

Minutes

Meeting of : Planning and Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Meeting held in : Meeting Room, City Hall, Salisbury

Date : Monday 23 February 2009

Commencing at : 6.00 pm

Present

District Councillors: C Spencer (Chairman), L Randall (Vice Chairman), J Holt, G Jeans, J King, J Launchbury, R Beattie, J Walsh

Apologies: Councillor J Noeken

Officers: D Milton (Team Leader, Forward Planning & Transportation), P Trenell (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

96. Public Questions/Statement Time:

There were none.

97. Councillor Questions/Statement Time:

There were none.

98. Minutes:

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2008 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

99. Declarations of Interest:

There were none.

100. Chairman's Announcements:

As this was to be the last meeting of the Planning and Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Panel the Chairman thanked members for their contribution. She also thanked Paul Trenell for his work supporting the panel since 2007. Members of the panel thanked Councillor Spencer for her work as Chairman.

101. Local Development Framework – Results of the Consultation:

The panel received a presentation from the Forward Planning and Conservation Team Leader and considered his previously circulated report. The ensuing discussion is summarised below:

Councillors asked about the future of the Local Development Framework (LDF) under the unitary authority. They were informed that Georgina Clampitt-Dix had been appointed to oversee the process. Further consultation was scheduled for June-July 2009 and submission of the LDF was expected in September 2009. In the long-term the South Wiltshire LDF would be integrated into the Wiltshire LDF produced by the unitary authority. Members stressed the need for the Forward Planning Unit working on the South Wiltshire section of the LDF to be located in South Wiltshire.



Councillors were eager to see extensive debate and discussion with members and the public during the continuation and conclusion of the LDF. Specifically, members wished to see greater engagement from external partners and infrastructure experts such as utilities companies.

The panel emphasised that improving existing infrastructure was necessary, as well as providing infrastructure to support new developments. To this end, members suggested that all Parish Councils be contacted and asked to notify Forward Planning of any infrastructure problems in their local areas. This information could feed into ongoing work to identify the most pressing infrastructure problems in the district

Members expressed scepticism at the demands placed on the LDF by the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). The officer explained that the LDF would not be approved if it failed to conform to the RSS and that there was no option but to aim for the specified government targets. It was noted that the panel's concerns on house occupancy rates and population growth rates had not been answered by Wiltshire County Council, the South West Regional Development Agency or the Office for National Statistics.

It was noted that Community Area Plans are now expected to address requirements for housing, jobs and infrastructure in their area. Parishes, Community Area Partnerships and Area Boards need to ensure that this new requirement is followed through.

With regard to the recession members asked that provision be made for extreme circumstances, with specific reference to a potential increase in homelessness. It was suggested that contingency plans for providing temporary housing be considered. One suggestion was the erection of short-term pre-fabricated housing, if necessary.

Members stressed that quality was the critical factor in securing local approval of development. They felt that too many developments failed to conform to the character of the surrounding area.

The panel felt that many houses were vastly under-occupied and strategies for encouraging cohabitation should be considered, along with encouraging house designs suitable for multi-generation occupation.

The relationship between the LDF and the New Forest was raised. Members felt that the status with regard to forward planning of the parts of the New Forest that lie within Wiltshire needed to be made very clear; that is for LDF purposes New Forest is part of Government Office of the South East and not part of Government Office of the South West. The officer agreed to contact the newly appointed Director of Strategy & Planning at the New Forest to discuss any arising issues.

The panel thanked David Milton and the Forward Planning & Transportation team for their extensive efforts over the process of the LDF, and for their work throughout the lifetime of the panel.

Recommended to Cabinet:

That the following recommendations be adopted by Cabinet:

- 1) That the Forward Planning & Transportation Unit should consult all parishes in South Wiltshire regarding infrastructure problems in their areas as part of the process of identifying critical weaknesses in infrastructure;
- 2) That the Forward Planning & Transportation Unit should consider producing contingency plans in anticipation of a potential increase in homelessness associated with the recession;
- 3) That future local needs for housing, jobs and infrastructure be considered by parishes and community area partnerships, in particular when community area plans are produced.

Resolved: that

- 1) the report be noted;
- 2) the recommendations to Cabinet be endorsed.

102. City Centre Management Scrutiny Review:

The panel considered the previously circulated report of the Senior Democratic Services Officer. Councillor Spencer thanked Councillor Holt, Chair of the Scrutiny Review Group, for his work on the review.

Members did not feel that the figures supported Market Square redesign as strongly as stated in the report. It was agreed that the figures would be revisited and the report amended accordingly. Members emphasised the importance of managing the use of the Market Square effectively, agreeing that removing the cars, planting more trees and staging more events and more entertainment in the square, possibly

through letting the square commercially, would do as much to invigorate the city's economy as a complete redesign of the space.

Councillor Holt asked that the membership of the Scrutiny Review Group be stated into the report.

Councillors asked that the row 'Total Responses' be deleted from the tables on pages 5, 7, 8 and 14.

Resolved: That

- 1) That the report be noted;
- 2) That following the requested amendments the survey results be forwarded along with councillors' comments to the City Centre Management Partnership and the forthcoming Salisbury City Council.

The meeting closed at 7:51

Public in attendance: 0