

ECONOMY & PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 11th September, 2024

Time of Commencement: 7.00 pm

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Present:	Councillor Mark Holland (Chair)	
Councillors:	Burnett-Faulkner	Gorton
	Edginton-Plunkett	Grocott
Apologies:	Councillor(s) Bettley-Smith, Moss, Panter, Parker and J Waring	
Substitutes:	Councillor Rupert Adcock (In place of Deputy Mayor - Councillor Robert Bettley-Smith) Councillor Philip Reece (In place of Councillor Robert Moss) Councillor John Tagg (In place of Mayor - Councillor Barry Panter) Councillor Joan Whieldon (In place of Councillor Andrew Parker)	
Officers:	Allan Clarke Gordon Mole	Planning Policy Manager Chief Executive
Also in attendance:	Councillor Andrew Fear Councillor Stephen Sweeney	Portfolio Holder - Strategic Planning Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder - Finance, Town Centres and Growth

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

Cllr Whieldon proposed that Cllr Holland be appointed as Chair in the absence of Cllrs Parker and Bettley-Smith. This was seconded by Cllr Burnett-Faulkner.

Resolved: That Cllr Holland be appointed as Chair.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest stated.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved: That the minutes of the previous meeting held on July 11th 2024 be agreed as a true and accurate record.

4. LOCAL PLAN UPDATE

The Planning Policy Manager presented the update report on the Draft Local Plan and informed members of consultation events that had taken place including Red

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Street Community Centre which was attended by 14 people. A total of 70 representations made by 44 residents had been received at the time of the meeting.

The consultation would run until the 7th October 2024. Comments could be made through completing a representation form on the consultation portal or contacting the Planning Policy team via email or postal mail.

The Chair invited members to formulate questions.

Cllr Gorton wondered if all consultation events would be dropping events as opposed to public meetings. The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning confirmed that it was indeed the case and that it allowed members of the public to have one-to-one discussions with officers.

Cllr Gorton asked if the representation form had been designed and stipulated by the inspector. The Planning Policy Manager advised that the Planning Inspectorate set out a preferred template to assist inspectors at future examinations. This should not stop residents from expressing views in other formats that they liked which would be processed and sent on to the inspector.

Cllr Grocott enquired about timescales and if any guidelines could be put on the website for people. The Planning Policy Manager responded that the plan was intended to be submitted for examination by the end of the calendar year subject to representations received. While a specific date could not be given yet some information could be added to the website in due course.

The Chair referred to the amendment proposed at Full Council that the consultation be delayed and asked if the portfolio holder or officer had any comments. The Chair also wondered whether delaying the process would have made any difference and if future changes were to be expected.

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning commented that would the consultation had been delayed recent changes proposed in the draft National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF”) would have applied including the requirement for a larger number of housing units. There were no indications that things would change further from the government side but the possibility was not to be discarded.

The Planning Policy Manager noted that in terms of the NPPF the consultation was currently taking place and would run until 24th September. Some transitional arrangements had been included within the draft NPPF’s package of proposals of which paragraph 226 which indicated that the 2023 version of the NPPF would apply in considering the proposals contained in the emerging Local Plan, given its status, at Regulation 19 stage.

Cllr Whieldon congratulated officers on their thorough work.

Resolved: That the update on the progress of developing a new Local Plan for the Borough be noted.

[Watch the debate here](#)

5. TOWN DEAL AND FUTURE HIGH STREET FUND

The Deputy Leader introduced the report on the delivery of the Town Deal and Future High Street Funds project.

The Chief Executive presented the report, highlighting latest updates on York Place, Castle Car Park, Aspire Housing, Midway Car Park, Knutton and Chesterton, the Zanzibar Enterprise Units, Sustainable Travel, Digital Infrastructure and Canal Pathways.

The Chair invited questions from members.

Cllr Reece wondered if any party had expressed an interest in running the new hotel. The Deputy Leader advised that Ibis had been in touch.

About the Midway Car Park, Cllr Reece asked if Capital and Centric had undertaken any assessment of the structure in term of viability. The Chief Executive confirmed that technical surveys had been carried out.

Cllr Gorton enquired about planters in the market. The Deputy Leader advised that there had been a delay in the delivery of the planters which were currently stuck in transit. While this was frustrating the planting season didn't start until October and therefore the consequences should be limited.

Cllr Grocott expressed his disappointment at the way things were progressing in Chesterton and Chatterley Valley, wondering about the withdrawal of the intended end user for plot D and how this would impact the Council. The Deputy Leader responded that the Council wouldn't be impacted as the site would not be developed without an end user, and it may well end up being beneficial. Cllr Grocott wished to know more about the current visibility in terms of funding. The Chief Executive noted that there were ongoing discussions with potential investors.

Cllr Adcock welcomed the Sustainable Travel update and the new circular route providing better access to Keele University and asked for clarification about the source of funding. The information would be confirmed in writing and circulated to members of the Committee.

Cllr Whieldon expressed her appreciation of the work carried out by Capital and Centric around the station and of the fact the heritage façade would be kept.

The Deputy Leader commented on the list of expenditures, drawing members attention to the £865,000 that was left to spend.

Resolved: That the report on the delivery of the Town Deal and Future High Street Funds projects be noted.

[Watch the debate here](#)

6. **WORK PROGRAMME**

Resolved: That the work programme be noted.

7. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There weren't any questions received from members of the public.

8. **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

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**Councillor Mark Holland
Chair**

Meeting concluded at 7.34 pm