

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLACE SHAPING WORKING GROUP HELD AT THE
COUNCIL OFFICES, STATION ROAD, WIGSTON ON WEDNESDAY, 24 JANUARY 2018
COMMENCING AT 6.30 PM**

PRESENT

Councillor J W Boyce (Chair)

COUNCILLORS

L A Bentley
G A Boulter
M L Darr
B Dave
Mrs H E Loydall
K J Loydall JP
Mrs S B Morris

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

J Carr (Planning Policy Team Leader)
A Thorpe (Head of Planning, Development & Regeneration)

14. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Mark Hryniw, Town Centre Manager

15. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 14 SEPTEMBER 2017

Cllr H Loydall asked if the matter of sub-division of houses would be picked up later in the Agenda. It was agreed that it would.

Cllr H Loydall asked if Mark Hryniw had contacted the person that managed the former Leicester City's Farmers Market yet to see if there would be any interest in them relocating their stall to the Borough's Farmers Markets. Adrian Thorpe said that he would follow this up with Mark Hryniw.

16. TOWN CENTRE MANAGER'S REPORT

Prior to beginning the Agenda Item Councillor Boyce asked Adrian Thorpe to briefly explain the structure of the Planning, Development and Regeneration Department, particularly in relation to Economic Regeneration. Adrian Thorpe explained that the Economic Regeneration shared service with Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council had ended, with the exception of the Town Centre Manager post. Otherwise the Team now comprises of Council employed officers.

Adrian Thorpe presented this report in Mark Hryniw's absence.

Members requested that an audit of all charity shops in the Borough be drawn undertaken, including charity shops outside of town centres such as industrial estates and local centres. Members wanted to understand the level of reduced Business Rate income due to the presence of charity shops.

Councillor Darr mentioned that he had heard that all of the units within the former Coop store on The Parade in Oadby had now been let and should be occupied soon.

Councillor Boyce indicated the intention that in the future Council funding for Christmas events would be channelled through the Economic Regeneration budget. With Economic Regeneration reporting to Place Shaping, it was agreed that Place Shaping could have an input into the allocation of funding.

Councillor H Loydall requested that advertising on the digital signs in both Oadby and Wigston centres be relevant for the time of year, particularly in regards to the festive and Christmas period.

Councillor Darr suggested that the standard of the festive lights in Oadby centre had dropped recently, specifically that they were not as bright as they once were and in some cases were very dimly lit. Adrian Thorpe explained that due to the age of the lights some were beginning to fade and dim, however that there is a rolling replacement programme in place to replace all of the Christmas / festive lights in all of the three main centres. Adrian Thorpe also mentioned that each year the Council invests in Christmas / festive light infrastructure. Councillor Boyce suggested that the rolling replacement programme could replace all of the lights within a centre at the same time rather than replacing some in each centre, therefore negating the issue of rows or sides of streets that were of different brightness.

Members praised the standard of the Christmas lights in Wigston centre. Councillor K Loydall asked if external electric sockets could be provided towards the Pocket Park end of Bell Street to help with public events. Members noted that it would be helpful to install external electric sockets within the three main centres to help with events.

Councillor Dave asked why the lights in Oadby centre were referred to as festive lights and not Christmas lights. It was explained that the lights in Oadby centre were turned on earlier to take account of other festivities occurring during the winter period.

Members requested that a separate report regarding Christmas Lights be brought to the next meeting of Place Shaping setting out the programme of Christmas / festive events and switch on's, an update on the rolling Christmas / festive lights replacement programme - both icicles and other displays, and an update on Christmas lights infrastructure upgrades / replacement (including the potential provision of external sockets)

17. LOCAL PLAN UPDATE (VERBAL)

Jamie Carr presented a verbal update setting out the latest position with regard to the Local Plan. The Pre-Submission Public Consultation closed towards the end of 2017. About 40 organisations and individuals responded to the consultation. The main comments related to the following issues:

- The Plan period should extend to 2036 – the Council's response is that the evidence upon which the Plan is based establishes that the Plan cannot extend past 2031, for example due to insufficient transport infrastructure capacity
- The Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for housing is not robust and should have been higher/the number homes allocated is too low – the Council's response is that the Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment provides the necessary evidence to support the level of OAN set out in the Plan and that it has been found sound in other Local Plan Examinations
- Various comments challenging different Direction for Growth areas - the Council's response is that it has applied a thorough and sound approach towards the identification of Direction for Growth areas

- Self build and custom build housing should not be required by policy - the Council's response is that it would be content for the Plan to be more flexible in this regard
- The Plan is not sufficiently flexible in respect of its approach to density/ the density requirement is too high - the Council's response is that it has applied a thorough and sound approach towards setting density requirement and that they are appropriate in the context of the Borough and its location
- The countryside policy is too restrictive - the Council's response is that it has applied a thorough and sound approach towards the countryside policy

Members asked how the Local Plan had taken into account sub-division of houses. It was reported that Policy 11 Housing Choices, states that all residential proposals for conversions, sub-division and/or changes of use will be considered on a case by case basis, and must take into account the Government's Technical Housing Standards. There was some debate as to the extent of this Policy but it was generally agreed that it will provide the Council with more policy guidance on this matter than has been available in the past.

Jamie Carr reported that the intention was to submit the Local Plan to the Planning Inspectorate for Public Examination on Monday 29th January. The Examination commences on submission day, a Planning Inspector will be allocated and the Hearings will likely take place toward the end of April/early May

18. STRATEGIC GROWTH PLAN UPDATE (VERBAL)

Adrian Thorpe stated the public consultation dates for the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan and briefly explained the content of the consultation documentation. Councillor Boyce suggested that the Strategic Growth Plan was necessary because the number of homes being proposed for the period up to the year 2050 in Leicester and Leicestershire is significant, and that significant infrastructure will be required in order to deliver the proposed number of homes.

19. ECONOMIC REGENERATION UPDATE

Adrian Thorpe briefly updated Members on the progress of the 41-43 Canal Street Compulsory Purchase Order, Horsewell Lane pavilion replacement and the former Oadby swimming pool site.

Councillor Bentley requested that proposed timetable for the Horsewell Lane pavilion replacement be adhered to as it had already taken longer than expected. Adrian Thorpe mentioned that Alex Ward, the Council's Economic Regeneration Team Leader was now leading the project and that it was progressing well. A further update on the project will be taken to the next Place Shaping meeting.

Members asked whether the current pavilion on Horsewell Lane would remain in situ until the replacement pavilion had been completed. Adrian Thorpe said that the plan is for the existing pavilion to remain in situ until the replacement had been completed. Adrian Thorpe also mentioned that Alex Ward was currently in the process of getting plans drawn up for the pavilion and its surroundings.

Councillor Boyce requested that any proposed development of the former Oadby swimming pool site be look at in the context of the wider development proposed within the centre of Oadby. Officers suggested that it would be.

20. HOUSING STRATEGY STATEMENT

Adrian Thorpe presented a report that had been circulated as an Agenda Update which identified the need for the Council to prepare a new Housing Strategy to cover the period 2018-2023 and that suitably qualified companies are invited to submit proposals for carrying out this work. Members supported this in principle but requested clarification over the late addition of the report to the agenda and confirmation over how this work will be funded.

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 8.15 PM



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Chair
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Thursday, 08 March 2018
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