

**MINUTES
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Monday 12 May 2014

Councillor Mike Hope (Chair)

Councillor Gary Gregory
Councillor Sandra Barnes
Councillor Paul Feeney
Councillor Cheryl Hewlett

Councillor Lynda Pearson
Councillor Colin Powell
Councillor John Truscott

Apologies for absence: Councillor Patricia Andrews, Councillor Paul Hughes,
Councillor Suzanne Prew-Smith and Councillor Nick Quilty

Officers in Attendance: J Ansell, S Bray and P Darlington

Guests in Attendance Councillor Darrell Pulk

41 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P. Andrews, Hughes, Prew-Smith and Quilty.

42 TO APPROVE, AS A CORRECT RECORD, THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 10 MARCH AND 29 APRIL 2014

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the above meetings, having been circulated, be approved as a correct record.

43 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.

None received.

44 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME REPORT 2013/14

i) Rolling Programme of Portfolio Holder Holding to Account

The Chair welcomed Councillor Pulk, Portfolio Holder, Leisure and Development, and Paula Darlington, Corporate Director, who had been invited to respond to questions on the following areas of the Leisure and Development Portfolio: **The Planning Process and Town Centres Strategy.**

Advance questions received from Members:

1. Given that GBC has spent public money on obtaining advice from URS regarding the best place to build, what to build and necessary infrastructure related to developments in Calverton, Ravenshead and Bestwood and given that the number of houses in each village has been decided, what is the sense of considering planning applications in these villages before the URS report has been received and considered?
2. What is the point of taking green belt land and designating it as white or safeguarded land unless it is to point developers at land that could be useful to them?

Response of Portfolio Holder and Corporate Director: The Strategic Planning Process

Before answering the specific questions raised by Scrutiny the Portfolio Holder placed the Strategic Planning Process into context. Key stages outlined as below:

- Develop a Core Strategy which details areas of development to take place and all the policies which support and control development.
- Gedling has produced an Aligned Strategy with Broxtowe and Nottingham City and this was submitted to the Planning Inspector for examination in late 2013.
- Inspector suggested some modification and Gedling responded with some amendments that the Inspector wished us to re consult on.
- Consultation on the modifications ended last week and we are in the process of submitting these to the Planning Inspector.
- If the Inspector finds the Core Strategy sound then it will go to Full Council about July 2014 for adoption.

The Council has to produce a Local Plan

- The Local Plan comprises of the Core Strategy and the Local Planning Document.
- **The Local Planning Document** comprises of site allocations for the key villages and Development Control Policies.

During consultation on the Core Strategy the Council committed to undertaking further consultation with the 3 key villages to determine views on exact locations for development and the resulting infrastructure requirement.

- The Council secured £30k of Growth Point Funding and used that money to employ a company named URS to produce master

plans which would be evidence for public the site specific allocations in consultation with the key 3 villages.

- That consultation has now ended and the results have been shared with the consultees.

The Portfolio Holder and Corporate Director then specifically answered the questions raised by Scrutiny as follows:

Question 1

Response: Corporate Director

- In an ideal world we would have the Core Strategy, the Local Planning Document and therefore the Local Plan adopted before any development take place, however, legally we have to deal with planning applications when and as they are submitted.
- If we do not deal with planning applications in a timely manner then they will be taken out of the Council's hand and determined by the Secretary of State without any influence by the Council.

A key consideration is PREMATUREITY, but the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) identifies circumstances when prematurity may be an issue is when;

- The application is so substantial that it would predetermine decisions about scale, location or phasing of new development
AND
- The Local Plan is at an advanced stage but not yet adopted.

Whilst Gedling's Core strategy is at an advance state (likely adoption July 2014), the Local Planning Document is not (likely to go to Full Council for adoption towards the end of 2015) so Prematurity would not apply.

We also have to maintain a 5 year land supply; currently Gedling only has a 3 year supply which means it would be more difficult to refuse development coming forward now.

Question 2

Response: Portfolio Holder

At the end of the process we will have a map which details those areas of land that have been allocated for development. This will point developers to those areas allocated.

If we do not have land allocated to meet the need we will not be able to resist development anywhere in the Borough.

The Aligned Core Strategy details development until 2028. However there is a need to continually review the need for housing. The numbers required will be subject to change over the life of the Core Strategy and beyond if evidence, i.e. the Census figures for population growth, should indicate a greater need.

General overview: Town Centres Strategy – Corporate Director

The Corporate Director provided the following overview of the Council's approach to Town Centres:

- There have been limited resources for the development of a Town Centres Strategy, and this year the priority for Economic Development has been Employment and Skills.
- In the recent past, the Council has provided grants to businesses for shop front improvements, and the 2 hour free parking provided at a cost of £350, 000 per annum continues to help revitalise local shopping areas.
- In addition, new car park charging arrangements will be introduced allowing long stay parking facilities at reduced rates.
- The recent 1.3m investment in Arnold Leisure Centre is anticipated to contribute significantly to the economic upturn in Arnold, and consideration is being given to the merging of Redhill LC and Arnold LC at the Arnold Town Centre site.
- Work has commenced with developers to identify the next steps to increasing footfall in Arnold.
- A new Economic Development Officer post has been created.
- There are now fewer 'void' (empty) retail shops in the Borough.

ii) Future Programme of Portfolio Holder attendance

The Chair reminded Members of the attendance of Councillor Fox, Portfolio Holder for Community Development at the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and raised the importance of Members submitting a range of questions in advance of the meeting.

The Chair proposed that the Senior Elections and Members Services Officer be asked to liaise with Portfolio Holders and Corporate Directors to identify a new rolling programme of Portfolio Holder holding to account from October 2014 onwards.

iii) In depth Scrutiny updates

The Senior Elections and Members' Services Officer updated Members on the progress of the two current in -depth Scrutiny Reviews 'Reducing Unemployment in the Borough' and 'Homelessness and Hardship in the Borough'.

Members were informed that both working groups will report their findings to the October Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

iv) New In Depth Review

The Chair proposed that a third review, 'Transport links to, and within, the Borough' be appointed to commence in June, and requested nominations both from the Committee and from wider non – executive Members.

RESOLVED to:

- i. Thank the Portfolio Holder and Corporate Director for their attendance.
- ii. Direct the Senior Elections and Members' Services Officer to prepare an ongoing programme of Portfolio Holder holding to account.
- iii. Note the updates received on progress of in-depth Scrutiny Working Groups.
- iv. Appoint Councillors Pearson, Feeney and Truscott to the 'Transport links to, and within, the Borough' in depth Scrutiny working group and request nominations from wider non-executive Members.

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REPORTS AND NOTICES RECEIVED BY THE CHAIR OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AS REQUIRED UNDER CONSTITUTIONAL LAW.

Members considered a list of items referred to the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee under the Constitution or Law.

These included:

Notification of decision to dispose of land or property other than the sale of council houses to sitting tenants pursuant to the right to buy.

- Transfer of land at the junction of Church Road and Chestnut Grove, Burton Joyce (the Land) together with the toilets erected thereon to Burton Joyce Parish Council (the Parish Council) and pay a contribution of £2,500 towards demolition

costs.

- Surrender of lease of land at St Wilfred's Square, Calverton. Purchase of same land at St Wilfred's Square, Calverton and then to transfer this land together with the toilets erected thereon to Calverton Parish Council.

RESOLVED:

To note the items referred to the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee under the Constitution or Law.

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ANY OTHER ITEM WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT.

None.

The meeting finished at 7.35pm

Signed by Chair:
Date: