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| Place Overview Committee |
| 30 June 2022 |
| 2.00 pm |

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| Item |
| 3 |
| Public |

**MINUTES OF THE PLACE OVERVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 30 JUNE
2022
2.00 - 3.55 PM**

Responsible Officer: Sarah Townsend
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Present

Councillor Joyce Barrow (Chairman)
Councillors Steve Davenport (Vice Chairman), Julian Dean, Geoff Elner, Roger Evans,
Dan Morris, Pamela Moseley, David Vasmer, Paul Wynn and Roy Aldcroft (Substitute)
(substitute for Peggy Mullock)

4 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Peggy Mullock. Councillor Roy Aldcroft was in attendance as her substitute.

5 Disclosable Interests

None were declared.

6 Minutes of the Previous Meetings

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Place Overview Committee meetings held on 28th April 2022 and 12th May 2022 be approved as a correct record.

In relation to the 28th April 2022 minutes, a member of the committee commented that there was an action that needed to be followed up on and it was requested that this be done.

7 Public Question Time

There were none.

8 Member Question Time

A member question was received from Councillor Julia Evans regarding correspondence received from her constituents within the Radbrook Division of Shrewsbury concerning developers not adhering to planning. Councillor Evans was in attendance to ask her question and several photographs were displayed to illustrate her concerns. The Assistant Director of Economy and Place responded. (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).

Councillor Evans also asked a supplementary question regarding how residents could pursue their issues and which sections of the Council could help them with their frustrations. In responding, the Assistant Director of Economy and Place explained that many of the photographs displayed related to highway adoption issues and were therefore, not planning enforcement issues. Similarly, the adoption of open spaces was also not a matter for the planning enforcement team. She commented that planning enforcement was reactive and that if Councillor Evans shared the information regarding the various issues / complaints with her, the planning enforcement team would ensure that the correct department picked up the various matters of concern.

The Executive Director of Place commented that he fully understood residents' issues and spoke about whether some form of bond system could be explored between the Council and developers in order to ensure that work on housing developments was completed before occupation. He also confirmed to Councillor Evans that he would engage with highway colleagues regarding the concerns that she had brought to the meeting.

RESOLVED:

That a one off working group be arranged within the next couple of months to look at issues concerning new build housing estates and whether some form of bond system could be implemented. Officers from the relevant departments as well as the Portfolio Holder would be invited to attend.

9 Kier Performance Reporting

The committee received the key performance indicator scores (KPI's) for January, February and March 2022 in relation to Shropshire highways, having requested them at their meeting held on 28th April 2022.

The Head of Highways and the Portfolio Holder for Physical Infrastructure were in attendance and drew members' attention to KPI 1b (Reactive & Routine Highway and Environmental Maintenance tasks completed in time. Street Lighting) which was not hitting the performance target. It was explained that this was due to the difficulty in accruing old stock of SOX's lanterns which were no longer manufactured in the UK and that other local authorities were also experiencing this same issue. Also, some faults had been identified in locations that form a part of the LED replacement programme which will be scheduled for replacement rather than repair as part of the programme.

In responding to questions, the following points were made:

- The LED roll out replacement programme is aimed for completion at the end of the 2023/24 financial year, as per the programme.
- The KPI target performance levels had increased when compared to last year due to the expectation of performance being higher than it was last year.
- Regarding the data behind KPI 1b and the number of lights affected, the Head of Highways confirmed that, as he did not have this information to hand, he would find out and email the committee.
- Once capital schemes have been completed, feedback was sought regarding how the scheme had been delivered.
- Regarding customer perception, a significant piece of work would be undertaken on engagement, as detailed in the report that the committee had received at their 28th April 2022 meeting.
- The roll out of the customer engagement and stakeholder engagement process might result in some tweaking / a review of the customer satisfaction KPI's.
- The reporting of issues through Fix My Street would allow for greater visibility of what has been reported and provide feedback to customers on when action is likely to be taken.
- Faulty street lights in locations where there were critical safety issues were prioritised (e.g. on a corner or junction) for replacement and if linked to the lack of availability of old stock SOX lanterns, a one off LED replacement would be undertaken.
- Regarding KPI 1b and whether the highways department were giving jobs to Kier that were impossible to complete, the committee were informed that the figures represented the number of reactive jobs on inspection where a street light needed replacing. This information needed to be reported within the system in order to understand where to prioritise the LED roll out replacement programme most effectively.

