



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE, SAFETY AND GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 23rd AUGUST 2022

PRESENT: Councillor S Goodall (Chair), Councillors R Ford, M Cook, A Cooper, S Daniels, J Harper, S Peple, B Price and P Turner

CABINET: Councillor Stephen Doyle

The following officers were present: Richard Powell (Planning Policy and Delivery Team Leader) and Jo Hutchison (Democratic Services, Scrutiny and Elections Officer)

28 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

29 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of 6th July 2022 meeting were approved as a correct record.

(Moved by Councillor A Cooper and seconded by Councillor P Turner)

30 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

31 UPDATE FROM THE CHAIR

There was no further update from the Chair on any items not otherwise covered on the Agenda.

32 RESPONSES TO REPORTS OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE SAFETY & GROWTH COMMITTEE

None.

33 CONSIDERATION OF MATTERS REFERRED TO THE INFRASTRUCTURE SAFETY & GROWTH COMMITTEE FROM CABINET OR COUNCIL

No new items had been referred.

34 STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

The Portfolio Holder for Skills, Planning, Economy and Waste introduced the Report in relation to the adoption and publication of a new Statement of Community Involvement and Local Development Scheme for the Committee's consideration prior to the report being put before Cabinet.

The Committee commented and sought clarifications in the following areas:

1. Whether the Council would sign up to the plain English campaign as part of this process. The Portfolio Holder reported that activities to sign up to the Plain English Campaign could be considered separately from this item.
2. How engagement with the widest public audience could be achieved to ensure that local people had an opportunity to comment on proposals as part of this process and whether it would be possible to directly contact residents living locally to sites identified for major development. The Planning Policy and Delivery Team Leader reported that the advice of the Communications team would be sought to assist on reaching the widest audience and in terms of directly engaging with residents local to major developments, this would be something to take forward later in the process.
3. In the planning application process, currently when an item was considered by the Planning Committee there was a maximum of 2 public speakers supporting (including the agent / applicant) and 2 public speakers objecting to an application (in each case a speaker was limited to 3 minutes). Could consideration be given to increasing the number of speakers to ensure full public engagement? The Portfolio Holder supported the proposal to ensure public participation and had previously identified that the 3 minute duration could be reviewed.
4. In the Local Development Scheme, there was no explicit reference to joint working with the relevant highway authorities (Staffordshire County Council and Warwickshire County Council) and it was agreed that they would be specifically named.

The Committee considered the recommendations within the report. Recommendations 1 and 2 were not approved as the comments above were relevant to them. The Committee raised one further recommendation.

RESOLVED that the Committee recommend to Cabinet

1. that authority be delegated to the Planning Policy and Delivery Team Leader to make any minor typographical amendments to the documents before or after publication; and
2. that Cabinet investigate the opportunity of increasing the time and number of speakers at Planning Committee.

(Moved by Councillor R Ford and seconded by Councillor B Price)

35 LOCAL PLAN ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION

The Portfolio Holder for Skills, Planning, Economy and Waste introduced the Report to seek the Committee's endorsement of the proposals and recommendations to be made to Cabinet in respect of the launch of an issues and options consultation as part of the development of the new local plan for Tamworth.

The Committee commented and sought clarifications in the following areas:

1. The Committee reiterated the importance of as much community engagement and consultation as possible during this process. The Committee suggested that as many different means of engagement be utilised as possible to support community involvement and understanding of the process, including digital methods.
2. It was noted that it was important for members of the public to understand that this was the time for their involvement on proposals and that the document needed to be transparent in terms of the scale of housing need in the Borough which under the Standard Method demonstrated a need to deliver 2961 homes by 2043, and whether the figures could be highlighted earlier in the document.
3. Clarification was sought on whether the figures for average house price in the Borough were up to date and it was agreed that this would be reviewed and the report would be updated to include the date for the relevant figure.
4. In terms of the 10% Biodiversity Net Gain statement at 6.1.3 whether it would be possible to include within the Local Plan a statement to not unnecessarily remove trees or hedgerows from boundaries of our developments. It was noted that this was an item for discussion later on the committee's agenda as well.
5. In terms of the green belt, it was reported that whilst this had to be included within the options, it would be the last resort.
6. The Committee queried whether in terms of affordable homes and the amount of these on qualifying developments whether there should be further evidence / guidance available to help the public decide on the balance between affordable homes versus additional infrastructure given limited resources. It was reported that at this early stage, the Council was seeking the initial views of the public in relation to this balance and that further evidence would be made available through the process.
7. The Committee considered that the wording at 6.2.6 (i) needed further consideration and clarification. The Committee questioned the current wording and whether it accurately reflected the current position. The Portfolio Holder clarified that this point related to permanent sites, and that this would be reworded. It was agreed that, following relevant updates to explain the different types of provision (permanent traveller sites and migratory traveller sites), the wording of this document would be re-circulated to the Committee members to check the wording.
8. Whether there could be further consideration given to building houses for rent and for affordable rental property in the Borough, and whether there was evidence on the need within the Borough for more affordable rental properties. It was reported that a joint assessment with Lichfield District

Council had been undertaken in 2019 which did identify a large need for further affordable homes.

