

MINUTES OF CABINET

2 DECEMBER 2019

PRESENT:

Councillors Lowe (Chairman), Mrs Crane, Poole, Roberts, Ms Robbins and Mrs Simpson-Vince.

Councillors Douglas, McQueen, Mrs O'Rourke and Roodhouse were also in attendance.

57. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2019 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

58. QUESTION TIME

In accordance with the Council's public question time procedure, Mr Brian Coleman asked the following question of the Leader of the Council, Councillor Lowe:

Your response to my question last month was much appreciated. However, the content gives rise to a supplementary question regarding the overall plan/vision for Rugby and its application to the SWRSPD.

In your response you reference that "Central Government has been clear that one of the key aims of the planning system is the achievement of sustainable development. A local plan Inspector would not approve the adoption of a local plan containing an allocation like this that would be contrary to this aim."

The Local Plan (Rugby Borough Council Local Plan 2011-2031 June 2019) vision states under the *Economic* heading of *Spatial Objectives* "To ensure the Borough has an expanding and diverse economy where manufacturing and engineering remains strong, the service sector grows, and there is not over reliance on logistics, transport and distribution". It seems that the proposed prime mover for economic expansion in SW Rugby, in a green field, adjacent to Green Belt is contradictory to that objective.

My question is this 'Can the public be given an opportunity to hear a presentation by the Council at a public meeting regarding the SWRSPD where the overall vision for the Rugby plan be expressed in terms that residents of Rugby can appreciate and be able to ask questions for clarification?'

We are currently in a 'consultation phase' (due to end this week) and residents are expected to respond to legal documents the comprehension of which may exclude many people from responding; the 'consultation' only encompasses the written word rather than the opportunity for discussion, which the word 'consultation' partially means. Planning applications for SWR will be fully funded by developers whereas the balancing view by the public will not and the Public Meeting could go some way to ameliorate the situation.

Councillor Lowe, Leader of the Council responded as below:

Thank you for submitting your question for consideration at this evening's Cabinet. Before responding I would like to pick up your initial point regarding economic expansion and employment growth.

As you will be aware the Local Plan was underpinned by a robust evidence base and one of those pieces of evidence included an Employment Land Study by GL Hearn. In paragraph 1.21 of the report it concludes that between 100 - 130 hectares of employment land should be delivered between 2015-2031. This can be split as follows:

- Up to 10 hectares for B1a/b development;
- Between 20-25 hectares for B2 development;
- Up to 95 hectares for B8 warehouse/ distribution development.

The Local Plan also contains a forecast for job growth over the lifetime of the Plan, indicating there will be an extra 6,700 jobs created within 'Use Class B' of which 4,300 jobs would be from B8 employment. The warehousing/distribution element of the South West Rugby allocation contributes towards this anticipated and desired employment growth and therefore, is not contradictory to the Local Plan's objectives. These issues were all debated and discussed at the Local Plan Examination and were found to be sound by the Inspector.

Moving onto your specific question around public consultation and the request for a public meeting.

In October 2019 the Borough Council adopted an updated version of its Statement of Community Involvement, (SCI). This is a publicly available document that sets out how we will consult on all planning policies and planning applications. For Supplementary Planning Documents this involves making documents available for comment at the Town Hall, online and in public libraries. We have adopted this approach for the recent Coton Park East SPD and the SW Rugby SPD for consistency. The same approach will be utilised for the forthcoming Air Quality and Developer Contributions SPDs.

I am pleased to say that the consultation arrangements for the South West Rugby SPD have actually gone beyond the requirements of the Statement of Community Involvement and the Borough Council has run the public consultation for a period of six weeks rather than the statutory requirement of four weeks. In addition, we have provided a full display in Rugby library and have published a FAQ which has been regularly updated. Officers from the Development Strategy team have been available to answer queries throughout the consultation period and we have offered formal briefings to Elected Members and to constituted organisations including Cawston PC, Dunchurch PC, Thurlaston PC and the Friends of Lime Tree Avenue. We understand that Dunchurch PC held its own public meeting to discuss the proposals and that this was very well attended.

The consultation period has now closed and the team needs to process all of the consultation responses received so that these can be factored into the final version of the SPD. On this basis we do not feel a public meeting would be appropriate and furthermore, we would not comply with our own adopted SCI if we did this outside of the agreed consultation period.

To offer you reassurance, it should be noted that the SPD is independently produced by the Borough Council with the input of its independent evidence base, its statutory consultees and the consultation responses received.

Therefore the SPD is completely separate from any planning applications and the two issues should not be conflated. Instead, the SPD will set the detailed framework to help direct developers and to guide the determination of future planning applications.

In terms of next steps, the final SPD will need to be considered and debated by Full Council in February 2020 before its formal adoption.

Corporate Resources Portfolio

59. UPDATE ON GENERAL FUND BUDGET SETTING 2020/21

Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Corporate Resources and Chief Financial Officer (Part 1 – agenda item 5) concerning an update on the draft General Fund revenue budget position for 2020/21.

RESOLVED THAT -

- (1) the updated draft General Fund Revenue position for 2020/21 be noted; and
- (2) Cabinet considers the key decisions identified to date and identifies other policy or service changes required for consideration to deliver a balanced budget for 2020/21; and
- (3) Portfolio Holders work in conjunction with Heads of Service to identify other policy or service changes required for consideration to deliver a balanced budget for 2020/21.

60. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2020/21

Cabinet considered the report of the Executive Director (Part 1 – agenda item 6) concerning the Council's calendar of meetings for 2020/21.

RESOLVED THAT -

- (1) the Calendar of Meetings for 2020/21, as at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved; and
- (2) all Cabinet, committee meetings and task groups start at 5.30pm with effect from the 2020/21 municipal year.

Communities and Homes Portfolio

61. DRAFT HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT CAPITAL AND REVENUE BUDGETS 2020/21 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2020-24

Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Corporate Resources and Chief Financial Officer (Part 1 – agenda item 7) concerning the draft HRA revenue and capital position for 2020/21.

RESOLVED THAT – the draft revenue and capital budgets at Appendices A and B for 2020/21 be noted.

Items considered en bloc

62. TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT 2019/20 – PROGRESS REPORT

Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Corporate Resources and Chief Financial Officer (Part 1 – agenda item 8) concerning progress on the Council's treasury management activities for the first half of 2019/20.

RESOLVED THAT –

- (1) The report be noted;
- (2) the monitoring and review of the Treasury Management indicators be agreed; and
- (3) IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL THAT -
 - (a) the amended Approved Counterparties Investment List (Appendix A) be approved; and
 - (b) the amended Treasury Management Indicator for Principal sums invested for periods longer than 364 days be approved.

63. MOTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC UNDER SECTION 100(A)(4) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

RESOLVED THAT - under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of information defined in paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Communities and Homes Portfolio

64. COMMUNITY ADVICE AND SUPPORT TEAM STAFFING REVIEW

Cabinet considered the private report of the Head of Communities and Homes (Part 2 – agenda item 1) concerning a staffing review of the Community Advice and Support team.

RESOLVED THAT - IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL THAT -

- (1) the new structure for the Community Advice and Support Team (CAST), as detailed in the report, be approved; and
- (2) a supplementary General Fund revenue budget of £64,730 to fund the structure changes noted above to be met from MHCLG Flexible Homelessness Support Grant be approved.

Item considered en bloc

65. WRITE OFFS

Cabinet considered the private report of the Head of Corporate Resources and Chief Financial Officer (Part 2 – agenda item 2) concerning write offs.

RESOLVED THAT – the schedule of write offs, as at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

CHAIRMAN