

Minutes of the Economic, Planning and Housing Committee meeting held on Thursday, 10 June 2021 in Virtual Meeting - Zoom Webinar, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council at 6.30 pm

Members of the Economic, Planning and Housing Committee in attendance:

Councillor S Frost (Chair), Councillor S Carr, Councillor K Carruthers, Councillor S Dillow, Councillor L James, Councillor A Konieczko, Councillor S Mahaffey, Councillor A McCormick, Councillor A Peter, Councillor J Vaux and Councillor G Watts

1/21 Apologies for absence and substitutions

There were no apologies.

2/21 Appointment of Vice-Chair

Cllr Konieczko was appointed Vice Chair of the Economic, Planning and Housing Committee for the 2021-22 municipal year.

3/21 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4/21 Urgent matters

There were no urgent items.

5/21 Minutes of the meeting held on 4th March 2021

In response to a member query, the Chair agreed to ascertain and revert back to the committee as to whether the Economic Recovery Board had been established and met yet.

The minutes of the meeting held on 4th March were confirmed by the committee as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

6/21 Report of the Policy SS9 Task & Finish Group

The Chair thanked Cllr James for her work in Chairing the Policy SS9 Task and Finish group and then proposed that, due to the confidential nature of the information to be discussed, the committee pass a resolution that, by virtue of paragraphs 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting. This was approved.

On resumption of the open session the Chair confirmed that committee had discussed a report presented by the policy SS9 task and finish group and agreed to refer a number of recommendations to Cabinet.

Resolved: the Committee

- Invite the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Major Projects to attend a future meeting of the Committee and provide an update in relation to ongoing progress with the Leisure Park;
- Refer the following recommendations to Cabinet for consideration and response:-
 - I. Policy SS9 should remain unchanged in the Local Plan Update. However clarity and confirmation is sought as to whether there is an agreed legal definition of ancillary retail;
 - II. The committee recommends that additional checks and balances need to be introduced to Cabinet decisions on large projects with values greater than £100m. A root and branch review of the procurement process for large projects is required linked to oversight and scrutiny;
 - III. The committee feel that evidence presented displays a significant planning risk with regards to conflict with the town centre trade, and potentially a commercial/financial risk on the town centre as well. There is a need for a structured process of oversight before, during and in retrospect on all future large projects valued in excess of £100m, to support the Cabinet through the decision making process. Such would benefit openness, transparency and good decision-making best practice. Further, it is suggested that the Chief Executive take responsibility for all major projects reviewed annually in their appraisal.
- The Committee further request that Cabinet consider the following work suggestions:-
 1. It is suggested that the Retail Impact Study and Leisure Needs Assessment in support of the revised Local Plan must include and cover the changing nature of the retail sector and assess not just the retail opportunities but the impact caused by accessibility and parking fees, and to acknowledge the holistic nature of the modern day 'retail/leisure experience';
 2. Policy SS8 Basing View needs to be reviewed as to whether it can include a requirement to protect the Town Centre subject to the provisions of the Development Agreement relating to Basing View;
 3. That the wording in Policy EP3 be reviewed to ensure Festival Place and The Malls remain protected as the 'jewels in the crown' and the heart of Basingstoke's retail offering;
 4. Basingstoke Town strategy should recognise and take account of all other retail centres and retail parks throughout the Borough, which offer not only shops but also restaurants and cafes;
 5. The Scrutiny process needs to be more robust, including how decisions on major projects are reviewed during and not simply after the event;
 6. Papers and reports issued for scrutiny in the case of the Leisure Park were not as comprehensive as the bundle of papers reviewed by the Panel and so it is suggested that there needs to be greater transparency in scrutiny;

7. A review of the procurement process for large projects must be undertaken;
 8. The Constitution should be amended to require robust oversight of major projects through the formation of a specific Overview Committee for Major Projects; and
 9. Leisure park proposals should be appraised to ensure that they do not compete with the Town Centre.
- The Committee further recommend consideration of 9 confidential work requirements (as detailed under Appendix 1 of the report).

7/21 **Building Fire Safety Motion**

The Committee reviewed the Building Fire Safety motion referred by council at its meeting on 18th March 2021.

Resolved: the Committee

- Request an update from the Portfolio Holder for Homes and Housing Regeneration to ascertain whether a response had been received from government requesting clarity on the availability of building safety funding schemes for Crown Heights, and any other affected buildings in Basingstoke and Deane; and
- Request a progress report in September from the taskforce team established to review fire safety issues.

8/21 **Housing Green Conversion Motion**

The Committee reviewed the Housing Green Conversion motion referred by council at its meeting on 18th March 2021.

It was suggested that representations from Vivid and Sovereign Housing Associations and other partner agencies be invited to a future committee meeting to discuss their plans and strategy for conversion of existing housing stock.

Resolved: the Committee

- Request an update from the Chair as to the future of the motion, further to a meeting with the Portfolio Holder for Natural Environment and Climate; and
- Request collaboration with the Climate Change MAP to assist with scoping out the motion and reporting back to the committee with a progress report.

9/21 **Review of work programme**

The Committee reviewed and agreed its work programme with the following comments:-

- It was agreed that July's meeting would include an item in relation to the Green Infrastructure Plan. The committee requested a progress report in relation to each of the 35 action points of the plan.

- The Committee referred a request for a report in relation to youth unemployment and mental health to the Chair of the Community and Environment Committee for committee consideration.
- The Committee requested that a report on the work of the Economic Recovery Board be added to the work programme.
- The Committee requested that a report on the work of the Local Enterprise Partnership be added to the work programme.
- The Committee requested that a report on housing strategy and allocation be added to the work programme.
- Due to the busy schedule it was agreed that an additional meeting would be provisionally scheduled for 16th September.

Further it was agreed that the DSO would ascertain and report back as to whether the Leisure and Recreation Needs Assessment, Retail and Town Centre Study and the Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Sensitivity Assessment were due to be reviewed at future MAPS.

The meeting ended at 9.30 pm.

Chair