RESOLVED that the:

1. Committee endorsed the recommendation for Cabinet to approve the issues and options public consultation based on the document set out in Appendix A with the amendments as discussed by the Committee; and
2. Committee endorsed the recommendation for Cabinet to delegate authority to the Assistant Director – Growth and Regeneration to make any final typographical and formatting amendments to the document prior to publication.

(Moved by Councillor R Ford and seconded by Councillor M Cook)

36 PETITION TO STOP THE NETTING OF HEDGES IN TAMWORTH

The Chair reported that following the Committee's consideration of this matter at its meeting of 6th July 2022 and the queries raised by the Committee about the use of pre-commencement conditions, he had received further information from the Assistant Director. In summary, the inclusion of pre-commencement conditions required the consent of the developer, and there was concern that developers may not agree such conditions and could appeal them.

The Chair reported that an alternative suggestion for the Committee to consider would be to enhance the Validation Criteria which the Council used for planning applications. This criteria must be complied with by applications at the start of the process. The Chair highlighted that there was currently a Council consultation underway (closing on 20 September 2022) with regard to the Validation Criteria for planning applications. Consideration could be given to the inclusion of a compliance method statement as part of the submission by relevant applications.

The Committee discussed the type of wording which could be considered for inclusion in any updated Validation Criteria and considered the Guidance available on the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) website. It was noted that the precise wording for such criteria would require the input of the county ecologist.

RESOLVED that the Committee recommend to Council that the Planning Validation Criteria is reviewed and reference is made to include the RSPB Guidance on hedges and netting in consultation with the County ecologist.

(Moved by Councillor S Goodall and seconded by Councillor S Peuple)

37 FORWARD PLAN

There were no further items identified from the Forward Plan for consideration by the Committee.

38 WORKING GROUP UPDATES

Councillor B Price reported that there was no update at this time on the Facilities for HGV Drivers working group.

The Chair reported that he planned to meet with the Chair / Vice-Chair of the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee to discuss which Committee was best placed to take forward any further scrutiny work on the migrant travelling community item.

39 INFRASTRUCTURE SAFETY & GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

The Committee discussed the work plan, and utilisation of certain buildings within the Borough was raised. It was noted that the Corporate Scrutiny Committee had an item on Asset Management Strategy on its work plan and the Chair would liaise with the Chair of Corporate Scrutiny to minimise any areas of duplication.

The Committee updated it's work plan as follows:

Infrastructure, Safety and Growth Scrutiny Work Plan

Work Plan	
DATE	SUBJECT
14 September 2022	Net Zero – baseline reporting
14 September 2022	Future High Street Fund
11 October 2022	Amington local centre
11 October 2022	Dual Stream (recycling service) quarterly update
Quarterly updates	Future High Street Fund
Quarterly updates	Dual Stream (recycling service) updates
Quarterly	Reset & Recovery updates
Date to be confirmed	Council Housing Repairs Policy
Date to be confirmed	Review of policy / engagement with stakeholders relating to migrant travelling community
Date to be confirmed	Fire Safety Update
Date to be confirmed	Town Hall
Date to be confirmed	Funding of public toilets (link to HGV working group)
Date to be confirmed	Strategy for older buildings
Date to be confirmed	Review of Taxi Licensing Policy – Points System
Date to be confirmed	CCTV update

Working Groups		
Topic	Possible WG Members	Target IS&G Com meeting date
Review of policy / engagement relating to migrant travelling community		
Facilities for HGV Drivers in Tamworth	Cllrs B Price (WG chair) Cllrs S Daniels and M Cook	
Transport integration	Cllrs R Ford (Chair), A Cooper, S People and P Turner	

**Upcoming Infrastructure, Safety and Growth Scrutiny Committee
Meetings**

Meeting dates:

14 September 2022

11 October 2022

22 November 2022

18 January 2023

23 March 2023

Chair