



Place Overview
Committee

10 May 2018

10.00 am

Item

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Public

MINUTES OF THE PLACE OVERVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 10 MAY 2018 10.00 - 11.20 AM

Responsible Officer: Julie Fildes
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Present

Councillor Gwilym Butler (Leader)
Councillors Julian Dean, Rob Gittins, Simon Harris, Paul Milner, Dan Morris, William Parr,
Harry Taylor and Roger Evans (substitute for Jonny Keeley)

44 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Jonny Keeley. Councillor Roger attended as substitute for Councillor Keely.

45 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Councillor Simon Harris asked that it be noted that he was Deputy Portfolio Holder for Transport and Highways.

46 Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd March 2018

The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd March 2018 were agreed as a correct record.

47 Public Question Time

There were no questions from Members of the public.

48 Member Question Time

No questions had been submitted by members of Council.

49 North West Relief Road Update

The Head of Infrastructure and Communities updated Members on the progress of the outline business case for the North West Relief Road [NWRR] submitted to the Department for Transport [DfT] in December 2017. The DfT had requested that the bid submission to the Large Local Major Schemes Fund for the NWRR be brought forward from April 2018 to December 2017. This was to allow time for evaluation

and for an announcement to be made in the Spring Statement in March 2018. This had not been made and the Department for Transport had indicated that an announcement might be made after the local elections in May 2018.

Members noted that in order to continue to meet the programme requirements set out in the Outline Business Case [OBC], Council had authorised work to be undertaken at financial risk following the submission of the OBC in December 2017. The Leader had also written to the DfT expressing concerns over the delay in the announcement.

The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport added that he had received a request for further information from the Secretary of State for Transport regarding the amount of land that would be made available for housing and commercial development as a result of the road being built and this information had been provided. He continued that he expected to meet with the Secretary of State for Transport the following week and would raise the issue then. In answer to a Member's question, the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport agreed that he was optimistic about the application. He confirmed that the County's Members of Parliament supported the project.

A Member commented that the report only outlined the advantages for the project going ahead and the disadvantages of it not doing so. Mr Dymond, representing WSP explained that the report was a summary of the full report which was 250 pages long, and contained a full examination of all the advantages and disadvantages of the project. He continued that the full report was available to Members if they wished to access it.

In response to a Member's question about the impact and implications of the application being refused, the Head of Infrastructures and Communities advised that the Shrewsbury Integrated Transport Package would continue to be implemented despite other highways projects being put on hold. He continued that other funding streams were available and bids would be made to these should funding fail to be secured through the Large Local Major Schemes Fund.

Mr Dymond confirmed that the Public Consultation sessions had been well attended and the on-line survey had received a good number of responses. The visualisation of the new road, which had been made available on-line, had received thousands of views and positive comments.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

50 Brexit Task and Finish Group Report

The Council's statutory Scrutiny Officer reminded Members that the Brexit Task and Finish Group had been established to consider the implications of Brexit on the Shropshire economy. This included both risks and opportunities. It aimed to establish a clearer understanding of what would be required locally from Government to enable Shropshire to achieve the ambitions of the Economic Growth Strategy. The key messages and requirements would then be available to Cabinet to inform the Council's response to the expected Shared Prosperity Fund White Paper on the UK Funding approach to replace European Union funding initiatives. He continued

that it had been anticipated that the White Paper would be published in December 2017, but it had not yet been received.

Members noted that the Task and Finish Group report before them was a stage report and the Task and Finish Group had suspended further work until the contents of the White Paper were disclosed, and the Government provided greater clarity on its proposals.

The Council's statutory Scrutiny Officer summarised the work undertaken by the Task and Finish Group as outlined in the report. Much of this had been desk-based research although a range of representatives from different organisations had been invited to give evidence to the Group. Contact had also been made with the Welsh Government and information shared. He observed that Shropshire appeared to be the only Local Authority working on this issue in this detail.

