

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

**18 SEPTEMBER 2019**

## **PRESENT:**

Councillors Cox (Chairman), Ball (Vice-Chair), S Wilcox (Vice-Chair), Binney, A Little, Marshall, Warburton and Westwood.

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

## **8 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ennis, Ho, Parton-Hughes and Ray

## **9 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor A. Little declared a personal interest in item 6 – Amendments to Local List of Buildings of Local Architectural and Historic Interest as he owned a property on the list.

## **10 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting were signed as a correct record. It was asked if the consideration of electric vehicle (EV) charging could be extended to wider areas than Lichfield City. It was confirmed that it would be discussed further in the work programme.

## **11 WORK PROGRAMME**

The work programme was considered. It was discussed and agreed to set up a task and finish group to consider Sunday car park charging. The chairman suggested that the group could also address the issue of policy in respect of EV charging points. In this regard it was noted that the city master planning exercise would be looking at EV charging options and this needed to be borne in mind.

It was noted that there had been no further information received regarding the LEP review however the Chairman would be attending the GBSLEP Scrutiny meeting and would report back if he heard anything there.

It was noted that Councillor Ray had requested a standing item on the environmental impact of economic growth in the district and it was agreed to look at this further.

Members noted the special meeting scheduled for December 2019 to consider the Master planning report.

**RESOLVED:** That the work programme be noted and updated where required.

## **12 REVIEW OF THE OPERATION OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE**

The Committee received a report setting out a 12 month review of the performance and operation of the revised Planning Committee arrangements. It was reported that changes were made including the reduction to 15 Members on the Committee, the use of the

Committee Room rather than the Chamber when lower public attendance is anticipated and three further Members trained to act as replacements if vacancies were to arise.

On the issue of meetings, it was asked if these could be held outside of Frog Lane and across the district as it would make it more accessible and desirable for the public to attend. It was reported that there would be many factors to take into account including costs of hiring venues and potential loss of money if the meetings were to be cancelled which has happened in the past. It was also noted that there could be logistic issues in moving equipment if required along with access to case files.

The location of meetings at Frog Lane was then discussed and the Chairman of the Planning Committee, Councillor Marshall stated that he preferred the Council Chamber as there were no concerns regarding seating for the public that attend. However this was not withstanding that the presentation and audio equipment there needed updating to be more useful for the public attending. The Principle Planning Officer was asked his thoughts on the rooms used to hold Committee meetings and he reported that the Committee Room did make for better discussions but meetings were more formal in the Council Chamber which was better for consideration of larger planning applications.

The number of Committee members on the Planning Committee was considered and it was agreed that 15 Members worked well and was the optimum number. It was also agreed that attendance was important and this should be emphasised to the Committee Members. It was agreed that attendance also applied to planning training. It was asked if there was some merit into considering sharing training opportunities with neighbouring authorities and it was agreed to investigate this further.

The cycle of meetings was discussed and there was some feeling that moving to four weekly had made the agendas congested and applications were being considered quicker than was appropriate. It was reported that the previous three weekly cycle put more pressure on officers as there was no break in producing reports for the next Committee agenda. It was also noted that there was pressure on the Parish Council's to consider applications within their meeting cycles.

The Cabinet Member agreed to take all comments on board and investigate points raised further.

**RESOLVED:** (1) That the size of the Planning Committee remain at 15 Members; and

(2) That the layout of the Committee Room be given further consideration to maximise capacity of the public gallery, where possible, so it may continue to be used on occasion, whilst continuing with use of the Council Chamber for the majority of Committees particularly when larger public galleries are anticipated.

(3) That consideration be given to the potential enhancement of the presentation equipment available within the Council Chamber going forward.

### **13 AMENDMENTS TO LOCAL LIST OF BUILDINGS OF LOCAL ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC INTEREST**

The Committee received a report on the results of the public consultation on the proposed amendments to the Council's List of Buildings of Local Architectural and Historic Interest and seeking support for the final, amended proposals and their recommendations for approval to the Cabinet and Full Council.

The Committee was pleased to note that this was a phased programme to include areas outside the Conservation Areas to ensure all heritage assets were included on the list. As the programme would be based on parishes, it was suggested taking it to Parish Forum as that

input could be invaluable. When asked, it was confirmed that Development Management Officers did check if a building was one or should be considered to be added when planning applications were received.

It was also noted and agreed that War memorials would be removed from the local list as they were designated as listed buildings.

The Committee also noted the high response rate from the consultation and the valuable comments made. The Committee were also pleased to see the number of properties linked to St Matthews Hospital in Burntwood as it was a great example of building in the Victorian era. It was also agreed that it was correct to remove the Squash Club at Spinney Lane as there had been a great loss in architectural merit through redevelopment.

There was some discussion regarding tenants of properties responding and it was asked if this was appropriate as they were not the owners. It was reported that the consultation was sent to properties addressed to owner/occupier and it was agreed that this should be made clearer in the future that it is for owners/landlords or management companies only.

**RESOLVED:** That the Committee notes the results of the consultation, supports the final proposed amendments to the Council's List of Buildings of Local Architectural and Historic Interest and recommend they be submitted to the Cabinet and Full Council for approval.

## **14 LOCAL PLAN UPDATE**

The Committee received a report updating the Committee on the Local Plan and it was reported that the period for legal challenge to the Local Plan Allocations had passed with none received and so the Council now had a complete and up to date Local Plan.

There was significant debate regarding infrastructure and the Committee had concerns that there was greater need to address this and specifically before development. There were concerns with not just highway pressures but also environmental issues including air quality and the impact this was having on residents as well as health provision and access to basic retail. Highway infrastructure was discussed further and there were concerns that the County Council did not take into account the knock on effect of numerous developments when giving advice and their representations to the Development Management department. It was suggested that the Committee may wish to invite SCC Highways representatives to a future meeting to discuss their rationale in these situations. It was noted that CIL could be used if required to help develop infrastructure if required. Rail infrastructure was debated and it was noted that without good rail access, economic benefits would be lost to other areas. It was reported that the leader and Deputy Leader of the Council would be meeting with West Midlands Rail representatives to discuss this further.

The green belt was discussed and it was noted that there may be a need to lose it in some areas and designate new areas to accommodate growth or new settlements. The Committee stated that the Local Plan Sub Group had received much information on this area and had worked hard in producing documents regarding this subject.

Housing growth was then discussed and it was noted that the need for housing was growing with the population and without housing it would be a loss of Council tax which was greatly needed.

Officers were thanked for their continued hard work on Spatial Policy. Special mention was given to Ashley Baldwin, Spatial Policy Manager as it was reported that he would be leaving the Authority to take up a new post. The Committee expressed their gratitude for all his advice and input to the Committee and noted his presence would be missed.

**RESOLVED:** (1) That the progress associated with the Local Plan Review be noted;

- (2) That the potential scale and distribution of growth identified within the report be noted;
- (3) That the minutes of the Local Plan Sub Group be noted; and
- (4) That the consultation proposals be recommended to Cabinet

(The Meeting closed at 7.40 pm)

CHAIRMAN