

Place Shaping Working Group Minutes

Oadby and Wigston Borough Council

Thursday 9th June 2016

Councillors Present:

Councillor A R Bond
Councillor J W Boyce (Chair)
Councillor M V Chamberlain
Councillor L Darr
Councillor B Dave
Councillor H E Loydall
Councillor S Morris

Officers Present:

Adrian Thorpe (Planning Policy and Regeneration Manager)
Ed Morgan (Planning Policy Officer)
Jamie Carr (Planning Policy Officer)

Apologies:

Councillor L A Bentley
Councillor D A Gamble

1. Minutes and matters arising

1.1 None.

2. Local Plan Update – Presentation

2.1 Adrian Thorpe presented to Members on the key components of plan-making; the issues that need to be addressed in preparing a plan; and, the role that Members play in the process of preparing a plan.

2.2 With regards to the Duty to Co-operate, Councillor Loydall sought clarification on how a matter is resolved should an authority fail to co-operate. Adrian Thorpe explained that this has been an ongoing issue since the Duty was introduced by the Localism Act (2011) and that it places a duty upon authorities to 'co-operate' as opposed to 'agree'. Therefore, should a local authority be able to demonstrate to an inspector that they have tried to accommodate the views of their partners and actively sought to co-operate, even if their strategy isn't agreed by all partners, the Inspector for a Plan ultimately decides whether or not a local authority has complied with the Duty to Co-operate. Adrian Thorpe did however explain that the Government's Local Plans Expert Group are currently looking at the Duty to Co-operate.

2.3 Adrian Thorpe spent some time explaining why it is essential that the Council seeks to prepare and adopt a Local Plan as soon as is reasonably possible. Although the Council has an adopted Core Strategy (2010) and an adopted Town Centres Area Action Plan for Oadby and Wigston (2013), the Council now needs to prepare and adopt a new Local Plan.

2.4 Adrian Thorpe, Councillor Boyce and Jamie Carr then explained the roles and relationship between the emerging Leicester and Leicestershire Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA); the determination of each

local authority areas Objectively Assessed Need (OAN); and, the importance for the Council to maintain an up to date housing land supply of at least 5 years.

- 2.5 Adrian Thorpe gave an explanation of how much time, effort and financial investment is required to deliver all of the necessary evidence based work to underpin the successful preparation and ultimate adoption of a new Local Plan. In conclusion to the presentation, he sought Members opinions on the proposed strategy for the Plan, which could be to primarily focus development in the centres of Oadby, Wigston and South Wigston; then to consider development on suitable land within the Leicester Principal Area; and, to then make provision for a Direction for Growth.
- 2.6 Councillor Loydall expressed full support for this strategy and reiterated how important it is to focus development in the town centres in order to strengthen their vitality and viability, with particular reference to the continuous churn of retailers and businesses that Wigston town centre has seen. There is a need to continually be looking to enhance the regeneration opportunities for the Borough's centres in order to maintain the viability of the businesses that occupy them. By doing so, this will help to reduce the number of vacant units, as well as charity shops within those centres.
- 2.7 Councillor Boyce also supported the proposed strategy and highlighted the role that the Council could look to play in encouraging development in the Borough's centres in the future.
- 2.8 Adrian Thorpe explained how important it is to have a fully supported strategy and the risks that exist for the Council if the strategy is not supported by all of the Members.

3. Strategic Growth Plan – Strategic Growth Statement

- 3.1 Adrian Thorpe introduced this item and explained the context of the Strategic Growth Plan and its role in helping to shape growth across Leicester and Leicestershire in the future.
- 3.2 Councillor Boyce provided further explanation of what both the likely planning and political implications of the document are likely to be.
- 3.3 Councillor Loydall asked why the Strategic Growth Statement doesn't draw reference to the Borough of Oadby and Wigston. Councillor Boyce explained that it is a strategic document and that there is a relationship between the Strategic Growth Plan and infrastructure provision. He said that one of the most important elements of the Strategic Growth Statement is the objectives as these will set the context for the Strategic Growth Plan itself.
- 3.4 Councillor Loydall made a series of specific comments on the draft Strategic Growth Statement that were noted by Officers.

4. Date of Next Meeting

- 4.1 Thursday, 14th July 2016.
- 4.2 Councillor M V Chamberlain gave her apologies for that meeting.