

Place Shaping Working Group Minutes

Oadby and Wigston Borough Council

Thursday 11 June 2015

Councillors Present:

Councillor Boyce (Chair)
Councillor Bentley
Councillor Carter
Councillor J Kaufman
Councillor S Morris
Councillor Thakor (substitute for Councillor Dave)

Officers Present:

Adrian Thorpe (Planning Policy and Regeneration Manager)
Jamie Carr (Planning Policy Officer)
Judith Sturley (Senior Economic Regeneration Officer)
Mark Hryniw (Town Centre Manager)

1. Apologies:

Councillor Darr
Councillor Barr
Councillor Boulter
Councillor Dave

2. Minutes and matters arising

- 2.1 There have been no further meetings regarding the Duty to Cooperate, therefore no updates.
- 2.2 Adrian Thorpe has sent out an email with an update regarding the Network Rail Consultation.
- 2.3 Councillor Boyce asked if the Council had gained ownership of Oadby Grange Country Park. Adrian Thorpe was going to check with the Council's Legal department and email Councillor Boyce with an update.
- 2.4 Councillor Kaufman asked whether the Oadby Grange Country Park matter would need to go back to Committee as it had been a long time. Councillor Boyce said that it would be best to see what the position is first before considering whether it needs to go back to Members.

3. Town Centre Managers Update

- 3.1 Mark Hryniw outlined the current void rates within the three town centres and suggested that all three of the town centres had seen a drop in the number of void units since the last count and that all three centres compared favourably to the National average.

- 3.2 Councillor Kaufman asked what was happening with the Oadby Library public house site in Oadby. Mark Hryniw said that the site was being advertised for sale and that it was in the Council's Investor Prospectus. Progress is being sought regarding bringing the site forward as a development opportunity.
- 3.3 Councillor Kaufman and Councillor Thakor asked whether or not the current hand car wash on the Oadby Library public house site was licenced. This was going to be checked by officers.
- 3.4 Mark Hryniw updated on the digital display screens and said that the advertisement policy was due to go to Committee in July for Member approval. Although there was initial teething problems with the digital display screen software, this seems to have been rectified.
- 3.5 Councillor Thakor suggested that Wigston Police wanted to advertise their beat personnel on the signs. Adrian Thorpe said that he had spoken to Wigston police and that they were to produce an advertisement.
- 3.6 Mark Hryniw highlighted key upcoming event dates for the three town centres (as Town Centre Managers Report 11 June 2015).
- 3.7 Councillor Kaufman asked why the festive lights within Oadby had been left on throughout January. Mark Hryniw explained that Oadby Traders had asked for the lights to be left on. Councillor Boyce asked if all of the proposed dates for switch-on/off could be advertised on the digital display screens.
- 3.8 Mark Hryniw updated regarding Christmas/festive lights for 2015. Councillor S Morris suggested that there was a faulty lamp post that kept blowing the lights in South Wigston last Christmas. Mark Hryniw said that the County Council electricians had been out to check and said that there was no fault with the lamp post, however he was going to get them checked again for a second opinion.
- 3.9 Councillor Boyce asked whether the County Council's roll out of LED lamps would have an effect on the Christmas lights. Mark Hryniw suggested that it would not as it was to do with the bulbs rather than the whole post.
- 3.10 Councillor S Morris asked if the road closure orders had been completed. Mark Hryniw said that all the orders had been signed and sealed.

4. Economic Regeneration Strategy Review

- 4.1 Judith Sturley explained that a review of the Economic Development Strategy was underway, as the previous strategy was for the time period 2009 to 2014. Judith Sturley read through the key points of her report and outlined the proposed structure of the Economic Development Strategy Review. Judith Sturley also suggested that once drafted the Economic Development Strategy Review would be taken to Policy, Finance and Development Committee for Member approval.

- 4.2 Judith Sturley said that once approved the Economic Development Strategy would be an important document in applying for future project funding, for example Horsewell Lane, No. 41-43 Canal Street and Blaby Road Park Pavilion.
- 4.3 Councillor Boyce asked what the publication timescales were. Adrian Thorpe suggested that a key objectives report would come back to the next Place Shaping Group, then onto Policy, Finance and Development Committee.
- 4.4 Councillor Boyce asked if the Direction for Growth employment allocation should be part of the Economic Development Strategy Review. It was agreed that it should be.

5. Stoughton Grange Development Brief

- 5.1 Adrian Thorpe explained the reason for the redrafted Stoughton Grange Development brief and said that the consultation had received 8 responses from interested parties.
- 5.2 Adrian Thorpe said that the main response to the consultation had been from the Co-op which suggested that they were currently considering development options on the site and that the brief should be more flexible with regards to the alternative uses of the site. Adrian Thorpe also said that the Co-op had been contacted to arrange a meeting, however nothing had been heard back yet.
- 5.3 Adrian Thorpe suggested that the Development Brief should not be adopted prior to the meeting with the Co-op. He said that the Core Strategy has specific policies relating to Green Wedge areas, therefore not adopting the document at this moment in time would not pose a threat to the misuse of the site.
- 5.4 Councillor Kaufman asked why the EDDR had been protected through the Core Strategy process. He suggested that it was showing up on title searches and could cause issues for land purchases. Adrian Thorpe said that the County Council wanted to retain the designation therefore it had to be protected.
- 5.5 Councillor Thakor suggested that he had not been consulted with the Development Brief draft document. Adrian Thorpe said that the document had been circulated to all Councillors that were on the consultation database.
- 5.6 Councillor Boyce suggested that it was positive the Co-op is willing to work with the Council on the brief.

6. Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

- 6.1 Adrian Thorpe explained what the Sustainability Appraisal was and that it was required by European directive. In essence, it is a document that appraises potential development sites proposed to come forward through the Local Plan Review process. The scoping report is the first step in the Sustainability Appraisal process.
- 6.2 The Scoping Report has been through two rounds of consultation with the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England, all of which are now happy with the contents of the document.

- 6.3 The main Sustainability Appraisal report will be produced alongside the Local Plan Review and will be consulted upon at the same time as the Local Plan Review also.

7. Residential and Employment Land Availability Reports

- 7.1 Jamie Carr highlighted the key points of each document and their importance to the planning and decision making process.
- 7.2 Jamie Carr explained that the Council had provided in excess of the annual housing requirement of 90 for the period of April 2014 to March 2015 and that the forecast was for this (in excess provision) to continue in the forthcoming years. This is due to relatively high numbers of appropriate housing development sites currently.
- 7.3 Jamie Carr also explained that it was imperative that the Council kept identifying an up to date supply of deliverable development sites to ensure that unsustainable development could not come forward.

8. Leicester and Leicestershire Regeneration Funding Opportunities

- 8.1 Judith Sturley outlined the potential funding opportunities available to the authority, for example EU Structural Fund 2014 – 2020, Local Growth Fund 2015 – 2012 and City Deal 2014.
- 8.2 Councillor Boyce asked if there was a chance that the Council would be able to secure funding. Judith Sturley said that there may be the opportunity to bid for funding for construction jobs. She also mentioned that PERA were putting together a bid for funding for non city location enterprise centres and that this bid could be beneficial for the Borough, ie South Wigston Enterprise Centre.
- 8.3 Councillor Kaufman asked if there was funding opportunities relating to apprenticeships and degree level and above, as he was aware that the number of people out of work at 24 years of age and older was relatively high. Judith Sturley said that there was probably not funding for this, however it would be worth speaking to employers about apprenticeships etc.

9. Any Other Business

- 9.1 None.

10. Date of Next Meeting

- 10.1 The next Place Shaping Work Group is proposed for Thursday 17th September, 2015, 18:30, Committee Room, Council Offices, Wigston.