

Place Shaping Working Group Minutes

Oadby and Wigston Borough Council

Wednesday 22nd October 2014

Councillors:

Councillor J W Boyce (Chair)
Councillor L A Bentley
Councillor J Kaufman
Councillor Mrs L Kaufman

Officers:

Adrian Thorpe	(Planning Policy and Regeneration Manager)
Kirstie Rea	(Senior Planning Policy Officer)
Jamie Carr	(Planning Policy Officer)
Judith Sturley	(Senior Economic Regeneration Officer)
Anita Pathak-Mould	(Head of Community)

1. Apologies:

Councillor L Darr
Councillor D M Carter
Councillor R Thakor
Councillor Mrs S B Morris
Councillor Mrs JM Gore
Councillor M Charlesworth

Mark Hryniw	(Town Centre Manager)
Anne Court	(Director of Services)
Daniel Britton	(Economic Regeneration Officer)
John Dickson	(Section 151 Officer)
Ed Morgan	(Planning Policy Officer)

2. Minutes and matters arising

- 2.1 No comments regarding previous minutes.
- 2.2 It was made aware to officers that William Gunning Park has had the football pitches removed; this change needs to be reflected in the Playing Pitch Strategy.

3. Presentation from the Homes and Communities Agency

- 3.1 Holly Harrow from the Homes and Communities Agency was unable to attend the meeting and therefore the presentation to Members did not take place.
- 3.2 Anita Pathak-Mould explained that the Homes and Communities Agency are seeking opportunities to assist Local Authorities in bringing forward sites for affordable housing.

- 3.3 Anita Pathak-Mould said that Holly Harrow was to present on how the Homes and Communities Agency could support Oadby and Wigston Borough Council and set out the certain options that were available to bring forward affordable housing. One of the suggested approaches is to work in partnership with a Register Social Landlord (housing association).
- 3.4 Councillor Boyce asked if Holly Harrow could present at a future meeting. It was arranged for the presentation to take place on Tuesday 28th October at 6pm prior to Policy, Finance and Finance Committee.
- 3.5 Councillor Boyce suggested that there is a desire for the Council to provide affordable homes so advice from the Homes and Communities Agency would be very helpful.

4. Town Centre Manager Update

- 4.1 An agreement has been entered into with Central Electrical Services (CES) regarding the installation and removal of the three town centres Christmas/Festive lights. Four companies returned valid tenders, which were scored on price and quality resulting in CES successful.
- 4.2 Councillor Boyce asked if the decision to appoint CES has to go through the Committee process. Adrian Thorpe responded saying that he had been advised that it did not need to go through the Committee process.
- 4.3 The lights are currently being installed in Oadby, with Wigston due to commence in the coming weeks. South Wigston lights are due to be installed during November 2014.
- 4.4 The Christmas/Festive lights switch on dates are Oadby – Saturday 1st November 2014; Wigston – Saturday 29th November 2014; and, South Wigston – Saturday 6th December 2014.
- 4.5 Councillor Boyce referred to paragraph 4.9 of the Town Centre Managers Report, which suggests that no further lights could be purchased this year. Adrian Thorpe said that no further lights could be purchased and installed this year as the ordering and delivery process has relatively long timescales. In addition the Council has allocated its spending to reflect the public realm schemes.
- 4.6 An update was given regarding the public realm works that are currently ongoing within Oadby and Wigston town centres. Both sites are due to complete during November 2014 with official opening events taking place towards late November/early December 2014.
- 4.7 As part of the public realm schemes digital media signs are to be installed (replacing the previous multi faith sign in Oadby) within both Oadby and Wigston town centres. The signs have received advertising consent meaning other stakeholders other than the local authority can advertise events etc on the signs.

4.8 Councillor Boyce asked if a report could be sent to Policy, Finance and Development Committee in February 2015 which sets out what the signs will be used for, for example what they are likely to display.

4.9 Councillor Boyce asked if invites for the opening events for the two schemes could be sent to all Members as soon as dates are confirmed.

5. Business Breakfast and Economic Regeneration Update

5.1 There were 78 attendee's at the most recent jobs fair. As a note Judith Sturley mentioned that the job seekers allowance had decreased in the last year within the Borough.

5.2 The 2nd Business Breakfast received a positive response and it was decided that there will be three business breakfasts each year. The third Business Breakfast is due to be held on the 27th January 2015.

5.3 The event on the 27th January 2015 is going to be trialled in the evening rather than the morning to see if the number of attendees increases.

5.4 To inform businesses of the event it will be promoted on the Business Directory webpage; over 400 letters will be sent out, including flyers; and South Leicestershire College will send out invites to those on their database.

5.5 Councillor J Kaufman attended the 2nd Business Breakfast and said that it was very informative, however it seemed like any grants available to businesses were very specialist.

5.6 Councillor Boyce agreed and said that he believed that the complexity of the grant process put many businesses off attempting to obtain them.

5.7 Judith Sturley mentioned that at the moment European funding rules do not allow retailers to apply for grants. There is however specialist advice available.

5.8 Councillor Boyce mentioned that he had been to all the Business Breakfasts that the Council had provided and noticed that each time the personnel was very different, which suggests that there were not many (if at all) return visitors.

6. Draft New Local Plan

6.1 A working draft of the Local Plan was presented to Members in July; this is an update to that work.

6.2 Not a huge amount has changed with the document, however the evidence base and research behind the document is evolving.

6.3 The housing section of the Draft Local Plan has seen a few changes due to the Housing Market Area wide work that is currently being undertaken, for example the SHMA.

- 6.4 Housing Market Area wide working is extremely important within the current planning system as the Regional Spatial Strategy has been abolished, which set out a number of requirements, for example housing numbers. Local authorities in Leicester and Leicestershire are working closely on a number of planning matters, including a Strategic Growth Plan that is looking to set out the location of growth within the City and County.
- 6.5 The draft New Local Plan is due to be published for Issue and Options stage during summer 2015; with adoption of the final document in 2017.
- 6.6 Although the adoption date of the new plan is a couple of years off, this should not be a problem as the current plan is deemed up to date.
- 6.7 Councillor Boyce noted that Housing Market Area wide decision making is difficult and complex. It was mentioned that Councillor Boyce had experience of this as he attended the Members Advisory Group which is a HMA wide planning group of officers and lead members.

7. Stoughton Farm Park Development Brief

- 7.1 The previous Stoughton Farm Park Development Brief is now out of date so needed updating. The brief seeks an element of control over the types and scale of development that occurs at the farm park.
- 7.2 The brief will not restrict all development; it seeks to encourage certain forms of development such as small scale retail associated with the farm park.
- 7.3 Councillor Boyce asked if specific types of retail could be encouraged, such as craft. It was explained that this could be added into the brief.
- 7.4 Councillor J Kaufman asked if the brief could seek to improve public transport links to the north of Oadby. Adrian Thorpe said that the brief was focussed specifically on the Stoughton Farm Park site rather than transport links to and from the park.

8. Any other Business

- 8.1 The Investor Prospectus is due to be launch during November 2014.
- 8.2 Mark Hryniw is working with the Pride of the Borough Group to promote the Pride of the Borough Discount Card.

9. Date of Next Meeting

- 9.1 Thursday 12 February 2015, 18:30, Committee Room, Council Offices, Wigston.