

Minutes of the Economic, Planning and Housing Committee meeting held on Thursday, 4 March 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 A Konieczko, Councillor O Cubitt, Councillor P Gaskell, Councillor D George, Councillor P Harvey, Councillor G James, Councillor L James, Councillor P Miller, Councillor J Vaux, Councillor G Watts and Councillor C Wooldridge

44/20 Apologies for absence and substitutions

There were no apologies.

45/20 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

46/20 Urgent matters

There were no urgent items.

47/20 Minutes of the meeting held on 7th and 14th January

It was requested that the minutes of the 7th January be amended to read 'It was agreed that there would be a future paper to review and evaluate the 35 actions of the Green Infrastructure action plan'.

With reference to the minutes of 14th January, It was requested that an officer contact Cllr Laura James to discuss the IFS risk assessment.

It was requested that Review of the Retail and Town Centre Study, Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Sensitivity Assessment be added to the work programme.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Infrastructure and Natural Environment agreed with the Committee's view expressed on 7th January that Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty be recognised as an important partner in achieving the green infrastructure strategy and hoped that EPH would be able to look at the matter in greater detail in the future.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Infrastructure and Natural Environment reported that further to comments made at the meeting on 7th January he was looking at extending the BIZ initiative and was reviewing whether this would be incremental or a more widespread roll out taking account of resource implications. It was further reported that the Portfolio Holder intended to meet with the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust in a fortnight to discuss ongoing volunteer training.

With reference to the minutes of 14th January and frustration expressed by the

Committee at the failure of large allocation areas to deliver any development the Portfolio Holder reported that he had recently submitted two new sites for Cabinet consideration, which if approved would beneficially impact the council's 5 year land supply.

The minutes of the meetings held on 7th and 14th January were confirmed by the committee as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

48/20 **Update from Lead Member of the Policy SS9 Task and Finish Group**

Cllr Laura James updated the committee on the work of the policy SS9 Task and Finish group. It was reported that the cross-party group had worked very collaboratively, received useful officer support and had undertaken a significant piece of work. It was reported that the group had completed its review of the impact of policy SS9 and produced a draft report.

Cllr James reported that the report would present the committee with three overview recommendations and further suggested actions for consideration.

Resolved: the Committee agree to add the task and finish group's report to the agenda for the 10th June 2021 meeting.

49/20 **Update on Economic Recovery in response to COVID-19**

The Economic Development Manager and Leader of the Council introduced the update on economic recovery in response to COVID-19 briefing paper.

The committee made the following observations and comments:-

- It was clarified that the apprenticeship and skills hub was launched in February and was currently available as a service.
- The youth hub which was a joint enterprise with Hart and Rushmoor councils was awaiting funding confirmation from the Department of Work& Pensions, and so was a few months away from delivery. It was clarified that soft skills training would form part of the service provided by the youth hub, for example curriculum vitae writing and interview practice. It was suggested that the hub was likely to have a town centre base, but that there would be opportunities for outreach work.
- It was reported that the council was promoting the Kickstart scheme throughout the borough. It was hoped that the national skills fund would assist with youth training.
- It was suggested that the borough would require improved broadband connectivity, particularly in rural areas, in order to promote new business and facilitate the green infrastructure strategy.
- The importance of manufacturing and engineering within the borough was recognised, as was the need to develop an inward investment strategy.

- The committee emphasised the need for action in relation to a strategy for the town centre, rather than 'visions' and consultations.
- It was confirmed that there was a development agreement in place for the leisure park. It was recognised that plans for any retail occupants may not be the most appropriate in the current climate. The Leader emphasised however that the decision lay with NewRiver.
- It was confirmed that there would be a diversity of individuals and organisations represented on the Economic Recovery Board. Cllr Cubitt made a request to join the board.
- It was requested that further work be undertaken in relation to unemployment amongst the disabled.
- It was clarified that the government's recent budget had provided 100% business rates relief for the retail, hospitality and leisure industry until the end of June 2021, and 66% relief from July until March 2022. Certain caps were in place determined by the size of the business. The business rate policy for sectors not within that industry continued to be set by central government and officers expressed hope that when reviewed there would be consultation and consideration given to assist and support local economies.
- Concern was raised in relation to youth unemployment, and the detrimental health effects of long term unemployment.
- It was agreed that future Economic Recovery briefing reports would include figures on unemployment and disability broken down into gender categories within the borough.

Resolved: the Committee note the briefing paper.

50/20 **Local Plan Update: Issues and Options Consultation Outcomes**

Further to concerns raised by Cllr Cubitt relating to the summary nature of the report, the lack of detail including categorisation of respondents and relevant numbers, and resulting paraphrasing of responses, the committee decided not to consider the report further.

It was agreed that topic specific consultation response reports would be circulated to committee members prior to relevant Members Advisory Panel (MAP) meetings including the climate change MAP on 11th March and the design quality options MAP on 31st March.

51/20 **Review of work programme**

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

- It was agreed that the SS9 Policy Task and Finish group report would be

reviewed on 10th June;

- It was confirmed that there would be a future Local Plan MAP covering the issues of housing and water;
- There was a request for a report in relation to youth unemployment and mental health;
- There was a request for a report on the work of the Economic Recovery Board;
- There was a request for a report on the work of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP);
- There was a request for a progress report on the Green Infrastructure Strategy;
- It was agreed that the DSO would liaise with officers to include forthcoming EPH MAPs on the work programme; and
- Chair to report back to the committee in relation to a suggested review of housing strategy and allocation.

In response to a query the Head of Planning, Sustainability and Infrastructure explained that evidence based reports would be discussed in detail at the Local Plan MAPs.

The meeting ended at 9.35 pm.

Chairman