In concluding, it was noted that there was a proposal on the committee's draft work programme to look at the LED lighting programme early next year.

RESOLVED:

1. That where a KPI score is well below its target performance level, the raw data behind it also be reported to the committee.
2. That where there are delays to street lighting repairs due to the LED lighting replacement programme, a form of wording be put onto Fix My Street to advise people of this.

10 Planning Committee Structures

The committee received the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Officer which provided further information requested by the committee to support its review of the decision by Shropshire Council in 2019 to reduce the number of its planning committees from three to two.

Several committee members expressed their opinion regarding the number of planning committees they felt the Council should have. Reference was also made to previous scrutiny committee meetings and task and finish groups where this issue

had been discussed, including a task and finish group meeting held in July 2015, where it had been suggested that the process for deciding which applications were delegated and which went to committee meetings should be examined and made clearer.

It was also commented that protocol says that where an officer recommendation on a planning application was contrary to the opinion of the parish council, the elected local member should be contacted to see if they agreed with the parish council's view. It was the opinion of the member making this point, that this rarely happened.

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Regeneration and Planning was in attendance and stated that he supported the report and was still of the opinion that two planning committees was the better option. Regarding feedback from agenda setting meetings, he commented that he had recently received feedback as a local member, along with his parishes and this had been very welcome and was being rolled out to all councillors. In terms of planning performance, he explained that there had been vast improvements within the Planning Service over the last 12-18 months and the number of complaints that he received via email had significantly reduced.

The Assistant Director of Economy and Place commented that planning committee meetings sometimes had to be cancelled due to there being inadequate business and whilst reference had been made to a task and finish group meeting in July 2015, this was seven years ago and the current position and what was fit for purpose now, was the important consideration. Members were reminded that planning was not political and that information provided to them needed to be as automated as possible, with no bespoke arrangements in place. In terms of training, this had recently been offered to all councillors. Officers were currently putting together a training programme for members on planning issues.

It was proposed that officers be asked to look at the deadline for responding to planning applications as councillors had 21 days to respond to planning applications, whereas Town and Parish Councils had 31 days and it was felt that it would be better if both of these deadlines were the same. Upon being put to the vote, this was carried.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be noted.
2. That it be recommended to Cabinet that the deadline for response to planning applications by both councillors and Town and Parish Councils be the same.
3. That it be recommended to Cabinet that the current situation of two planning committees be maintained.

11 Banners, Bunting, Christmas Lighting & Temporary Signage Policy Review in Shropshire

The committee received the report of the Network Co-ordination and Compliance Manager which updated them on the current situation regarding Banners, Bunting, Christmas lighting and temporary signage.

A question was asked regarding charity events that are not profit making and it was confirmed that the guidance notes say that commercial events are not allowed. However, charitable events and those that are more community based are allowed. The Network Co-ordination and Compliance Manager confirmed that this would be clarified within the revised draft policy.

The Executive Director of Place confirmed that following an election, the responsibility for the removal of political banners and signs lay with the person who put them up. However, if they were up for an unreasonable amount of time, the street scene team would remove them.

In terms of A Boards and Pavement Licences, the Overview and Scrutiny Officer explained that the Committee had previously agreed to send this to Cabinet. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Cabinet had replied saying that it wasn't appropriate to discuss the issue at the current time. Now that the pandemic was over, the committee agreed that their recommendations should be sent back to Cabinet for a decision.

RESOLVED (BANNERS, BUNTING AND CHRISTMAS LIGHTING):

1. That the group/officers engage and consult further with Town and Parish Councils in order to further identify "best practice", provision for specific retail centres, and any local conditions that could be included.
2. That a revised policy and process for "Banners, Bunting and Christmas Illuminations" is drafted for consideration.

RESOLVED (TEMPORARY SIGNAGE):

1. That officers review recommended amendments to the current policy, process and charges for this activity and submit a further briefing note/report for consideration to the group.
2. That the group review and make recommendations on the submitted briefing note/report with a view to revised processes and charges being agreed.
3. That the group advise on a feasible timeline for a revised schedule of charges to be implemented.

RESOLVED (A BOARDS AND PAVEMENT LICENSES):

That the recommendations of the Place Overview Committee in respect of A Boards and Pavement Licences be reconsidered by Cabinet now that the COVID-19 pandemic was over.

12 Proposed Fees for Event Closures / Temporary Traffic Restriction Orders

The committee received the report of the Network Co-ordination and Compliance Manager which contained a proposal to consider introducing a reasonable / defensible fee for events that take place on the highway which involve either a temporary road closure or some other form of Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO) such as a temporary rescind of parking or parking restrictions.

Clarification was sought regarding charity non-profit making organisations as when this agenda item had previously been considered by the committee, the opinion was that small community organisations should not be charged and it was commented that this information had not been included within the report. The Network Co-ordination and Compliance Manager explained that there were many different types of event organisers and it was not as straightforward as deciding whether they were either non-profit or profit making - there were many 'grey areas' in-between. It was discussed and agreed that the decision on whether to charge for an event should be delegated to officers to use their judgement in consultation with the local member, as the member would have local knowledge and hopefully be able to provide some background information to the event. It was requested that this decision be included within the revised draft policy and fee structure.

The committee agreed that a phased implementation of charges should be applied in order that charges could be made for those events where it was obvious that a fee should be introduced.

RESOLVED:

1. That it be assumed that there will be a charge for events that take place on the highway which involve either a temporary road closure or some other form of Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO) unless a case has been made and accepted that an event is not for profit.
2. That the various decisions as indicated in the committee's discussions above, be incorporated into the revised draft policy and fee structure prior to a report being presented to Cabinet in 2022.

13 Place Overview Committee Work Programme

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer presented the Place Overview Committee's proposed work programme for the 2022-2023 municipal year. In particular, he drew members' attention to the Clean and Healthy Rivers topic and explained that Councillors Kate Halliday, Pam Moseley and himself, in conjunction with the Chairman, had been working on some terms of reference for a piece of work looking into this topic. It was questioned whether the objective could be widened to include natural lakes, such as the meres in Ellesmere.

A member referred to an email that he had received asking if the committee could consider investigating how the process of traffic safety concerns are managed, both in a particular parish and other parishes and investigate why the promises made have been unmet. He outlined the background history of the particular parish over the last two to three years and raised concerns regarding the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), how it is deployed and the application process. In responding, the Portfolio Holder for Physical Infrastructure commented that there was a fundamental question concerning how CIL funding for road safety schemes was accessed and how it was prioritised and brought forward. He explained that a piece of work to look at the process and how much it was prioritised internally, would be welcomed. Following discussion, it was agreed that a meeting be held in October 2022 to consider this further.

A question was asked regarding whether CIL was fit for purpose and it was reported that this had been flagged for review by the Government, with guidance expected to be provided later in the year. The Overview and Scrutiny Officer commented that this would come under the remit of the Communities Overview Committee.

Regarding planning and the topic of supplementary planning documents, the committee were informed that these would start to be produced once the local plan had been endorsed. It was suggested that the committee might wish to have an input into this.

It was noted that safe access to schools and 20mph speed restrictions outside schools was being considered by the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the Place Overview Committee’s work programme for the 2022-2023 municipal year be agreed.

14 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 Thursday, 29th September 2022 commencing at 2.00 p.m.

Signed (Chairman)

Date: