

# Minutes

**Meeting of** : Planning and Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Panel  
**Meeting held in** : Committee Room 1, The Council House, Bourne Hill, Salisbury  
**Date** : Monday 23 October 2006  
**Commencing at** : 6.00 pm

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**Present:**

**District Councillors**

Councillor P D Edge – Chairman

Councillors A J A Brown-Hovelt, Mrs J A Green, W R Moss, A G Peach, L Randall, Mrs C A Spencer and I R Tomes

Councillor Mrs P Brown was also in attendance in her capacity as Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development.

**Apologies:** Councillor Mrs E A Chettleburgh

**Officers**

John Meeker (Forward Planning), Stephen Hawkins (Development Control) and L Mertens (Democratic Services)

**216 Public Questions/Statement Time:**

There were none.

**217 Councillor Questions/Statement Time:**

There were none.

**218 Minutes:**

**Resolved** – that the minutes of the last meeting held on 21 August 2006 (previously circulated) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**219 Declarations of Interest:**

There were none.



*Awarded in:*  
Housing Services  
Waste and Recycling Services



**220 Chairman's Announcements:**

The Chairman explained that the costed action plan based on the CCTV Scrutiny report, which was due to be brought to this meeting, had been delayed due to a high workload being experienced by the Head of Forward Planning and Transportation. He informed the Panel that he would be requesting an update on the costed action plan to be brought to the next meeting.

The Chairman also reminded Members that future meetings of the Panel would be mainly held in the City Hall due to the closure of The Council House at Bourne Hill during the office project works.

**221 Update on Agreed Scrutiny Reviews for 2006/7:**

**Rural Wellbeing Review** – Scrutiny Support Officer, Lindsay Mertens, informed the Panel that the review group had just completed a comprehensive consultation paper that would be sent to all parishes in the near future. Responses would be co-ordinated mainly via the rural Area Committees. Following the consultation stage conclusions and recommendations would be assimilated into the final report, due to be received by the Panel in the new year.

**City Centre Management Review** – The Scrutiny Support Officer informed the Panel that the initial meeting of the review group had been held, at which the Salisbury City Centre Manager was interviewed. A great deal of information was successfully gained at this meeting, with the remit, aims and objectives of the CCM being clearly outlined. The next stage for the review group would be to consider any consultation which Members may wish to undertake.

**Major Developments and Economic Development Strategy Reviews** – The Scrutiny Support Officer reminded the Panel that these reviews had been postponed until the next municipal year due to limited resources, and that they would then be included in the new format of a rolling programme of reviews, as agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee earlier in the year.

**222 Update on Review of Hotel and Conference Facilities in the Salisbury District:**

As requested at the Panel meeting of 23 May 2006, Members received a verbal presentation from The Principal Forward Planning Officer regarding the progress of incorporating the findings of the above scrutiny review into the LDF.

The main points raised during the update and ensuing discussion were as follows:

- One of the recommendations of the review, as agreed by the P&ED Scrutiny Panel and by Cabinet, was that the observations and findings be incorporated into the LDF.
- The Core Strategy document of the LDF will refer to hotel and conferencing accommodation in the district. Where specific sites are the subject of planning policy there will be site specific documents drawn up, and if necessary a suite of hotel related policies will be created in order to give planning guidance on these areas.
- One of the other recommendations of the scrutiny review was that the findings be incorporated into the Vision work. The LDF will be developed closely alongside the Salisbury Vision to ensure that there is correlation in this area.

**Resolved** – that the update be noted.

**223 Update to the Local Development Scheme:**

As requested at the Panel meeting of 23 May 2006, Members considered the previously circulated report on the Local Development Scheme, ahead of submission to Cabinet. The Principal Forward Planning Officer was in attendance to answer any questions. The main points raised during the update and the ensuing discussion were as follows:

- The purpose of the Local Development Scheme is to set out how the Council will go about creating its Local Development Framework and in what timeframe. Although this was previously approved by the Government Office of the South West (GOSW) in 2005, revisions have had to be made owing to debilitating staff shortages experienced over the last year by the Forward Planning department.
- The Council approached GOSW earlier in the summer to agree a revised timetable in light of the difficulties experienced in meeting the LDS. These changes are likely to be formally agreed by the end of 2006.
- Despite staff shortages, the Statement of Community Involvement has been advanced in line with the timetable which is positive. Consultation on the Core Strategy and Sustainable Communities LDF

documents is also due for publication in May 2007. These two documents will cover a large number the central LDF policies.

- Members questioned how the proposed P&ED Scrutiny review of Major Developments would fit in with the revised LDS timetable. The Forward Planning and Scrutiny Support Officers explained that as both the LDS timetable and the Scrutiny timetable have been delayed it would be possible to align these pieces of work together at a later date when due resources could be allocated to both.
- Members also questioned when the new documents would finally replace the current local plan. The Forward Planning Officer explained that documents would be adopted according to the timetable, meaning that the local plan would be phased out as the LDF is phased in. Members questioned whether the new policies would take over from the previous policies once preferred options had been identified following consultation, as policies that had been developed to that stage, even though not formally adopted, would be far more relevant to the planning process than the previous policies would be. The Forward Planning Officer undertook to look into exactly when the documents would be recognised in the planning process and to report back to the Panel on this point.

**Resolved** - that the update be noted.

#### **224 Advertising on the highway in rural areas:**

As requested by the Chairman in relation to queries raised at a Western Area Committee meeting, the Panel considered the report of the Principal Planning Officer (Enforcement). The Officer was in attendance to answer any further questions raised at the meeting. The main points raised during the presentation and the ensuing discussion were as follows:

- A-boards can legally be displayed on a forecourt of a business without the requirement for consent from a statutory body. However, many businesses do not have their own forecourt and instead place A-boards on the public highway, for which consent is required. Where this is not obtained businesses are advertising illegally and enforcement action may be taken.
- Wiltshire County Council Highways Authority has the power to remove any signs illegally placed on the public highway. Enforcement powers also lie with the District Council under planning law.
- Salisbury District Council has investigated a number of complaints about A –boards on the public highway over the last few years. The council is duty bound to investigate any offence of this nature that is brought to its attention. However the council has always taken a pragmatic view towards enforcement, and aims to advise business owners on how best to advertise. Prosecution is viewed as a last resort only.
- The current enforcement policy has been in place since 1999 and is currently under review. The purpose of the review is to investigate the merits and support for prioritising enforcement work in order to concentrate on more serious matters of enforcement and take a 'lighter touch' in other areas. A policy to state the prioritisation of enforcement would be useful as with all offences committed there is a need to weigh up the cost of enforcement action against the likely harm of the offence before enforcement is proceeded with. Enforcement of the use of A-boards for advertising is one such area that may result in a lighter touch being applied. The policy will be brought to members for formal comment after a period of public consultation.
- Members noted that the ability to take a lighter touch to some areas of enforcement would be useful. In the case of advertising in rural areas it is important to be mindful of the need to sustain the rural economy and therefore a lighter touch in these areas would be good. However, some Members also recognised that A-board advertising in the city centre is a more serious problem, as many complaints have been received in the past for illegal advertising in areas such as Fisherton Street. Members noted that whilst they recognise the need for a lighter touch in rural areas they would still support a stronger approach to A-board advertising in the city centre.
- Members queried whether there was a time period outside of which advertisement in breach of the law obtains deemed consent. The Officer explained that any advertising that has been in place since April 1974 has deemed consent. However, statutory authorities still have the power to take discontinuation action against such advertising.
- The Panel enquired about the rights applying to Special Event Notices. The Planning Officer explained that travelling fairs and circuses have limited rights to display notices, and these are mostly done legally. Members also enquired about the rights held by shop premises for displaying goods on the highway. The Planning Officer explained that a business would normally require a licence for this, which falls solely within the remit of the Highways Authority.
- Members enquired whether business are able to obtain brown road signs directing motorists safely to their business. The Officer explained that the purchase of brown signs may be arranged via the Highways Authority, however the price associated discriminates against smaller businesses obtaining signs and therefore brown signs are not a satisfactory solution to every business' advertising needs.
- Councillors raised concerns that a lighter touch policy to A-board advertising may cause highways to be cluttered with A-boards which could be a particular hazard for blind individuals. It was suggested that

the appropriate societies working on behalf of this section of the community should be approached when public consultation on a possible revised enforcement policy is undertaken.

- Members raised their concerns at fly posting in the district, explaining that many businesses approach the council feeling unhappy that A-board advertisement is enforced but frequent illegal fly-posting is not. The Planning Officer explained that fly-posting is an act for which enforcement does not fall within the remit of the Enforcement team but is dealt with by Environmental Services, who operate a similar robust approach in relation to fly posting offences.

**Resolved** – that

- 1) the report be noted.
- 2) revisions to the enforcement policy be brought to the panel to consider formally when the public consultation period is completed.

**225 Cabinet Work Programme:**

The Panel considered the Cabinet work programme items relating to the Planning and Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Panel (previously circulated).

**Resolved** – that the Cabinet work-programme be noted.

**226 Date of Next Meeting:**

As agreed previously, the next meeting of the Panel will be held on 27 November 2006, 6pm in the Alamein Suite at the City Hall, Salisbury.

**Please note:** it was subsequently agreed that meetings of the Panel would not be required during the months of November and December 2006, owing to insufficient items for determination. The next scheduled meeting date for the Panel is Monday 22 January 2007, 6pm, Alamein Suite, City Hall.

*The meeting closed at 7.00 pm  
Public in attendance - 2*