

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 attended the meeting).

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2 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.

Councillors 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 knew member individuals who had submitted representations.

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

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

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

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

3 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 of 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.

4 WORK PROGRAMME

The work programme was considered. It was asked if an item could be added that considered details of a 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 discussed that there was overlap with CIL/S106 and Affordable Housing matters with 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 had already spoken to the Chairman of CHH O&S on this matter. It was requested that scoping of the item was undertaken to ensure focus could be given with a clear outcome.

It was then requested that an item be added to the work programme that considered the impact on the local economy due to 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 and the Committee would consider matters relevant to its remit.

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

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

5 LICHFIELD CITY CENTRE MASTERPLAN

The Committee received a report on the final draft Masterplan for Lichfield City Centre. It was reported that there had been a capacity analysis of the centre's car parks. It was also reported that although financial information to carry out the development brief would have been advantageous, the timescales as set and the current climate had not made this possible however they would be included in the Cabinet report when considered at that meeting.

It was reported that the plan would be delivered as separate sites all with their own development briefs and was hoped that the public realm element would be first. It was also reported that a Project Board would be created to oversee the whole project with O&S representation on that board, it was noted that social distancing and high street shopping post Covid-19 would have to be taken into account.

It was noted that a borrowed sum of £45m had been approved for property investment and views were sought as to whether, 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 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 the Masterplan should be postponed and reviewed to take this into account. Other Committee Members however felt the masterplan was adaptable and the detail 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 has agreed that the votes cast were six for the recommendations and five against and that result will stand when these minutes are agreed as a correct record at the Committee's next meeting.

- 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.

6 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 related to Statements of Community Involvement was also included.

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 and the Preferred Options were discussed and there was concern on the impact of the amount of development proposed in Fazeley. 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. These concerns centred on the proposed 800 houses and loss of greenbelt. It was felt that the responses given in the report

were not adequate and without showing the evidence. 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 for the Cabinet Member to receive them after the meeting to give comprehensive answers.

Affordable housing was discussed and it was noted that a representation from the Lib Dem party had suggested that it was noted that the 40% target was aspirational and most times negotiated down due to viability however there should be a reduction to 35% but for it to be compulsory. 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 however 35% was on the radar for the preferred options.

- 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 Time Not Specified)

CHAIRMAN