



<u>Committee and date</u>
Whitchurch & Prees Local Joint Committee
21 st February 2018

<u>Item</u>
<u>Public</u>

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WHITCHURCH & PREES LOCAL JOINT COMMITTEE

NOTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 21st February 2018 IN Whitchurch Civic Centre AT 7PM

Committee Members Present:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Council</u>
Mr Tom Biggins	Shropshire Councillor
Mrs Peggy Mullock	Shropshire Councillor (Chair)
Mr Ray Hirons	Prees Parish Council
Mr Gerald Dakin	Shropshire Councillor
Mr Thomas Biggins	Shropshire Councillor
Mrs Bev Duffy	Whitchurch Town Council

Officers present:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Role</u>
Belinda Doolan	Community Enablement Officer, Shropshire Council
Nic Laurens	Portfolio Holder Economic Growth, Shropshire Council
Lisa Ashby	Development Officer Economic Growth, Shropshire Council

There were approximately 22 members of the public at the meeting.

ACTION

Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone.

Receive Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Shropshire Councillor Paul Wynn and Colin Fitzmaurice

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Members were reminded that they must not participate in the discussion or voting on any matter in which they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and should leave the room prior to the commencement of the debate.

Confirm Notes of LJC meeting on 4th October 2017

It was RESOLVED that the notes of the previous meeting held on 4th October be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record.

Partners & Communities Together (PACT)

West Mercia Police

Graham Oliver from the Police and Crime Commissioners office was in attendance, he asked if any questions could be recorded and he would pass them on to the commissioner; there were none.

Sgt Deborah wheeler is the nominated officer for Whitchurch and Officer Tracey Ryan was present she reported that the current police station is for sale and there are negotiations under way with the fire service to consider a shared station, there have been lots of options examined. The conclusion is due at the end of March. There is also a new member of administration staff due to start in May.

In answer to an enquiry regarding the lack of a front counter at the station, it was stated this is not financially viable and there is an intercom system available.

It was explained that the police are working on a Threat Harm & Risk system and there has been a recent change of shifts, with more officers on the street.

There is a comprehensive CCTV system that is one of the best in the country, this needs to have its' positioning looked at, it seems as though certain activity may not be picked up. The Town Council are responsible for the CCTV and having the contracts renewed and servicing done, they may be able to make enquiries about positioning.

- There has been a recent hold up at knife point in a local shop and retailers are consequently nervous of any further opportunist crimes, there seemed to be a perceived decrease in police presence on the beat.
- A recent incident involving a death in a home was commented on and questions were raised regarding the attendance of 4 cars, this may have been due to certain risk assessments.
- There has been a spate of break ins to sheds in Prees /Higher Heath.
- Slight increase in Vehicle crime with the occupants being arrested.
- Spate of broken shop windows – lull at present, please pass on any details
- Prolific shoplifter has been arrested and there is a reduction in number of offences
- Lead thefts spread out over several weeks, a recent reported incident of stolen lead took 2 days for a response from the police, this created delays for the insurance claim. The police did apologise but this was risk assessed.

With the change of weather more traffic it is to be expected, there may be an increase in car and speeding crime.

There was a comment about solvability of crime and how is this recorded if the police do not attend.

Smart Water has been offered to the community.

Shropshire Fire Service

Fire Chief Ian Johnson talked about Home Safety Risk Assessments.

There has always been smoke alarm fitting provided, however in July 2017 there was an introduction of the Safe & Well assessment, to date there have been 340 referrals within Shropshire Council and Telford and Wrekin. The team accesses information and referrals via a long working system, information comes from the NHS with a Name and telephone number being passed on, a home visit is then arranged, people can also refer via word of mouth regarding an elderly or vulnerable neighbour for example. No medical information is shared and the system is confidential, part of the criteria is age and social isolation has been alleviated with the information being fed back into the local authority and Shropshire Choices has been used where required. There was publicity shared on the night and leaflets are available.

Shropshire Council Update

Consultation Early Help Delivery model open until 6th March

Pharmacy Needs Assessment online consultation until 19th March

Cllr John Sinnot suggested the council should look at replacing online surveys and advertise when any consultations are live, they should also explore options of using LED screens in the Town Council, Doctor's surgeries and pharmacies to get the message out to the public.

Reporting & Scrutiny (Hot Topics)

Lisa Ashby Development Officer for Economic Growth gave a short talk in preparation of the workshop element of the meeting:

Following the launch of the Shropshire Council Economic Growth Strategy, one of the key actions was the development of a growth strategy for each of the key market towns to sit beneath the framework of the overarching EGS. This was also reiterated by the Leader at the Town and Parish Council Economic Growth Strategy conference held at the end of last year just after the launch. Each strategy will need to cross check against the Place Plan refreshes and Local Plan Review work (especially the Settlement Strategies), and Neighbourhood Plans/Visions.

Economic Growth and the Community Enablement Officers are leading the development of these plans and we will work closely with the Town Council and Local Members to produce these as well as sharing a draft with other organisations e.g. business groups. Work will ensure that the purpose is focused and clearly communicated. The Oswestry strategy is now well under way and today's session represents our first consultation with Whitchurch which is the next strategy we are moving onto. A format has been put together for the workshop session where it is hoped to gain a steer in the initial development phase. The areas to be explored are:

- Context (including data pulled from the Market Towns Profiles and statistics)
- Key opportunities and challenges
- Key actions and priorities (these will follow the same headings as the EGS)

- Communication and engagement

Town Council

Cllr Bev Duffy gave an outline of the work that has been done so far by the Town Council to address the Economic growth of Whitchurch, there was an image of the SamDev map of Whitchurch with the potential areas for development highlighted.

These had been discussed at a recent visioning meeting with the Town council and the leader Peter Nutting, areas of development include the Waymills area and it was suggested that a digital innovation park with satellite office space would be welcome.

There was some discussion regarding the need for tourist accommodation, sites identified included Heath Road, it was reiterated that there is a need for large companies and organisations to be contacted about these development opportunities in Whitchurch, Travel Lodge was suggested.

The promotion of work life balance could also be a way forward when in discussions with companies.

Access to the Southbound platform at the train station is something that needs to be considered, this is an ongoing issue.

There is an active Joint commissioning and Economic Board who meet several times a year they are actively addressing the issue of promotion of sites and development of businesses, along with shop fronts, parking and landlords.

Whitchurch Chamber of Trade

Therese Hickland the chair discussed the remit of the organisation

1. Enable business to start and grow
2. Meet the needs of business development

Membership is voluntary, a healthy number is required to influence the Town Council currently it is low but picking up. It is a challenge to get members involved with economic strategy, most focus is on the shops in town.

Housing development brings more people hence more money.

Whitchurch has an excellent reputation for independent retailers and sole traders

Empty shops, it is important to work with Shropshire council and the Town Council to keep the town smart and vibrant.

Not all traders are in it for economic reasons, some wish to fulfil dreams and aspirations.

Trading has progressed dramatically from people no longer living above their place of work and restricted opening hours, to shops now open 24 hours with the virtual platforms.

The question was raised how do small businesses remodel for people's expectations now and in the future.

There was some discussion about succession planning and retirement from small businesses.

Public Questions and comments

Enquiries regarding Business Rates were discussed and it was suggested that people can lobby the local MP with regards to rates and rents of commercial properties, business rates are currently being reviewed. Government policy states the Local Authority has a duty to collect rates and send them to central government, having retained a percentage. There are currently some pilot schemes of full rates retention in rural counties. Rates assessments are done via H M Valuation office.

Topic of absent landlords was raised, particularly those with poorly maintained property, it was observed they often lack interest, especially if they are not local.

Whitchurch JCEB can tackle Landlords and Landlord associations, Whitchurch has a significant amount of listed buildings and small individually owned shops.

Mr M D Parker had an enquiry regarding Planning Application 18/00324/MAW he said there has been an under estimation of the amount of solid waste.

Ash Road:

- Trailers have chopped edge off road
- Passing places need to be incorporated
- No security fence on plans
- Heavy mud on road during winter will have an impact
- Strong odour from digester

Muggers Alley / Mill street appears unkempt and grass needs cutting

Archibald Worthington Bowling club there is Japanese Knotweed and the area needs clearing

Old Herald building has been a dumping ground and is a health hazard it needs an environmental officer to visit – there are plans for development and somebody said it has been cleared.

J Gallagher said the litter coming from the bypass is a problem, this has also been discussed at the Whitchurch Tourism group, McDonalds used to pay extra for additional litter collections this will be investigated.

Tilstock Road :

- needs litter picking
- floral display looks really good
- Plastic Banners are unsightly by the SJT school
- Reinstate the seat for elderly people to use
- Replace fencing

Sedgeford :

- Create a tidy corner with a bench

Workshop How to shape Economic Growth in Whitchurch

There was a hands-on activity where everyone was invited to share their values and vision for Whitchurch.

The session was designed around the theme of baking a cake, including

- Ingredients list
- Recipe
- Method
- Cherry on Top

People were divided into groups and given a list of questions to help with the discussions:

- Describe the Economic profile of Whitchurch
- What does economic growth look like
- Opportunities to deliver economic growth
- Are there challenges to overcome
- Methods Actions Resources
- Identify Employment sites now and in the future

Supporting growth discuss needs and requirements:

- skills
- Digital
- Housing
- Utilities
- Transport

Each group were given cardboard slices of cake templates and asked to write their ideas on them.

The evening ended with the assembling of a large cardboard cake with everybody's contributions, after some discussion the cherry on top was then added.

Next Meeting

20th June 2018 in Whitchurch Civic Centre

All meetings start at 7pm and doors will be open from 6.30pm.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting closed at 21.00

Signature (Chair) Date: