

Minutes

of the Meeting of the

Strategic Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Panel Wednesday, 22nd July 2020

held in the Virtual Meeting.

Meeting Commenced: 14:30 Meeting Concluded: 16:37

Councillors:

P John Crockford-Hawley (Chairman)
P Mike Solomon (Vice Chairman)

P Peter Crew
A Richard Tucker
A Steve Bridger
P Gill Bute
P Sarah Codling
P Mark Crosby
P Karin Haverson
A Steve Hogg
P Huw James
P Patrick Keating

P: Present

A: Apologies for absence submitted

Also in attendance: Councillors Mike Bird, Caroline Cherry, Terry Porter, James Tonkin.

Officers in attendance:

Richard Kent, Jonathan Kirby, Colin Medus, Joy Milsom, Martin O'Neill, Jonathan Periselneris, Michael Reep, Steve Thorne (Development and Environment); Brent Cross, Mike Rigall, Leo Taylor (Corporate Services)

SPR Declaration of disclosable pecuniary interest (Standing Order 37)

1 None

SPR Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 January 2020 (Agenda Item 4.1)

2 **Resolved:** that the minutes of the meeting be approved as a correct record.

SPR Minutes of the Meeting held on 29 January 2020 (Agenda Item 4.2)

3 **Resolved:** that the minutes of the meeting be approved as a correct record.

SPR North Somerset Local Plan - Challenges and Choices

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The Planning Policy Manager presented an overview of the report, and thanked Members for their input in developing the Challenges documents. He also highlighted the upcoming Choices consultation and hoped that the Panel would be able to perform a similar role in developing that.

In discussing the report, Members supported the work that had been done, and were looking forward to the opportunity to meet with the different interest groups and to engage with the process as it rolls forward.

Officers made it clear that they were doing their best to ensure that any person or group that wanted to discuss the Local Plan with them was able to communicate with them, including developers as well as local communities.

It was suggested that a uniform way to capture responses and feedback from online events would be useful for North Somerset Council to have.

Concluded:

- (1) That a series of informal meetings of the Panel be set up to consider the response to Challenges (including how to best feedback from engagement events) and advise on the Choices consultation in the autumn;
- (2) that the informal meetings on the Local Plan should continue but continue to report back to formal meetings of the Panel.

SPR Procurement of a developed for NSC-owned land at Parklands Village **5 (Phase 1)**

The Property Estates and Regeneration Manager presented the report and clarified the timings of the next steps – the process was in the Detailed Solutions stage, and the three bidders were to be submitting their formal tenders shortly. The informal meeting of the Panel to scrutinise the procurement process would need to be in the first half of September.

The following questions and comments were received from Members:

- Why were there only to be 75 volumetric (modular) units out of 425 to be built with Modern Methods of Construction (MMC)?
The minimum requested by the Homes England grant was 75; the remainder of the units would be of panelised construction and assembled on site, and so would still be classed as using MMC.
- How long did it take to construct a volumetric house in the UK?
This would depend on a number of factors including whether

the bidders owned the factory that would be delivering the units and the number of volumetric units the developer was delivering; within the factory this could be from seven to ten weeks from placement of order to delivery to site and, after arrival on site, not usually more than four weeks for finishing.

- What was the Wyvern Development Company, and why was it determined to be unsuitable when evaluating alternative options? *Wyvern was the Council's arms-length shell company set up under the previous administration. It had no staff or resources.*

Concluded:

- (1) That the report be received, and Members' comments provided to officers in the form of minutes;
- (2) That an informal SPEDR meeting be called in early September to scrutinise the procurement process;
- (3) And that officers report to the Panel with further information about the formation and activities of the Wyvern Development Company.

SPR MetroWest Phase 1

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The Head of Major Projects presented the report providing an update on the MetroWest Scheme covering: the Development Consent order (DCO) examination process and the impacts of impacts of Covid-19 on progress; the Environmental Statement; finances including estimated spend for 2020-21 and 2021-22; and an outline of the proposed draft recommendations to the 22nd September meeting of Council around likely timescales, further budget provision and the delivery strategy.

Members noted that this report to Council would look at expanding the scope of the enabling packages for the programme to mitigate the delays caused by Covid-19.

Concluded: that the report be noted, and Members' comments be provided to officers in the form of minutes.

SPR Active Travel and Social Distancing (COVID response)

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The Head of Transport and Infrastructure presented a report that updated the Panel on Active Travel as part of the Covid-19 response.

Members' questions and comments were as follows:

- It was appreciated that some of the teams were up to a third under strength, and this resulted in staff being moved between teams for prioritised work.
- Governance: how had the Member reference group that worked with the Steering Group come to be, and who was on it? *The group had 8 or 9 members, including a mixture of*

relevant Executive Members and the Chair of the Licensing Committee. This group did not make decisions but was rather a place to monitor the activities of the Transport and Infrastructure team.

- *At the Executive Meeting in January, it was stated that a pro-forma for applications for 20mph speed limits and traffic calming measures would be provided. What had happened to this? The workstream had been delayed due to Covid-19 but had now been picked up again. This would now hopefully be available in early September.*
- *Was there confidence that the funding for all these schemes could be secured? The Council would be reprioritising its capital resources to top up funding if this was required.*
- *What was the Space to Move survey, and what had resulted from it? This was a way to gather feedback on temporary measures, which would help to decide on whether they would be made permanent. Temporary measures around schools would be in place until September, and schools would be consulted in determining which measures had worked and would be made permanent. Ward Councillors would have the opportunity to see the Space to Move results.*
- *Had any disability advocacy groups been consulted while these changes were made? Disability advocacy groups had been or would be engaged and the Council's relevant officer was also involved in the working group overseeing this work. However, some of the initial works had been implemented at speed and therefore this was not always possible in advance. However, we had followed up subsequently with some groups and responded when the Transport team had been made aware of issues. It was recognised that changes had not always been communicated effectively to users but actions were being taken to improve on this moving forward.*
- *Would signage along pavements showing where cyclists were not allowed be provided? Signs were not always useful, as a cultural shift in following the appropriate road rules was needed.*

Concluded: that the report be noted, and Members' comments be provided to officers in the form of minutes.

SPR The Panels Work Plan 2020-21

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The Democratic Services Officer presented the Panel's Work Plan, which needed comprehensive review in the light of the Council's Covid-19 response.

Concluded: that an informal workshop or meeting be convened to update the Work Plan.

SPR Housing Infrastructure Fund Final Grant Determination Agreement

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The Head of Major Projects presented the report on the final Grant Determination Agreement (GDA) for the Housing Infrastructure Fund.

He responded to Members' queries and comments as follows:

- The part of the suggested route that bypassed Castle Hill would cut through the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AoNB) and a water extraction protection zone. Could this be avoided? *The route had been in previous Local Plans, and impacts such as these would be considered as part of the planning and design process and form part of the resulting planning application.*
- Had the possible negative impacts of the bypass on surrounding communities such as Churchill and Sandford been investigated? *The GDA required due process, including public consultation which would be run independently to ensure that the views of residents were taken into account.*
- Covid-19 risk had only been given a score of 12 – was this an underestimate? *This was due to issues linked with Covid in the construction industry (e.g. social distancing, supply chain issues, price increases) and the current view is that the impact would be more limited by the time of the proposed HIF construction phase.*
- Carbon footprint reduction had not been mentioned in the report. Had Climate Emergency issues been considered? *The climate change agenda had been strongly reflected in the bid and the background papers, to help inform any decision making, reflected the climate change points in detail, hence the lighter referencing in this paper; officers were working to ensure that the process was as carbon neutral as possible.*
- There had been concern from residents that this project was the first step in the resurrection of the garden villages plan. It was emphasised that communication was needed to ensure that residents were aware that no plans had been finalised and that their concerns would be addressed.
- The GDA provided funding for both the bypass and a secondary school at Locking Parklands – could these be disentangled? *The GDA covered both elements, but delivery was separate as both were subject to their own statutory approvals processes. Therefore; one could be proceeded with if the other was not approved or delayed. This would however mean renegotiation of the GDA with Homes England as our assessment for the grant would change. The Senior Project Manager emphasised that go/no go points were built into the agreement, and that the Panel would play a role in evaluating each of these.*

Concluded:

- (1) that the report be noted, and Members' comments be provided to officers in the form of minutes; and

- (2) That reservations expressed by Members for the affected wards be noted.

Chairman
