



Place Overview
Committee

2 March 2021

2.00 pm

Item

3

Public

**MINUTES OF THE PLACE OVERVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 5
NOVEMBER 2020
10.00 AM - 12.22 PM**

Responsible Officer: Sarah Townsend
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Present

Councillor Joyce Barrow (Chairman)
Councillors Andy Boddington, Julian Dean, Rob Gittins, Paul Milner (Vice Chairman),
Dan Morris, Pamela Moseley, Paul Wynn and Nicholas Bardsley (Substitute) (substitute
for Simon Harris)

73 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Gerald Dakin, Simon Harris
and William Parr. Councillor Nick Bardsley was in attendance as a substitute for
Councillor Simon Harris.

74 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Members were reminded that they must not participate in the discussion or voting on
any matter in which they had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and should leave the
room prior to the commencement of the debate.

There were no Disclosable Pecuniary Interests declared.

75 Minutes of the Meeting held on 3rd September 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd September 2020 were confirmed as a correct
record.

76 Public Question Time

Four questions were received from members of the public.

From: Mr Peter Clare, Member of Selattyn and Gobowen Parish Council

Mr Clare's question related to whether Shropshire Council had a duty of care to those of its residents who lived adjacent to one of the county's 'tractor riddled' narrow lanes. A full copy of the question and response provided is attached to the web page for the meeting and also attached to the signed minutes.

In addition to the response provided, it was noted that a reference group of interested parties had been set up to consider matters regarding agricultural vehicles and rural roads. Mr Clare had indicated that he wanted to be part of this group and the Chairman of the Place Overview Committee asked that he be included.

From: Ms Emma Bullard

Ms Bullard asked two questions relating to the agenda item on the North West Relief Road and specifically paragraphs 3.1 and 8.3 of the report. A full copy of the questions and responses provided is attached to the web page for the meeting and also attached to the signed minutes.

From: Mr Mike Streetly

Mr Streetly asked four questions relating to the agenda item on the North West Relief Road and specifically the traffic levels, timescales, budget and water supply. A full copy of the questions and responses provided is attached to the web page for the meeting and also attached to the signed minutes.

From: Mr Frank Oldaker, Shrewsbury Friends of the Earth

Mr Oldaker asked two questions relating to the agenda item on the North West Relief Road and specifically the claim that the North West Relief Road would reduce traffic in the centre of Shrewsbury and improve air quality. A full copy of the questions and responses provided is attached to the web page for the meeting and also attached to the signed minutes.

77 **Member Question Time**

One question was received from Councillor Julian Dean.

Councillor Dean was in attendance to ask his question in relation to the emergency social distancing measures across Shropshire. A full copy of the question and response provided is attached to the web page for the meeting and also attached to the signed minutes.

Councillor Dean was allowed to ask a supplementary question regarding staffing and when further consultation with the public, particularly in relation to the New Street proposals, would take place. The Head of Transport and the Environment responded by acknowledging Councillor Dean's comments and commented that he was pleased that the temporary measures implemented in New Street had been well received by members of the public. However, the staff undertaking this work were also looking at the other social distancing measures across the county, as well as dealing with many other duties and issues.

78 **Agricultural Vehicles and Rural Roads**

Mr John Campion (Police and Crime Commissioner) and Chief Inspector Mark Reilly (West Mercia Police) were in attendance for this item.

The committee received a verbal update from the Head of Transport and the Environment, Shropshire Council, who explained that, following the consideration of this item at the committee's last meeting, the first meeting of the liaison group had been arranged for 24th November 2020 with representatives from the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office, West Mercia Police, National Farmers' Union of England and Wales (NFU) and Shropshire Council having already confirmed their attendance. The initial terms of reference had also been issued.

In addition, reference group meetings would also be set up, consisting of representatives of Town and Parish Councils, Shropshire Association of Local Councils (SALC) and other interested parties. They would provide further detailed evidence and support to the liaison group.

The Police and Crime Commissioner reassured the committee that road safety was a priority and that he was grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the liaison group and looked forward to playing a meaningful part.

Chief Inspector Mark Reilly gave his assurance that he would be present at the liaison group meetings and commented that West Mercia's Rural and Business Officer had good communications with both the farming communities and the NFU and provided education in relation to the legislation of agricultural vehicles on rural roads. People were encouraged to use Operation SNAP (an initiative whereby members of the public can report and submit digital footage showing potential traffic offences that they have witnessed, including agricultural vehicles).

In response to a question, the Head of Transport and the Environment outlined the procedure for how he envisaged the reference group feeding into the liaison group and stated that he would give further consideration to the suggestion that there be a parish council representative on the liaison group.

The Chairman requested that the minutes of the committee's last meeting be sent to the Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Inspector Mark Reilly for their information.

RESOLVED:

That following each meeting of the liaison group, the Place Overview Committee receives a report relating to this at their next committee meeting.

79 **North West Relief Road**

The committee received the report of the Strategic Projects Executive Manager which updated them on the North West Relief Road (NWRR) project programme, budget forecasts, environmental assessment process and the current opportunities and risks around a combined NWRR and Flood Alleviation Scheme (FAS). The process of developing the Full Business Case for the NWRR incorporating these elements was also detailed.

Councillor Dean Carroll, Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Services and Climate Change, was in attendance for this item and spoke about the environmental impact and climate change in regard to the NWRR. He explained that the route of the NWRR had been slightly amended to offer greater protection to Hencott Pool and also spoke about biodiversity, the cycle lane (which would be one of the best specialist cycle paths to be delivered in Shropshire) and how one of the overriding principles was to move moving traffic out of Shrewsbury town centre, thereby improving the air quality within the town centre and reducing the CO2 impact of journeys.

The Strategic Projects Executive Manager presented a summary of his report to the committee and commented that a full carbon report would also be prepared. In terms of the current out-turn forecast window, it was noted that the worst case scenario was an £8,518,793 overspend and the best case scenario was a £5,851,140 underspend.

During the discussion and responding to questions from the committee, the following was explained:

- A comment was made that further information regarding the wider economic benefits and the potential development opportunities for new businesses would be useful in future reports. The Strategic Projects Executive Manager provided reassurance that these points were being considered.
- Land costs, utilities diversions and the ground conditions on which the NWRR was to be built, were the issues that could potentially cause an overspend.
- How the Council was protected financially in terms of potential overspends was outlined and the incentives in place to avoid them.
- A question was asked regarding whether the Outline Business Case still had credibility given the continued growth in traffic nationally and issues concerning carbon, COVID-19 and climate and environmental changes. The Strategic Projects Executive Manager commented that, whilst the Outline Business Case was submitted to DfT in 2017, that was why there were protocols in place to revisit it with a Full Business Case.
- In terms of traffic growth and modelling, comprehensive local data had been collated and analysed relating to movements in the town. Further surveys would continue be undertaken prior to the Full Business Case.
- The NWRR would allow traffic to be taken away from the town centre and therefore, the journeys of cyclists and walkers would be undertaken in a town that was safer, with improved air quality and a more pleasant and inviting environment.
- In terms of land acquisitions costs, it was confirmed that this was expected to happen through negotiation, but as a risk management approach, a compulsory purchase process was also being run behind it.
- In terms of acreage of land to be purchased, it is approximately 7 kilometres by around 200-300 meters in width.
- Regarding the Severn Valley Water Management Scheme, it was requested that the cost and environmental damage in reducing flood risk downstream to the properties upstream in both Shropshire and Mid-Wales be looked at and that an estimate and impact assessment, both upstream from the proposed barrier and downstream, be undertaken. The Director of Place responded that the Environment Agency were currently undertaking modelling work which was due to be completed early in the new year. He suggested that this be brought back

to a future meeting of the committee as soon as the information was received and thought this was likely to be in Spring 2021.

