



Place Overview Committee
6 February 2023
10.30 am

Item
Public

**MINUTES OF THE PLACE OVERVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 6  
FEBRUARY 2023  
10.30 AM - 12.00 PM**

**Responsible Officer:** Sarah Townsend  
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**Present**

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

**36 Apologies for Absence**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Steve Davenport and Councillor Roy Aldcroft was in attendance as his substitute.

Councillor Richard Marshall (Portfolio Holder for Highways and Regulatory Services) also sent his apologies.

**37 Disclosable Interests**

None were declared.

**38 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the Place Overview Committee meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2023 be approved as a correct record.

**39 Public Question Time**

There were none.

**40 Member Question Time**

There were none.

#### 41 **New Housing Development Task and Finish Group**

The committee received a draft report of the final report of the Housing Development Completions Task and Finish Group. The chairman thanked all those who had participated and in responding to a comment explained that two meetings had been held. One of these was a site visit and the other was an all-day meeting, to which all were very welcome to attend.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer presented the report and in doing so explained that the proposed recommendations would be added to previous recommendations that the Place Overview Committee had made and would be taken to a future Cabinet meeting for consideration.

Committee discussion, comments and suggestions covered:

- The need to amend the second recommendation to include reference to the New Homes Quality Board and the Housing Ombudsman.
- The Assistant Director Economy and Place re-emphasised that Building Control was completely separate to Planning Control and explained that Planning Enforcement dealt with planning issues and enforced planning conditions. Building Control has its own legislation and customers can either go to the Council for the Building Control Service or, to approved inspectors. However, the Council could not normally interfere with approved inspectors works.
- Matters relating to landscaping and drainage were relevant to both Planning and Building Control, but each have different responsibilities.
- Customers should be encouraged to use the Council's own building control service, rather than approved inspectors as they can 'come and go' whereas, by using the Council's services, customers were provided with more stability. It was commented that it should be included in application forms that if customers decided to use private building inspectors, they did so at their own risk.
- It would be useful to review the progress of the proposed recommendations in twelve months time in order to establish whether they had been implemented.

#### **RESOLVED:**

It was recommended that Shropshire Council:

- Should always encourage the local authority to use its own building control service for its own developments or those of its ALMO.
- Requests its building control and communications services collaborate to develop a plan to increase awareness of building control, the New Homes Quality Board and the Housing Ombudsman, to would-be homeowners in Shropshire.
- Includes building control in the programme of induction training provided to elected members following all-council elections in 2025.
- Supports Cornovii and STAR Housing's work in creating their own open space management company.
- Proceeds to recruit a dedicated officer with a specific remit of ensuring well-designed, high-quality, coherent, biodiverse open space on new developments.

- Reviews its Section 38/278 process to create a greater focus on securing legal agreements early in the planning process.
- That the Place Overview Committee follow up the above recommendations of the report in twelve months time to consider whether or not they have been implemented.

The Assistant Director Economy and Place thanked Members of the Task and Finish Group for their work and particularly for the interest that they had shown with regard to Building Control.

In conclusion, the Overview and Scrutiny Officer commented that it was hoped that the above recommendations would be taken to the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2023 Cabinet meeting.

## 42 Highways Capital Programme

The committee received the report of the Head of Highways which reported on the Carriageways, Footways and Cycleways Capital Programme and acknowledged the issues that had led to the current position and the proposals for services improvement in the delivery of capital works and the associated closures and diversion routes. It also provided an overview of the capital programme which set out the overall approach to investment in highways assets, as directed by the Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy and the outcomes being achieved.

The Committee heard how capital investment had been focused on delivering preventative maintenance, to try and slow the rate of deterioration of the network, which helps reduce the number of network potholes year on year. By delivering preventative maintenance, there is a decrease in terms of the amount of reactive maintenance needing to be undertaken.

Committee discussion, comments and suggestions covered:

- Several comments were made regarding the report lacking attention to active travel.
- It was commented that it was incorrect under the Climate Change Appraisal Section of the report to say that 'there are no direct climate change implications as a result of this report' as it was suggested that the standards of footways and cycleways was directly linked to climate change. These needed to be of a high standard in order to encourage people to use them, thereby reducing the number of people using cars. In responding, the Executive Director of Place explained that the scope of the report was about the conditions of highways, the Highways Capital Programme and highway maintenance implications. The importance of active travel would be addressed at a Cabinet meeting in March where the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) strategy consultation documents and a Bikeability and pedestrian training programme would be considered. Having gone to the Cabinet meeting, it was suggested that the issue of active travel be included on the committee's work programme for further consideration.

