

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

**9 JUNE 2020**

## **PRESENT:**

Councillors Cox (Chairman), Ball (Vice-Chair), S Wilcox (Vice-Chair), Binney, D Ennis, Gwilt, Ho, A Little, Marshall, Parton-Hughes, Ray, Warburton and Westwood.

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

## **9 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

## **10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors D. Ennis, Ho and Westwood declared a personal interest in item 5, Local Plan Update as members of Burntwood Town Council and members of the Burntwood Action Group were known to them.

Councillor Cox declared a personal interest in item 5, Local Plan Update as he knew individuals who had submitted representations.

Councillor Marshall declared a personal interest in item 5, Local Plan Update as a member of Armitage with Handsacre Parish Council and as he knew a number of individuals who had submitted representations.

Councillors Ball and Ray declared a personal interest in item 5, Local Plan Update as members of Lichfield City Council and as they knew a number individuals who had submitted representations.

Councillor Warburton declared a personal interest as a member of Fradley and Streethay Parish Council and as he knew r a number of individuals who had submitted representations.

Councillor S Wilcox declared a personal interest item 5, Local Plan Update as her son is a project manager for the Highways Agency

Councillor Parton-Hughes declared a personal interest in item 5, Local Plan Update as a member of Fazeley Parish Council and as he knew a number of individuals who had submitted representations.

Councillor A. Little declared a personal interest as a member of Staffordshire County Council.

All members of the Committee declared a personal interest in item 5, Local Plan review as they knew other Members and former Members of Lichfield District Council who had submitted representations.

## **11 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the previous meeting were circulated. It was noted that affordable housing was under the remit of Community, Housing and Health (Overview & Scrutiny) Committee. It was also noted that there had been reference to the need for play equipment in the south of Burntwood and not just the north of the area.

RESOLVED: That subject to the agreed amendments, the minutes be approved as a correct record.

## **12 WORK PROGRAMME**

The work programme was considered. It was asked if an item could be added that considered details of a GBSLEP grant made available to research what could be done to develop Burntwood.

It was also noted that there was still no update to the LEP review however it was agreed to keep the item on the work programme.

It was identified that there was overlap with CIL/S106 and Affordable Housing matters being considered by the Community, Housing & Health O&S Committee so there may be a need for a joint Task Group or Committee. It was noted that the Chairman of EGED O&S had already spoken to the Chairman of CHH O&S Committee on this matter. It was requested that scoping of the item be undertaken by the Committees to ensure a clear focus on what issues members wished to see addressed.

It was then requested that an item be added to the work programme that considered the impact on the local economy of the Covid-19 pandemic. It was noted that recovery would be cross council and it may be advantageous to discuss further at the Overview & Scrutiny Coordinating Group to prevent any duplication. It was confirmed that there would be no omission from the work programme as a consequence of this and the Committee would still consider matters relevant to its remit linked to CV19 going forward.

RESOLVED: The work programme was noted and would be updated as agreed.

Councillor Ho left the meeting at this point due to technical issues.

## **13 LICHFIELD CITY CENTRE MASTERPLAN**

The Committee received a report on the final draft Masterplan for Lichfield City Centre submitted to the Council by consultants David Lock Associates. The plan included changes agreed as a result of comments made as a result of consultation and feedback on the draft. These changes did not alter the overall direction of the Masterplan or its contents but either added or deleted details where relevant.

The plan showed four key development sites complemented by suggested strategies which would apply across the whole of the city centre including in respect of public realm and car parking. If the plan was duly approved and accepted by the Council, it was explained how further work would be needed to implement its provisions. It would be for the Council to decide what its priorities are in terms of the phasing of any work and which sites (including any others that might emerge in due course) should come forward before others. The report accompanying the plan outlined a suggested approach to implementation including identifying specific outputs and outcomes, the commissioning of key areas of work and reporting and governance arrangements.

Members were asked to consider the role that they wished the Council to play in making the Masterplan happen including in regards to funding. It was noted that a borrowed sum of up to £45m had been approved for property investment in order to achieve a return for the Council, but revised guidance from CIPFA and an increase in Public Loan Board interest rates had impacted on the original strategy. However it was advised that Councils could borrow to shape their place and views were sought.

In principle, it would be deemed appropriate to use any of this to fund any part of development as set out in the Masterplan if appropriate to do so. There was much debate from the Committee with differing views given. Some felt that without full costings or business cases for each of the sites, it would be wrong to commit at this stage. There was also concern that this agreed sum would be committed to a city masterplan with no consideration to the needs of the wider district. There were also views that supporting investment in the Masterplan would give greater control and oversight and all Members were in agreement that a cross party project board would be essential and welcomed.

There were further concerns that the climate now being experienced due to Covid-19 would impact and potentially change what would be achievable from the Masterplan. It was discussed that retail and other business may operate differently post pandemic and have different needs. Some felt that work on progressing the Masterplan should be postponed and reviewed to take this into account whilst others felt that the masterplan might itself be challenged by the events of CV19. Other Committee Members however felt the masterplan was adaptable and the details were still forthcoming where consideration of the changing environment could be dealt with.

There was a request that Cabinet be recommended to consider implications of Covid-19 before proceeding further with the Masterplan. There was also a request to not endorse the Masterplan due to the complexities such as funding and Covid-19 impact as discussed.

The Committee took a vote on whether to agree with the recommendations as set out in the report or not.

*At the meeting the Chairman was advised and announced that the vote was four for the recommendations and 5 against. However after reviewing the video of the meeting, the Monitoring Officer agreed that the votes cast were six for the recommendations and five against and that this result be recorded as the outcome of the vote in the Minutes of the meeting for approval by the Committee as a correct record.*

- RESOLVED:
- (1) That the City Centre Masterplan be endorsed and its adoption be recommended to Cabinet as the basis of shaping the future development of Lichfield City Centre;
  - (2) That the proposed approach of moving the proposals in the Masterplan forward, including bringing forward a Delivery Strategy be endorsed;
  - (3) That the proposal to bring forward a Public Realm Strategy as the first in a series of strategies to be produced and implemented be endorsed;
  - (4) That the undertaking of a capacity study for Council owned car parks to inform a Car Parking Strategy be endorsed; and
  - (5) That the proposal to undertake preliminary work to inform work on a development brief for the Birmingham Road site be endorsed.

## **14 LOCAL PLAN REVIEW UPDATE**

The Committee received a report giving an update to the Local Plan Review which also provided complete details of representations received to the preferred options consultation together with a suggested response to each of the issues raised. The report also set out the progress that had been made on the collection and updating of the evidence base along with next steps for the evidence base work still to be completed and potential timelines revisions

that may be necessary. An update on Government Guidance in relation to the impact of Covid 19 on Statements of Community Involvement was also included as part of the report and that as a result it was indicated that a review of the Council's current Statement of Community Involvement was considered appropriate

The Committee wished to express their gratitude to the Spatial Policy team for their hard work in collating and analysing the data and evidence base for this and other previous reports.

Representations received in respect of the Preferred Options version of the Local Plan were discussed. Both Fazeley Ward Councillors (Councillor Gwilt and Councillor Parton-Hughes) were present as Committee Members and wished to express their concerns on behalf of residents in respect of the amount of development proposed in Fazeley. These concerns centred on the proposed allocation of 800 houses on land at Fazeley and the loss of land currently designated as greenbelt for the proposal. They felt that the officer responses given in the report to the representations received on this matter were not adequate and lacked justification for the proposed development. It was noted that neither Fazeley Parish Council nor Tamworth Borough Council were in favour of these proposals and the impact on the infrastructure would greatly affect those authorities. Questions on behalf of residents were read out and it was agreed that the Cabinet Member would receive them after the meeting to give a detailed response. . It was noted that the purpose of this report was to provide an update on Local Plan preparation progress. That a plan must be prepared and meet the needs of the area, all representations and representations received would be carefully considered and that therefore further work on the Local Plan remains to be done before the plan reaches a definitive position.

Affordable housing was also discussed and it was advised that the Local Liberal Democrats party had made a submission regarding the 40% affordable housing target in the plan which was considered to be aspirational and therefore was usually negotiated down due to viability. They therefore proposed that there should be a compulsory minimum affordable housing requirement of 35%. It was reported that the criteria from government on developers to produce 'first homes' may have an impact on further affordable targets and that would have to be taken into account. It was noted that the Preferred Options version of the plan identifies 35% as the current affordable housing requirement and that therefore this figure is on the radar.

- RESOLVED: (1) That the updated record and analysis of the representations received following the consultation on the Preferred Options version of the Local Plan be noted
- (2) That the update on progress of the local plan evidence base and the revised timelines for collection and completion of the evidence due to the impacts of Covid 19 pandemic; and the relevant steps being taken to prepare the regulation 19 publication version of the Local Plan be noted; and
- (3) That the review of the Lichfield District Statement of Community involvement (SCI) to ensure that it is consistent with new government guidance on social distancing be supported.

(The Meeting closed at 8:33pm)

CHAIRMAN