



Place Overview
Committee

5th September 2019

10.00 am

Item

Public

**MINUTES OF THE PLACE OVERVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 18 JULY
2019
10.00 - 11.55 AM**

Responsible Officer: Julie Fildes

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Present

Councillor Joyce Barrow (Leader)

Councillors Andy Boddington, Julian Dean, Rob Gittins, Simon Harris, William Parr and Paul Wynn

12 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dan Morris, Pam Moseley and Paul Milner. Councillors Nick Bardsley and Tony Parsons attended as substitutes for Councillors Morris and Moseley respectively.

13 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Members were reminded that they must not participate in the discussion or voting on any matter in which they had a disclosable pecuniary interest and should leave the room prior to the commencement of the debate.

14 Minutes of the Meeting Held on 6th June 2019

The minutes of the meeting held on 6th June 2019 were confirmed as a correct record.

15 Public Question Time

Three questions were received from members of the public.

Question 1:

From: Mr Charles Green, who was present to ask his question

The question concerns Agenda Item 6: *Local Plan*

CPRE Shropshire has recently felt obliged to lodge a formal complaint against Shropshire Council because of its failure to address our concerns following the

discovery of significant errors in Tables published in an earlier round of consultation on the Local Plan Review.

Robert Macey's response to our question to Cabinet on 7th November 2018 as to whether hard-pressed officers' work received any level of independent scrutiny was essentially that:

- *the Local Plan Member Group helps the officers, and*
- *details would be looked at during the formal public examination of the Plan by a Government Planning Inspector.*

We are also concerned that the growth ambitions of the Local Plan Review and the closely related Economic Growth Strategy are not wholly compatible with the Council's recent declaration of a Climate Emergency, which implies that "business as usual" is no longer an option.

We therefore ask, does your Scrutiny committee receive any reports from the Local Plan Member Group, and what level of scrutiny are you giving to the detail of the Local Plan Review and to the effect it is likely to have on greenhouse gas emissions, before it comes before a Government Inspector?

Submitted on behalf of CPRE Shropshire by Charles Green, 16/07/2019

The Response was given by the Chairman:

The Scrutiny Committee has not received any reports from the Local Plan Member Group and the Committee has yet to determine how it might scrutinise the Local Plan.

The Local Plan Review is the subject of extensive public consultation, including with statutory consultees, and will ultimately be the subject of a formal examination by an independent Government Planning Inspector.

Indeed, thus far there have been three completed public consultations on the Local Plan Review and a fourth stage of public consultation is currently ongoing. Each of these consultations was approved by Shropshire Councils' Cabinet and responses have and will inform the ongoing Local Plan Review.

A further formal stage of public consultation has been programmed for March 2020, subject to approval by Cabinet. Following this consultation, and subject to approval by Full Council, the Local Plan will then be submitted for formal examination by an independent Government Planning Inspector. As part of this examination this inspector will consider any formal objections, compliance with national policy and undertake a detailed review of the evidence informing the Local Plan.

The Local Plan Review is also overseen by the Local Plan Member Group, which is a politically balanced group established by Cllr Robert Macey, the portfolio holder for Housing and Strategic Planning.

With specific regard to your comments regarding the Local Plan Review and Climate Change, at Cabinet on the 12th June 2019, Cllr Dean Carroll responded to a very similar question, stating:

“As was stated at Full Council on 16th May we have already started the work of establishing a baseline of emissions as we believe that understanding where we are currently is an important part of developing the Climate Action Plan that will be produced. Reducing carbon emissions is not about growth per se, but about the right growth, about having the Right Home in the Right Place and sustainable employment opportunities. For example, that is why we support key worker housing, because it’s about helping to place our key workforce in affordable and good quality homes within the communities they serve. The point is that future population growth will not necessarily result in a net growth of carbon. We are exploring a package of measures that are aimed at reducing net carbon emissions and increasing the sustainability of our places, economies and communities for generations to come!”

Question 2

From Mr D Cheese, who was present to ask his question.

I would like to ask Steven Brown or Kevin Aitken about email from the 1 July 2019. Regarding the Crossing on Monkmoor Road near Monkmoor Glass

The response was given by the Chairman:

It is unclear what question Mr Cheese was intending to ask. In communication with the local Member on 1st July we confirmed that:

- *Following requests Shropshire Council investigated the feasibility of a pedestrian crossing on Monkmoor Road, Shrewsbury near to Monkmoor Glass.*
- *This location does not form one of the council’s defined cluster sites based on accident history. Due to current budget restrictions, Shropshire Council is unable to prioritise and assess schemes which are not in response to defined cluster sites.*
- *In terms of potential crossing locations, there is little width in between the two access points to Monkmoor Glass to provide a formal crossing point which meets current regulations, or a priority buildout with informal crossing point. Should funding become available in future for community concern sites, a pedestrian crossing survey and feasibility report would be useful to establish the existing pedestrian desire lines on both Monkmoor Road and Conway Drive to determine the most suitable potential crossing locations.*
- *Although this response may disappoint, at the moment we need to target our limited responses on the sites which require them most.*

The Chairman agreed that a meeting with the Portfolio Holder should be arranged to discuss this issue further.

Question 3

From Karen Pearce, Bicton Heath, who was present to ask her question.

Members of this committee are likely all aware of the proposed Oxon Link Road at Bicton Heath currently the subject of a planning application.

Are committee members aware that the whole length of the link road has no pedestrian bridges proposed over it?

The proposed road severs Calcott Lane, Shepherd's Lane, Little Oxon Lane, Clayton Way and the Holyhead Road. It also severs at least five well used public footpaths between the communities of Bicton and Bicton Heath. The link road effectively severs safe access to and from Bicton and Bicton Heath apart from by road. In the report on the SWSUE Masterplan, presented to and signed off by Cabinet on 16 October 2103 (using information following public consultation) a number of amendments were considered to be necessary before adoption of the plan. The document states that at least two footbridges over the link road were to be included. These amendments were listed in a separate appendix.

An amended Masterplan now showing and mentioning bridges was then used in all further public consultations and referred to in the planning application for Phase 1 of the Urban Extension (planning application 14/00246/OUT –currently being determined)

Planning application 14/00246/OUT includes mention of a bridge in its proposals to lead to pitches for public use and RPS consultants also used this provision in persuasive argument at a Town Council Planning meeting.

However NO bridges are included in the plans for the proposed link road.

My question/s to the Place Overview Committee is why are no bridges included in the plans despite Cabinet signing off the Masterplan report in 2013 and their inclusion in a planning application currently being determined for Phase 1 of the Urban Extension? How has this been sanctioned and who by (please could the scrutiny committee provide transparency by including documentary evidence/link to relevant minutes in its response?) How can it be that a 60 mph road severs so many public highways and Public Rights of Way without provision of one single bridge? How is this sustainable development?

It could be argued that the public has been very much misled by both the Masterplan and application 14/00246/OUT. Comments on consultations and also to the planning application in the past may well have been very different if it had been known that subsequent plans for the Oxon Link Road would be submitted without any bridges at all.

RESPONSE:

The Oxon Link Road is a key component of the Shrewsbury SUE West and the need to provide crossings to link land north and south of the road was acknowledged in the masterplan, particularly linking:

- *Open space to the north of the road with residential development to the south and the communities of Bicton and Bicton Heath*

- *The existing uses north of Clayton Way including the Uplands Care Home and Severn Hospice with Oxon Business Park and Welshpool Rd*

At the Cabinet on 16th October and Full Council on 19th December 2013. It was agreed to adopt the Shrewsbury West Sustainable Urban Extension Master plan as amended for the purposes of informing and guiding the development of the SUE and as a material consideration for all subsequent planning applications. A number of amendments were addressed following comments arising from the consultation which included crossing points over the Oxon Link Rd.

The recommendation which was agreed was to Clarify crossing points on/over the Oxon Link Rd to include at least two footbridges and other surface crossings.

This issue was subsequently addressed as part of the consultation on the Oxon Link Rd and associated changes to the proposals including the replacement of the two foot bridges and provision for at grade crossings. Consultations are ongoing with the planning application, but it was always envisaged that there would be a need for connectivity between the development and existing land uses north and south of the OLR which could include the provision of crossings.

The Oxon Link Road (OLR) proposal is currently subject to a live planning application. The application is under consideration, material planning considerations including connectivity across the road will be taken into account prior to determination and as such, pending the response from the Councils Planning Team, the Council as applicant is unable to comment further on the current design and crossing proposals. The Council will take advice through Planning as to the required treatment of pedestrian crossing points along the OLR and amend the scheme as may be necessary following comments from Highways Development Control. For clarification,

1. The current design (with at grade crossings as opposed to pedestrian bridge/s) was fully explained and consulted with the public and stakeholders on in advance of the current planning application on two occasions at Oxon Church Hall, Welshpool Road;

During Scheme Design, January 2017

Day 1 – Wednesday 25th Jan 2017 11.00 – 8.00pm

Day 2 – Thursday 26th Jan 2017 – 11.00 – 8.00pm

Pre-Planning Application submission;

Day 1: Wednesday 28th February 2018 12 noon – 8pm

Day 2: Thursday 1st March 2018 12 noon – 8pm

Both of these very well attended events were announced through radio, papers and social media in advance, roadside advance signing, and letter drops to all households and businesses in the area. Information at the events was also available through Shropshire Councils website.

2. The Western SUE Masterplan does not stipulate pedestrian bridge crossings (below for information), rather shows “opportunities for pedestrian crossing or bridge.

Illustrative Masterplan



5.4 Illustrative Masterplan

Having built up the distribution of land uses through a series of layers, the Illustrative Masterplan shows how the design principles could be carried forward into a more detailed Masterplan solution.



3. *The design speed of the OLR as described in the planning application is 50mph*

16 Member Question Time

There were no questions from Members.

17 Local Plan

It was agreed that this item would be deferred to the meeting of the Committee on 5th September 2019.

18 Shrewsbury North West Relief Road

The Interim Head of Infrastructure and Communities introduced the report as a regular update to the Committee on the progress of the Shrewsbury North West Relief Road [NWRR].

Members asked for clarification of the role of Matt Johnson, Manager Highways and Transport. The Interim Head of Infrastructure and Communities advised Members that there was an error in the report and Mr Johnson was an Officer of the Council entirely dedicated to the Shrewsbury NWRR project, with responsibility for the co-ordination and delivery of the project and was not employed in any capacity by WSP. The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Car Parks explained the Council were working closely with WSP but the project had strong governance arrangements which ensured close but separate working.

Members requested further information on the environmental impact of the project. The Interim Head of Infrastructure and Communities agreed to provide this to a future meeting, although clear information about the environmental assessment and the actions taken to mitigate the issues caused by the development were set out in the Business Case for the project. Members observed that the project had recognised environmental benefits through the removal of heavy vehicles from roads not designed to accommodate them.

In response to a Members query, the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Strategic Planning stated that he was confident that the project would be built on time and within budget. The Highways and Transport Manager added that the Funding from Government gave the Council a five-year funding window to complete the project and the Council had undertaken to underwrite the risk associated with this. He continued that the key asset of the proposal was that it was a new road and not part of the existing road network and so had no third-party requirements from Highways. The Portfolio Holder for Highways and Carparking added that the Scrutiny Committee had an important role in holding the project to account to meet the deadlines set out in the programme.

Members noted that there were four risks on the risk register for the project. The Manager Highways and Transport explained that these were being mitigated and addressed by close working with stakeholders and partners. The Risk Register was a dynamic document which was constantly updated. He continued that stakeholders and partners had also identified risks for their organisations in the event the project not going forward. He confirmed that budget provision had been made to mitigate risks and address problems caused should they not be resolved.

Members discussed the revenue and capital costs of the project. The Manager Highways and Transport confirmed that as the Department for Transport had now accepted that the project was live, all expenditure was categorised as capital expenditure.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the current Shrewsbury North West Relief Road project governance and management arrangements be noted.
- ii) That the current Risk Register is noted
- iii) That further reports are brought to the Scrutiny Committee annually for 2 years and then biannually or quarterly as required during the preparation of the Full Business Case, Contractor Procurement and Construction phase of the project.

19 Review of Signs, Boards and Banners Policy

Barbara Reignford from the Federation of Small Businesses and Peter Richardson were in attendance for this item.

The Network Co-ordination and Compliance Manager, presented his report on the review of A boards on the highway. He explained that the initial consultation with Town and Parish Councils had received a poor response and so a second exercise was being undertaken. An engagement noted had also been sent to disability

groups including the Royal National Institute for the Blind [NRIB]. The Business Improvement Districts [BID] had also been contacted. He continued that consultation was on-going until September 2019, when a final report would be prepared.

Members considered establishing a Task and Finish Group to consider this issue.

RESOLVED:

That a task and finish group be established to consider the Council's policy appertaining to A Boards.

20 Support for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) (Pages 14 - 25)

The Business Growth and Investment Manager gave a presentation to Members [copy attached to the signed minutes] on the activity undertaken by the Business and Investment Team in support of Small and Medium Enterprises [SMEs] in Shropshire.

Members noted that the Growth Hub located at Battlefield, Shrewsbury offered a reactionary service across Shropshire, primarily supporting start up and fledgling businesses with advice from external providers where necessary. The work of the Growth Hub had developed since its establishment and particularly during the previous eighteen months with officers keen to involve Members in supporting SMEs.

Members enquired why the Growth Hub did not make better use of the data held on businesses by the Council and expressed concern that a silo mentality still existed. The Business Growth and Investment Manager explained that sharing information was often restricted by GDPR regulations, but a new business survey questionnaire was being developed which would target a variety of businesses in Shropshire, with a mix of sector, scale and locality.

The Business Growth and Investment Manager confirmed that there was a limited amount of funding available to support improving energy efficiency as part of the climate change agenda and he was looking into how this could be used most effectively.

In response to a Member's question, the Business Growth and Investment Manager confirmed that bench marking of the Growth Hub was undertaken against the other two Growth Hubs in the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership [LEP].

The Deputy Leader commented that significant progress had been made with the support offered in the County to SMEs and suggested that this would continue to improve over the coming five years.

The Chairman congratulated the Business Growth and Investment Manager on the improvements made by the department.

RESOLVED:

That the report and its recommendation be noted and endorsed.

21 Work Programme 2019/20

Members noted that the review of the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership [LEP] Governance arrangements would be undertaken by the Committee at its meeting on 5th September 2019.

The Chair advised Members that the Scrutiny Agenda Planning Workshop would take place immediately after the next meeting of the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee on 4th September 2019 and urged Members to attend.

22 Date/Time of the Next Meeting of the Committee

Members noted that the next meeting of the Place Overview Committee was scheduled for 10am on Thursday 5th September 2019.

Signed (Chairman)

Date: