

CHAIRMAN