- Various cycle paths around Shrewsbury that members felt were not particularly safe were mentioned and in particular, it was requested that Monkmoor Road be looked at.
- There was now a more proactive approach to maintenance in place, with initiatives such as 'Find and Fix' across the county.
- There had been significant improvements to the highway service and particularly surrounding communication.
- It was commented that it would be useful to see what Shropshire Council was doing with regard to active travel throughout the whole of Shropshire, including the rural areas.
- It was noted that the Council had a complete active travel team and some of the initiatives such as low traffic neighbourhood, Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and 20 mph rollout were highlighted. A number of consultative exercises were also planned in the next six months.
- Where cycle lanes are affected by a highways maintenance scheme, consultation and advice is sought from traffic colleagues e.g. Heathgates roundabout and the green areas where a person enters the roundabout, was considered in great detail by Officers.
- The National Cycle Network was consulted with regarding the status of various routes that pass through Shropshire.
- In responding to a question regarding whether the Council has the staffing and infrastructure in place to plan and deliver programmes of work made possible by increased capital funding, the Head of Highways commented that he was satisfied with the resources that were currently in place and that by having a 4-5 year plan in place, it meant that teams could be built around what needed to be delivered.
- The Highways Capital Programme had been considered by the Place Overview Committee before and like previous occasions, information that the Committee had hoped to see, had not been included. Therefore, it was suggested that a discussion be held between the Executive Director of Place, the Head of Highways and the Chairman of the Place Overview Committee to consider if a draft version of any future Highways Capital Programme reports be produced two weeks prior to the meeting in order to give members the opportunity to say if any information needs to be included that hasn't been done so.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the contents of the report be noted.
2. That the wider issues of the report come back for consideration at a future meeting of the Place Overview Committee following consideration by Cabinet of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) strategy consultation documents and a Bikeability and pedestrian training programme in March 2023.

**43 Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4)**

The committee received the report of the Executive Manager – Strategic Projects which provided them with an update on the ongoing development of the next Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Shropshire. The report built upon the previous report brought to the committee on the 11<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

The committee heard how the Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) was a strategic document that would sit alongside the Council's ambitions up to 2038 and how the launch of the new guidance by the Department for Transport (DfT) had been subject to delay. It was now expected to be released as a consultation draft early in 2023. It was also noted that the former Project Steering Group had now been superseded by direct reference to Place DMT and the Portfolio Holder for Transport.

Committee discussion, comments and suggestions covered:

- In reference to the development of the LTP being put on hold in March 2022, several Members commented that they had not been aware of this and felt that they should have been informed. It was felt that more communication on the LPT 4 and its progress needed to be provided to members.
- A concern was raised that the LTP was many years out of date and a long time had been spent without a LTP. A lot of consultation work had been undertaken but there didn't appear to be very much produced.
- The Executive Manager – Strategic Projects clarified that the new guidance from the DfT was expected to be released as a consultation draft early in 2023 and that this guidance was required before LTP 4 could be resolved.
- As it was known that the DfT guidance would have a strong focus on carbon reduction, the development of a carbon baseline for Shropshire had been commissioned for completion by WSP and was due to be completed by the end of March 2023. This piece of work needed to be carried out in advance of any further work to update and develop the LTP and would also be used to measure the impact of the LTP going forward. Once complete, it would culminate in a workshop for Members and Senior Officers.
- LPT 4 was a transformational change from LPT 3 as it was anticipated that the DfT guidance would move away from predicting future traffic growth and providing for it, in favour of a vision-led approach whereby Local Transport Authorities can demonstrate how their transport systems can achieve better intended outcomes for people, goods and places.
- When saying the LTP was being developed using a 'whole Council approach', it was questioned what was meant by this in practice.
- The importance of the co-benefits story of decarbonisation was emphasised. (Social inclusion).
- Reference was made to a Member Question on the LPT 4 at Cabinet in June 2022 and how the response did not mention that the work had been put on hold in March 2022. It was commented that this was worrying, as it suggested a lack of communication. In responding, officers explained that whilst some initiatives had been paused whilst the new guidance from the DfT on LTPs was awaited, some pieces of work continued as it was beneficial for them to be completed e.g. evidence gathering and engagement to identify needs locally. Despite the delay to the new guidance from the DfT, the requirement was for Local Transport Authorities to have new LTPs in place by Spring 2024.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the update provided to the Place Overview Committee be noted and the delay in development of the LTP be acknowledged.
2. Having considered the likely focus of the new Government guidance on LTPs and the associated risks and opportunities presented by it for Shropshire Council, this be noted.
3. That the revised governance arrangements that have been put in place be acknowledged.
4. That Cabinet be given the opportunity to consider the co-benefits of decarbonisation when thinking about transport and the new vision-led approach of the LTP.
5. That all members be kept up to date on the progress of the LPT.
6. That what is meant by 'a whole Council approach' be articulated and not just in relation to the LTP, in order that members, officers and the public understand what is meant by this.

#### **44 Place Overview Committee Work Programme**

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer explained that at the committee's next meeting, the topics of the LED lighting programme, planning improvement and an update on review of the winter service plan would be considered. This would then mark the end of the work programme for the municipal year and therefore, the committee would need to meet to agree the priorities for their work programme for the municipal year of May 2023 onwards.

The Chairman stated that this had been the Overview and Scrutiny Officer's last meeting. He was thanked for his hard work and support and it was acknowledged that he would be very much missed.

#### **45 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, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2023 commencing at 2.00 p.m. The Chairman explained that Councillor Steve Davenport (Vice Chairman) would be chairing this meeting as she was unable to attend. Councillor Paul Wynn was also unable to attend and therefore, Councillor Roy Aldcroft would be in attendance as a substitute.

Signed ..... (Chairman)

Date: