

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLACE SHAPING WORKING GROUP HELD AT THE
COUNCIL OFFICES, STATION ROAD, WIGSTON ON WEDNESDAY, 21 JUNE 2017
COMMENCING AT 6.30 PM**

PRESENT

Councillor J W Boyce (Chair)

COUNCILLORS

L A Bentley
G A Boulter
Mrs H E Loydall

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

J Carr (Planning Policy Team Leader)
M Hryniw (Town Centre Manager)
A Thorpe (Head of Planning, Development and Regeneration)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Bond, Councillor Darr, Councillor Kevin Loydall, Councillor Sharon Morris, Councillor Bhupendra Dave, Edward Morgan, Judith Sturley.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 15 SEPTEMBER 2016

Agreed.

3. TOWN CENTRE MANAGER'S REPORT

Mark Hryniw mentioned that the empty unit rate in Wigston was 4%. In Oadby, since his report was written Tippets Florists and the Co-op have closed. However, The Tipu Sultan has opened. In South Wigston, the empty unit rate remains steady with a rise of just one empty unit.

Councillor Helen Loydall commented that often new units are not retail and although this may create a 'night time economy' it does not help encourage shoppers and neither does it help if they are cafes and are closed in the evening.

Councillor John Boyce suggested that we need larger anchor stores in the centres of Wigston and Oadby and that this would only be achieved through redevelopment. Mark Hryniw said that Wigston has been buoyed by the new occupiers in the former Co-op unit on Bell Street.

In response to a question about the digital signs Mark Hryniw said that the rates bill received at the end of the last year was higher than anticipated. Rates are set by The Valuation Office. The cost is about £600 per year per sign. Despite this, it was agreed to progress with the additional sign in South Wigston. It was noted that this will be located outside the chip shop/Millers which was an agreed location. Mark Hryniw will also explore methods of increasing commercial advertising, such as use of an agent. Councillor Helen Loydall suggested 'Commercial Break' or 'Local Ads'.

The annual road closure application has been submitted but there are delays with Leicestershire County Council requiring lots of information and generally being slow in

providing a response. Councillor John Boyce suggested that we need to consider recent incidents as part of risk assessments. Councillor Bill Boulter said that he would raise the issue of slow response with the County Council at his next meeting with Phil Crossland.

The Council has supported town centre groups in purchasing their own signage for events and will store these on behalf of the groups.

Mark Hryniw provided details of forthcoming events including the Oadby Car Show and Christmas events.

In relation to Farmers Markets, Mark Hryniw reported that in Oadby the market is now being operated by two traders and has moved to outside the former Co-op. It is doing well. Wigston market is being operated by a trader and there is confidence that there will be an upturn in trade during the rest of the year.

Regarding Christmas lights, Mark Hryniw said that it is impossible to guarantee that all lights will be on all or the time. However, work is taking place during this year which it is hoped will improve the reliability and resilience of the lights, such as new wiring and sockets. Faulty timers have also been replaced.

Councillor Helen Loydall asked if the contractor was properly checking the equipment before it is erected. Mark Hryniw confirmed that it is but lights and associated infrastructure can be damaged once up. There was some discussion about whether there had ever been red lights in the Wigston Christmas Tree. Councillor John Boyce asked if further lights could be put into the Wigston Christmas Tree.

Mark Hryniw confirmed that all Christmas lights will be turned off by the 6th January.

Councillor Helen Loydall asked if the oak tree on the Wakes Road roundabout could be decorated instead and the cone Christmas Tree on the roundabout moved to another location. Mark Hryniw said that a request had previously been made to move it to adjacent to the Pocket Park on Bell Street and this was agreed.

4. LOCAL PLAN UPDATE (VERBAL)

At the recent All Members Briefing a discussion took place about whether the plan period would go to 2031 or 2036. Jamie Carr confirmed that it is only possible to go to 2031 because that is all our transport evidence will enable us to do. Councillor John Boyce queried whether there was a risk in only going to 2031. It was accepted there was, but this would be less of a risk than going to 2036 without sufficient transport evidence.

Sites that were potentially going to be allocated within the Local Plan were discussed. All of the sites that were to be proposed within the Local Plan (subject to evidence) were accepted as appropriate. It was acknowledged that due to the levels of development that the Borough needs up to 2031, all sites have to be developed, including town centre sites.

It was reported that the current programme is for the Local Plan will go to Committee in September / October, with consultation to follow.

Councillor Lee Bentley asked about minimum size standards in relation to houses being converted to flats.

It was agreed that officers would undertake some work on need and demand regarding conversion of family homes to flats. Officers will also investigate the use of minimum space

standards and establish whether they would be appropriate for the Borough. Councillor Helen Loydall also noted that the Council should encourage more bungalows. Councillor Lee Bentley asked the extent to which the Council would protect garden land for development. Jamie Carr mentioned that officers are looking at this through the Landscape Character Assessment and the new Local Plan.

5. STRATEGIC GROWTH PLAN UPDATE (VERBAL)

Adrian Thorpe talked through a presentation slideshow regarding the Strategic Growth Plan and where the favoured growth options were.

Members asked if the Strategic Growth Plan was planning for now or for the future. Adrian Thorpe confirmed that the Strategic Growth Plan was planning for growth post 2031 and up to 2050, due to all Local Authorities involved in the preparation of the Strategic Growth Plan, having or preparing Local Plans that already plan up to 2031.

6. REGENERATION PROJECTS UPDATE (VERBAL)

Nothing was discussed on this matter.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 14th September 2017

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 8.00 PM



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Chair
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Thursday, 14 September 2017
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