

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 2nd January, 2014

Present:- Councillor David Stringer – in the Chair

Councillors Miss Baker, Cairns, Clarke, Holland, Jones, Loades, Matthews
and Wilkes

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Mark Olszewski. A concern was also raised regarding the recent change in membership of the Committee, it was however stated that this had been done in accordance with the constitution.

3. CALL IN RELATING TO THE PROPOSED JOINT LOCAL PLAN

A report was submitted to consider the decision of Cabinet made at its meeting on 11 December 2013 in relation to the Proposed Joint Local Plan. At that meeting cabinet had given consideration to a report seeking to formally withdraw the Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan and to proceed with the preparation of a joint Local Plan with the Stoke-on-Trent City Council covering the Borough and City of Stoke-on-Trent. Following the decision of the Cabinet, a request for a call-in was made to the Chief Executive to review the decision.

The chair welcomed all parties to the meeting and invited the lead call in member to provide an explanation of reasons for the call-in and justification for the proposal set out on the call-in form. Cllr Sweeney and Cllr Tagg were representing the call in members. Reasons and comments made to the Committee included:

- That other Councils were able to fulfil their duty to cooperate without joint working.
- That there would be substantial public concern regarding the loss of decision making powers to the City Council.
- That the decision would allow another authority to have an excessive influence on the shape of the Borough's future development.
- That it was not the most economical or cost effective option.
- That The City Council would be able to use the Borough Council's green field sites just as the Borough Council could use the City Council's brownfield sites.
- That the Council should accept option B in the original report, work with other local authorities but have an individual local plan.

The Chair called upon representatives of the decision maker to provide an explanation of the decision taken and views on the alternative proposal. Cllr Snell was representing the decision maker and apologies were given for Cllr Turner who was unable to be present. Cllr Snell stated that option C was in fact the most cost effective way forward and the most economical. There would also be no loss of

decision making power for the Council as any decision would still have to be agreed by the Planning Committee and the Full Council, any decisions taken would be in the best interests of Newcastle under Lyme and all decisions would have to be based on a solid evidence base. Cllr Snell also confirmed that any joint boards would be on an equality basis. Newcastle under Lyme would retain its individual identity but note had to be taken that the Borough did share some areas with the City such as industry and travel to work routes and that if jobs were created it would benefit both areas. Cllr Snell stated that no one wanted to see green field sites built upon and that by working jointly with Stoke a preferential weighting could be worked out to try and avoid such an eventuality. Cllr Snell reaffirmed the point that Option C was the most cost effective way forward.

Members requested clarification from officers regarding the cost effectiveness of the options and it was confirmed that option C was the most cost effective and preferred option. Savings would be recognised in the preparation of the evidence base and the examination costs.

Members questioned officers regarding the options before listening to a summing up of the arguments from both sides.

The chair call for a vote of those in favour of the proposal set out in the call in form, 3 members were in favour and 6 were against.

The call in was rejected and the original decision taken by the Cabinet took effect.

Resolved: That the call in be rejected and the original decision taken by the Cabinet now take effect.

4. URGENT BUSINESS

COUNCILLOR DAVID STRINGER
Chair