Members noted that the Task and Finish Group had identified two areas that they considered to be of particular importance and had suggested that the terms of reference be revised to enable them to give greater consideration to:

- Agriculture and land based industries: different environmental benefits and the potential impact of Brexit on the rural economy.
- Skills and the labour force: the group had identified that the working age population was declining and did not offer the skills required by employers.

Members discussed the need to share the findings of the Task and Finish Group. It was suggested that the Head of Economic Growth should share the Group's report with the Shropshire Business Board, training organisations based in Shropshire, Shropshire Chamber of Commerce, neighbouring local authorities and the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership. The Chairman confirmed that a presentation would be made to the next MPs' meeting at Shirehall.

The Head of Economic Growth confirmed that the links made with the Welsh Affairs Department of the Welsh Government would be maintained. The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport commented that cross border working with the Welsh Government on business and road was improving, which was welcomed.

RESOLVED:

That:

- i. The Task and Finish Group paused its wider work on Brexit and Shared Prosperity Fund until the Government provides greater clarity which the Group can use to shape recommendations and responses to consultation;
- ii. The Place Overview Committee confirms that the Task and Finish Group refreshes the scope and focus of its Terms of Reference to incorporate more detailed consideration of
 - Agriculture and Land Based Industries; and
 - Skills and Labour Force;

- iii. That the Council continues to work on cross-border opportunities with the Welsh Government and Neighbouring Local Authorities to identify and progress economic growth and wider benefits; and
- iv. That the Council should lobby MPs and Government about concerns over the lack of clarity over Brexit negotiations and how the future will look for Shropshire and its neighbours in order to reduce speculation and improve business confidence.

51 Work Programming Discussion

The Statutory Scrutiny Offer advised Members that the work programme for all Overview and Scrutiny Committees would be discussed at the meeting of the Scrutiny Chairs on 11th May 2018. This would consider the work identified from the previous week's meeting which considered the refreshed Corporate Plan. The Scrutiny Chairs would review the strategic action plans and allocate items to each Overview and Scrutiny Committee to form the spine of the work programme. It would then be at the discretion of each Committee to identify other topics that they wished to examine and to consider the focus of their work programme and the best way to achieve this.

The Head of Economic Growth suggested items that the Committee might wish to consider and gave examples:

Place Shaping:

- Balancing housing with economic growth
- Place plans
- Planning
- Housing

Employment and progressive opportunities for all:

- Reskilling the retired and older people in the workforce
- Young people's aspirations and progression

Economic growth strategy:

- Monitoring targets
- Sector proposals

Maintaining a clean and attractive environment:

- Local transport plan
- Waste recycling
- Renewable energy

She observed that a number of these topics would be cross cutting across the remits of more than one Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Chairman added that the Committee had an on-going rolling programme which included the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan, parking, 20's Plenty Scheme and these topics would be revisited on a regular basis. He also added that the Committee wished to be included in review of the Local Development Plan and the Local Plan Review. The Head of Economic Growth advised that there would be three key

stages in the consultation, including the preferred options for market towns, key strategic sites and corridors and the draft of the full local plan.

The Head of Economic Growth suggested that the Committee may wish to consider the Green Belt Review proposals in September 2018.

A member suggested that issues emerging with highways maintenance should be considered by the Committee. He continued that a £5m reduction in spending on road and infrastructure would have a severe impact on communities and it would be useful to examine the way in which complaints and compliments were dealt with.

RESOLVED:

That the topics for the meeting on the 12th July 2018 be:

- Highways maintenance
- winter procedures
- The Shrewsbury Big Town Plan Update and key market towns strategies

52 Date/Time of the Next Meeting of the Committee

Members noted that the next meeting of the Place Overview Committee was scheduled for 10.00am on Thursday 12th July 2018.

Members requested that Officers should explore the possibility of holding a future meeting at a location in the market town of Craven Arms.

Signed (Chairman)

Date: