



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE, SAFETY AND GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 19th FEBRUARY 2024

PRESENT: Councillor C Dean (Chair), Councillors B Clarke, R Claymore, J Harper, B Price, R Pritchard, L Smith and P Turner

CABINET: Councillor Samuel Smith

The following officers were present: Richard Powell (Planning Policy and Delivery Team Leader), Laura Massey (Planning, Policy & Delivery Officer), Leanne Costello (Senior Scrutiny and Democratic Services Officer) and Tracey Smith (Democratic Services Assistant)

74 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J Jones.

75 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 17th January 2024 were approved and signed as a correct record.

(Moved by Councillor B Clarke and seconded by Councillor L Smith)

76 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

77 UPDATE FROM THE CHAIR

There was none.

78 RESPONSES TO REPORTS OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE SAFETY & GROWTH COMMITTEE

The Chair update the Committee that they attended Cabinet on the 1st February 2024 to present the recommendation made by the Committee on the 17th January, around ending plastic pollution, to look at the feasibility of a trial to strategically site some dual use bins around the town with ongoing

communications to explain and encourage the correct use This was approved. It was be diarised on the workplan to get an update on this.

They also attended Cabinet to share the three recommendations made by the Committee around the Future High Street Fund Project, after consideration of the recommendations it was agreed that a written response would be provided. Once this is received it would be shared with Members. It has been agreed that the Chair can attend the Board Meetings as a non-voting Member.

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

There were none.

80 UPDATE ON FIRE SAFETY ACROSS COUNCIL ASSETS

The Chair introduced the report of the Assistant Director, Assets to provide an update on the Council's approach to fire safety across its assets. The Assistant Director was unable to attend but the Committee were asked if there any questions that they would like taking away for the Officers. The Chair had a question around the legal/risk implications but would contact the Officer about this.

RESOLVED that the Committee:

Note and endorsed the contents of the report.

(Moved by Councillor B Clarke and seconded by Councillor L Smith)

81 LOCAL PLAN PROGRESSION OPTIONS

The Chair welcomed the Portfolio holder for Housing and Planning, Councillor S Smith, the Planning Policy and Delivery Team Leader, Richard Powell and the Planning Policy and Delivery Officer Laura Massey. The Portfolio Holder introduced the report to seek Committee endorsement of the recommendations to be made to Cabinet for approval for the revised approach to the delivery of a new local plan for Tamworth resulting from Government's proposed changes to the planning system, and for the publication of associated documents and highlighted the following before handing over to the Officers –

- The new system referred to in the report relates to the new rules in place for the local plan which is part of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill
- The current local plan was adopted in 2016 and covers the period up to March 2031.
- In 2018 the Government introduced legislation which requires all local plans to be reviewed every 5 years.

- In 2020 Tamworth Borough Council took a review of their local plan and determined that a new local plan was required.
- The current timelines stands as - the 'issues and options' consultation was undertaken about a year ago. The 'preferred options' consultation would be due at the beginning of this year which will be discussed as part of the options.
- The submission date for the draft local plan is currently at the end of 2025.
- The current transitional arrangements however require the submission to be by June 2025 with the plan being adopted by the end of December of 2026 so our current timeline, means our plan would be submitted after the submission deadline.

The Planning Policy Team Leader summarised the five option that were Identified in the plan noting that option 4, to update the existing plan now and do a new plan under the new system later, was the preferred option of the local Plan Working Group.

Upon further investigation Officers believed that this would require a similar amount of work as creating a new plan, and the updated plan would only have approximately six years left (National Policy states that new local plans should have at least 15 years to run at the point of adoption) and therefore that this was not the best option.

Option 5 was now considered the best option. This option was to get a new plan in place under the current arrangements by condensing the timetable by omitting a non-statutory stage of the process to submit the plan by the June 2025 deadline. Legal advice had been sought and this is not unlawful, however there was a small risk of challenge from the plan not being 'positively prepared' but that this unlikely. The Planning Inspectorate also advised that omitting the step would not be an issue as long as the Council is clear that they are not including this stage. It was highlighted that there was a possibility of the Government pushing back deadlines which may give them time for further consultation.

The Committee made the following comments/observations and asked the following questions:

1. What does the consultation period that is being omitted look like?
The Officer confirmed that there are two statutory stages of consultation, the first stages is the 'issues and options' stage and outlines what the plan might include. The second stage is sharing of the draft plan. The stage which is being omitted is the 'preferred options' stage, where the Council's preferred approach is put out for consultation for 6 weeks for comments. However, due to limited available options, the Councils plan was already quite focussed at the 'issues and options' stage.
2. Are there any guidelines from the Government on expected timescales?
It was confirmed that they are expecting more information over the course of the year but no specific dates.
3. Clarification over the resources table on Page 28 and noting that the reports states that the team has limited capacity, whether there was any plan in place if there were any resource issues?

Officers confirmed that this is the percentage of Officers time that is stated in the report is the time that it is expected that they would be working on the project. It is not 100% due to other commitments outside of the project. The limited resources referred to permanent staff and there is currently also a temporary member of staff in place until June 2025. It was also noted that by removing the preferred options part of the process this would help with workloads. There would also be consultants used to support the project where required.

4. Whether the cost of consultants had been worked out?

The Officer highlighted that the report showed an estimate cost of approximately £375,000 for the project and that there £215,759 in reserve from previous years underspend, but that a policy change may be required for 2025/2026 to cover this.

5. Assuming Cabinet approval is given when would work start?

Officers confirmed that they were already working on evidence gathering for the project.

RESOLVED that Committee endorsed the two following recommendations to Cabinet to :

1. Approve the revised approach to the development of the new local plan for Tamworth; and
2. Approve the publication of the updated Local Development Scheme and Statement of Community Involvement.

(Moved by Councillor L Smith and seconded by Councillor B Clarke)

82 FORWARD PLAN

There were no new items identified.

83 WORKING GROUP UPDATES

Migrant Travelling Community.

There was no update to share however the Chair congratulated Officers on how recent travellers within Tamworth had been dealt with

Facilities for HGV Drivers.

Councillor Price apologised that due to illness he had not picked this up and noted that due to Committee changes there were now only two Members on the group. Councillor Pritchard volunteered to join this group.

84 INFRASTRUCTURE SAFETY & GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

The Chair confirmed that the next meeting was on the 21st March 2024 and advised the Committee that it was proposed that the next update of the Future High Street Fund be removed from the agenda as it was being considered by all Members at Full Council on the 27th February. The Committee agreed. The chair confirmed that they were expecting a Community Safety Partnership update, a CCTV update and the Dual Stream recycling Service Update.

It was highlighted to the Committee that the scoping form for the Bulky Waste item had been shared and that any comments could be emailed to add to the form with a view to this being added to the workplan.

It was requested that the Committee look at whether they could add any item to the workplan around Potholes and trees in the Borough and that representatives from County be invited on these issues. The Chair highlighted that Corporate Scrutiny had requested an update from Officers within the Council on trees within the Borough and that these could possibly be looked at together. It was agreed that a scoping document would be circulated for these items for more information before Officers were invited.

Chair