RESOLVED:

- (a) To note the NWRR budget and programme updates.
- (b) To note that further reports will be brought back to Scrutiny, annually for the next 2 years, and then 6 monthly or quarterly as required, during the preparation of the Full Business Case, Contractor Procurement, and Construction phase.
- (c) That the Place Overview Committee reviews the Severn Valley Water Management Scheme early in the new year and that this be added onto the committee's work programme.
- (d) That the Place Overview Committee receives a report on the likely changes in the national policy and advice, since the submission of the Outline Business Case to DfT in December 2017, in order to assess the likely impact on the Full Business Case.

80 Shrewsbury Shopping Centre Update

The committee received the report of the Interim Head of Economic Growth which updated them on the latest performance of the shopping centres, the progress with the programme for the next phases of development and provided them with an update on the next phases of the Big Town Plan and the Strategic Development Framework for Riverside.

Despite the exceptional and unprecedented challenges of the year, it was noted that the town had continued to perform well against the national picture in terms of footfall. However, there had been a decline when compared to last year's footfall levels.

During the discussion and responding to questions from the committee, the following was explained:

- A comment was made concerning the long term fundamental changes in the way that people shopped, with the increasing decline in traditional retail shopping and the move towards online shopping. In looking at the redevelopment of Riverside and Pride Hill, it was questioned whether consideration was being given to residential opportunities and not just at another form of retail and commercial development. The Director of Place provided reassurance that this was being considered and commented that the shopping centres had been purchased to help manage the transition.
- A report on projected ROI figures and yields was being considered at the December Cabinet meeting.
- Regarding the proposal for a cinema in Pride Hill, it was confirmed that this was being looked into.
- A question was asked regarding housing and whether Cornovii could be used to help bring people back to live in the town centre with car free living which would allow for sustainable homes without having to build on green field sites. Reassurance was provided that this was being fully looking into and The Director of Place commented that he was happy for this to be added to the committee's work programme for consideration at a future meeting.

- Regarding the moving of retailers from Pride Hill to The Collective in the Darwin shopping centre, it was explained that 70% of The Collective already had tenants who were looking to move into there, particularly the independent shops. The objective was to retain as many of the retailers within the town centre as possible, by moving the ones that wished to move and finding the right accommodation for them.
- The Interim Head of Economic Growth confirmed that once proposals for the Riverside development were further established, she would come back to a future committee meeting to provide an update.
- Regarding rent holidays and help that was available to independent shops, reassurance was provided that the Council were working proactively with businesses to help support them as best they could and on a case by case basis, in order to help them survive. Some businesses had been able to access the available grant schemes.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Place Overview Committee note the findings of the report. In the context of the unprecedented challenges facing Shrewsbury shopping centres and the wider town centre, they acknowledge the progress made to date, performance of the centres and specifically the repurposing of Pride Hill and Darwin centres and the redevelopment potential of Riverside.
- (b) That the Chairman of the Place Overview Committee and the Scrutiny Officer have a discussion regarding the best way forward in terms of consideration of this item at future committee meetings, given that there are three different areas within it, namely Pride Hill, Darwin and Riverside shopping centres.

81 Work Programme 2020/21

The committee considered its proposed work programme for the remainder of the municipal year and the Scrutiny Officer was asked if he would update it to include the decisions that had been made during the meeting. In terms of the Severn Flood Alleviation Scheme, he commented that the Communities Overview Committee was already looking at the emergency response to flooding.

It was noted that the meeting scheduled for March 2021 was likely to fall within the pre-election period.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Scrutiny Officer liaise with the Chairman and Director of Place in order to review and redraft the committee's work programme and then circulate it to all members of the committee. It was agreed that it would then be considered at the committee's next meeting in December 2020 for formal approval.
- (b) That the current task and finish groups, as detailed in appendix 2 of the report, be noted.

82 Date/Time of Next Meeting of the Committee

Members noted that the next meeting of the Place Overview Committee was scheduled for 2.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 9th December 2020.

83 Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED:

That in accordance with the provision of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and Paragraph 10.4 (5) of the Council's Access to Information Rules, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item.

84 Exempt Minutes of the Last Meeting

The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 6th March 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

Signed (Chairman)

Date: