



Place Overview  
Committee

24 March 2022

2.00 p.m.

Item

3

Public

## **MINUTES OF THE PLACE OVERVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 17 SEPTEMBER 2021**

**Responsible Officer:** Sarah Townsend

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### **Present**

Councillor Joyce Barrow (Chairman)

Councillors Andy Boddington, Julian Dean, Geoff Elner, Paul Gill, Kate Halliday (Substitute) (substitute for Pamela Moseley), Dan Morris, Peggy Mullock (Substitute) (substitute for Steve Davenport) and Rob Wilson (Substitute) (substitute for David Vasmer)

### **13 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Steve Davenport (Substitute: Councillor Peggy Mullock), Councillor Pam Moseley (Substitute: Councillor Kate Halliday), Councillor David Vasmer (Substitute: Councillor Rob Wilson) and Councillor Paul Wynn.

Councillor Steve Charmley (Portfolio Holder – Physical Infrastructure, Highways and Built Housing) also sent his apologies.

### **14 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

None were declared.

### **15 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

Members noted that the minutes of the Place Overview Committee meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> August 2021 would be considered at the next meeting of the committee.

### **16 Public Question Time**

A question was received from Mr Graham Bould, Clerk to Sutton Parish Council, asking if farmsteads should be defined as settlements in their own right in the context of local rural housing needs. A full copy of the question and response provided is attached to the web page for the meeting and also attached to the signed minutes.

## 17 Member Question Time

Member questions were received as follows:

- **Councillor Rob Wilson** – regarding what representations have been made by Cabinet Members or Shropshire Council Officers to the Department for Transport, the Member of Parliament for Shrewsbury and Atcham or Government Ministers, in support of Shrewsbury’s bid for mini-Holland funding since the submission of the Expression of Interest on 9<sup>th</sup> August.
- **Councillor Julia Buckley** – regarding the authorities nomination for a national highways award on environmental sustainability.
- **Councillor Julia Buckley** – regarding the closure of two rural highway depots and whether by omitting this information from the Kier contract annual progress report to the Place Overview Committee in April 2021, it breached the legal terms of the Kier contract and governance process with Shropshire Council. Councillor Buckley also asked a supplementary question which further questioned why the decision had not been reported to members of the committee when the Highways Strategic Operational Board had decided in December 2020 to close two rural highway depots. The Assistant Director Economy and Place responded that she would take this back to the Assistant Director to explain in writing why this did not happen.

A full copy of the questions and responses provided is attached to the web page for the meeting and also attached to the signed minutes.

## 18 Post Covid-19 Economic Renewal

The committee received the report of the Assistant Director Economy and Place, which informed members of the work that was on-going and planned to support the Shropshire economy post covid.

It was noted that despite the covid pandemic creating many challenges for the economy in Shropshire, it had responded remarkably well with footfall levels in Shrewsbury now back to the same levels pre-covid pandemic. There had also been the emerging of many new businesses, with people moving their businesses and homes to rural locations such as Shropshire.

In terms of grant funding from the Government, over £160m had been distributed over the last eighteen months to support businesses and keep them afloat in the most difficult times. The Council had decided to hold back £2.7m for the use of developing schemes with businesses that give wider benefits, such as re-skilling and re-training people.

Responding to questions from the committee, the following was explained:

- In terms of economic regeneration in market towns, a bid for Levelling Up Funding had been submitted covering Craven Arms because it was mentioned

within the Local Plan and was an area that wanted to see and support growth. The funding bid was focussed around infrastructure improvements.

- Whilst the Place Plans had been paused due to the covid pandemic, they were now looking to be refreshed.
- Supporting young people to get jobs and to understand how they would travel to them, was currently being looked at. Work was also being undertaken with colleges to establish whether courses and training on offer were still right for now.
- Work was currently being undertaken with the University of Chester to understand how businesses are surviving as a result of Brexit.
- Comments were welcomed on the review of the economic strategy and the consultation workshops were shortly due to commence.
- A comment was made that Appendix C to the report did not contain a review of the last strategy and how effective it was. The Assistant Director Economy and Place commented that she would take this back for consideration, as whilst the economy had changed somewhat, it was still important to learn lessons about the economy over the period of the previous strategy.
- As far as social value issue was concerned, there are recognised links between employment and economic prosperity and better health outcomes for our populations.
- A comment was made that the grant funding distribution that had taken place during the pandemic had been well organised and well received by businesses. When asked about the potential for fraudulent activity, the Assistant Director Economy and Place commented that a strong verification process was in place and she would pass on the comment that had been made to the finance department.
- There was a need to have a greater understanding regarding those sectors that are thriving and those that are struggling and how the Council was supporting struggling businesses to establish what their needs were. In particular, concerns were raised regarding trained labour and the need to properly train people within the food industry to build up the food and drink economy.
- Discussions were being held regarding how the Council attracts bigger businesses into Shropshire.
- Cornovii was looking to deliver about 1000 houses over a four year period and the requirements for affordable housing levels were being delivered.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That members note and endorse the report and provide feedback as appropriate.
2. That members advise on any additional areas that may need addressing as part of the post covid economic renewal work, in particular the workshops planned for the Economic Growth Strategy refresh.
3. That an opportunity be provided for all councillors to feed into the Economic Growth Strategy.

## 19 Roadworks Diversions Working Group Terms of Reference

The committee received the report of the Scrutiny Officer regarding the proposed terms of reference for the Highways' Diversions Working Group which had come about as a result of the August 2021 Place Overview Committee meeting at which committee members considered an overview of how the council manages highways' diversions in the event of roadworks and street works.

The working group would carry out its work at a single meeting on a date to be arranged and would report back on its findings to the November 2021 Place Overview Committee meeting.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the working group consist of Councillors Joyce Barrow, Andy Boddington, Geoff Elnor and Peggy Mullock, with Councillor Joyce Barrow chairing the group.

## 20 Place Overview Committee Work Programme

The Scrutiny Officer presented the Place Overview Committee's proposed work programme for the 2021-2022 municipal year and explained that following its publication, he had the following updates:

- The Highways' Diversions Working Group needed to be included within the work programme and would report back to the November 2021 Place Overview Committee meeting.
- The Assistant Director for Infrastructure had requested that the Highways Capital Programme update be deferred to the December 2021 Place Overview Committee meeting.
- As discussed earlier in the meeting, a piece of work needed to be undertaken looking in greater depth at sector support within the economic growth strategy, with a view to reporting back to the November 2021 Place Overview Committee meeting.

Members considered the work programme and requested the inclusion of the following items:

- The ongoing work looking at 20 mph speed limits outside schools.
- Biodiversity – to be considered early in 2022.

### **RESOLVED:**

That with the above mentioned amendments and additions, the Place Overview Committee's work programme for the 2021-2022 municipal year be agreed.

**21 Date/Time of Next Meeting of the Committee**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Place Overview Committee was scheduled to be held on Monday, 25<sup>th</sup> October 2021 commencing at 2.00 p.m.

Signed: ..... (Chairman)

Date: