



Place Overview
Committee

22nd March 2018

11.00 am

Item

3

Public

**MINUTES OF THE PLACE OVERVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 1
FEBRUARY 2018
10.00 AM - 12.15 PM**

Responsible Officer: Julie Fildes
Email: julie.fildes@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 257723

Present

Councillor Gwilym Butler (Chairman)
Councillors Julian Dean, Rob Gittins, Simon Harris, Dan Morris, William Parr and
Harry Taylor

22 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Jonny Keeley. Councillor Hannah Fraser attended as substitute for Councillor Keeley.

23 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None were declared.

24 Minutes of the Meeting held on 7 December 2017

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7th December 2017 were agreed as a correct record.

25 Public Question Time

There were no questions from members of the public.

26 Member Question Time

There were no questions from members of Council.

27 20s Plenty

The Highways, Transport and Environment Commissioning Manager gave a presentation to Members on the Council's 'Approach to implementing 20mph Speed Restrictions in Shropshire' [copy attached to the signed Minutes]. The presentation outlined

- the benefits of a 20mph speed restriction;

- a summary of the Department for Transport Guidance;
- the current approach;
- the present situation regarding implementation and enforcement; and
- the key considerations.

The Highways, Transport and Environment Commissioning Manager advised Members that the Council had based its current approach on the implementation of 20mph speed restriction on the Department for Transport Guidance Note. This had been approved by the Portfolio Holder and embedded in the Shropshire Council's Road Safety Policy, which was based upon supporting the delivery of appropriate, proportionate and achievable traffic management interventions. He continued that the road network in the County was diverse and included some medieval street layouts. All applications for speed limit reductions were considered on an individual basis and relied on local communities requesting and supporting the change. 20mph speed restrictions were already in force outside schools and in residential areas where community support had been demonstrated. He added that during the planning process Section 106 Agreements could be utilised to implement reduced speed limits on streets in new residential developments where it was appropriate to do so.

Members noted that there was a cost implication related to changing speed limits. The cost was met from the Integrated Transport Block Capital Grant, which was externally funded. The budget also had to fund other traffic management demands and demand was always considerably greater than the available budget. The Highways, Transport and Environment Commissioning Manager continued that his department received approximately one hundred requests a year for changes to speed limits but only had the finance to deliver approximately twelve. Many of the applications received were rejected due to alternative traffic calming measures being more appropriate. He added that it was important that communities understood that speed limit reduction was not the only solution to traffic problems.

Professor Whitelegg was invited to address Members on behalf of the '20's Plenty' Campaign Group. He observed that as a Public Health measure supported by National Public Health Bodies, fifty English and Scottish Local Authorities had implemented a 20mph speed limit in place of the National 30mph limit. He continued that this issue was considered to be of public health interest as it led to the reduction of vehicle pollution through engines running more smoothly, and a reduction in collisions, citing that for every 1% reduction in speed there was a corresponding 5% reduction in collisions. Members were asked to disregard an article which had appeared in the Telegraph newspaper and had misquoted evidence from Bath and North East Somerset Council.

In response to a Members question about enforcing speed limits, the Portfolio Holder for Transport explained that the Police only supported a reduction in speed limits where there was sufficient community support for the change to be self-enforcing. Members commented that all roads had existing speed limits and law abiding drivers would observe these limits regardless of where they were set. Members expressed concern that few new developments had 20mph speed limits imposed and that sites of community concern were not being addressed as part of the current scheme and queried whether the benefits of lowering the speed limit had been financially

quantified. Members accepted that reducing speed limits relied on changing public behaviour in the same way as drink driving had become socially unacceptable.

A Member noted that the Council was undertaking place shaping work for Shrewsbury and asked if the Town Council supported reducing speed limits. The Highways, Transport and Environment Commissioning Manager explained that each community had the opportunity to decide on its own infrastructure needs through the Place Plan process and use of CIL and Neighbourhood Fund money. A Member disagreed that communities were able to obtain the resources they required to meet their infrastructure needs.

A Member proposed that a Task and Finish Group should be established to consider this issue, including community demand and to quantify the costs and benefits of implementing a 20mph speed limit across the County. This proposal was duly seconded but not carried when voted on.

It was suggested that the proposed Place Shaping Task and Finish Group would consider this matter as part of its remit when it was established later in the year.

RESOLVED:

That the existing technical guidance which outlines Shropshire Council's approach to implementing 20mph speed restrictions be noted. This provides the basis for the Council's current policy and recognises Department for Transport guidance and liaison with West Mercia Police.

28 Brexit Task and Finish Group - Update

The Head of Economic Growth verbally updated Members on the progress of the Brexit Task and Finish Group. Members noted that although the Group had not met since her previous report meetings would be taking place in February and March. She explained that the Group's focus had been on external input and views. Some evidence that been received from the business community and the Group had invited the NFU and Country Landowners Association to its next meetings. It also planned to hear the views of the various Business Relationship Forums and the Business Board. She asked Members to continue to feed in intelligence from local businesses and residents.

Members noted that The Head of Economic Growth had established contact with Anne Humble, Director of Environment and Rural Affairs in the Welsh Government, who was about to publish a report on a piece of work undertaken on anticipated sector impact of Brexit across Wales. Members also heard that contact had been made with Birmingham City University, Centre of Brexit Studies. Graham Biggs, Chief Executive of the Rural Service Network Sparse had also been invited to attend the Group as an observer. In response to a Member's question she agreed that the Trade Unions would also be invited to give evidence.

29 WSP Performance Review 2017/18

The Highways, Transport and Environment Commissioning Manager introduced the Highways and Transport (Performance Report) WSP Annual Report: 2016/17 which outlined the outcomes of the WSP contract. He introduced Mr Chris Kearns, Director for Local Authorities: WSP.

Members noted that the contract was working well for both parties and had good outcomes as outlined in section 1.3 of the report. Shropshire Council and WSP had a close working relationship with WSP occupying offices within Shirehall to facilitate projects and joint working arrangements, although the contract was subject to high standards of governance to ensure an ethical and healthy working relationship, and effective contract management.

The Director for Local Authorities: WSP advised Members that performance data showed strong numbers and an upward trend, with all services reporting good news. He continued that WSP undertook a self-assessment process and shared good practice developed by other Local Authorities to maintain good progress on joint projects. He outlined the joint working undertaken with the Council and detailed in section 3 of the report. In response to a Member's question, he confirmed that Shropshire Council was viewed as a key client by WSP and that WSP had recently acquired Mouchel, Parson Brinkerhoff and was part of OPUS a New Zealand based company employing 500 people in the UK. He continued that the demand for professional engineering services supplied by his group was in high demand across the UK.

In answer to a Members question, the Portfolio Holder for Transport explained that it was anticipated that by 31st March 2018, 98% of the allocated budget for WSP would have been spent. WSP provided a combination of physical work and policy work, an example of this was the work undertaken on the preparation of the business case for the North West Relief Road [NWRR].

In response to a Member's query about what WSP perceived to be its greatest challenges, Director for Local Authorities: WSP replied that the challenges presented were addressed and WSP understood the need for a three way partnership with the Council and Kier, who it had positive experience of working with on other projects. Clarity for commissioning was required and the biggest challenge was that of finding sufficient skilled and motivated resources to maintain the service. Members discussed the anticipated funding for the NWRR and the close work undertaken by the Economic Growth Team and WSP in developing the project.

Members considered the awarding of contracts and Director for Local Authorities: WSP confirmed that all work undertaken outside of the contractual obligations was tendered for in the usual way and this process tested the market and ensured that the Council was paying the value for the work undertaken. The Highways, Transport and Environment Commissioning Manager confirmed that performance was tracked and monitored and monthly meetings with Shropshire Council Service Leads and the Contracts Manager were undertaken, he added that the accounts were also audited by the external auditor and annual reports were made to the relevant Council's Scrutiny Committee.

30 Announcement by the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth

The Chair invited the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth to address Members. Members noted that a press release was to be made that infrastructure improvements in the Oswestry area had been awarded £9.3m from the Governments Housing Infrastructure Fund [HIF]. The funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government would be used to improve the existing capacity

of the road network on the A5 including Mile End and would significantly assist in bringing housing developments forward in this part of the County. Congratulations were extended to the small Officer led group who had developed the application for funding.

31 Future Work Programme

Members noted that an additional meeting of the Committee had been set for 12th February 2018 to consider a call-in of a Cabinet decision regarding parking charges. The next scheduled meeting of the Committee was due to take place on 22nd March 2018 where Place Shaping would be an agenda item.

The Statutory Scrutiny Officer advised that all the overview and scrutiny committees would undertake a review of the work programme in March. A Member suggested that the Local Transport Plan including the role of Public Health should be proposed as a potential work programme item.

Signed (Chairman)

Date: