

Minutes

of the Meeting of the

Strategic Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Panel Wednesday, 10th March 2021

held in the Virtual Meeting.

Meeting Commenced: 14:30 Meeting Concluded: 16:22

Councillors:

P John Crockford-Hawley (Chairman)
P Peter Crew (Vice Chairman)

P Richard Tucker
P 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: Councillor James Tonkin

Officers in attendance: Michael Reep, Richard Kent, Claire Courtois, Joy Milsom, Marcus Hewlett, Colin Medus, Alex Hearn, James Wigmore, Jack Wyatt (Place); Mike Rigall, Leo Taylor, Brent Cross (Corporate Services)

SPR 16 Declaration of disclosable pecuniary interest (Standing Order 37)

None.

SPR 17 Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 November 2020 (Agenda Item 4)

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting be approved subject to the following amendment: the attendance list in the minutes be corrected.

**SPR 18 Reference from the full Council Meeting – 23rd February 2021
Motions by Members (Standing Order No. 14) End our Cladding and
EWS1 Scandal (Councillor Keating) (COU153) (Agenda Item 5)**

Concluded; that a joint task-and-finish working group with the ASH Panel be

established to take evidence from residents, appropriate officers and elected Members, and make policy recommendations to a future meeting of the Council in all urgency.

SPR 19 North Somerset Local Plan (Agenda Item 6)

The Chairman explained that this item was part of a series of briefings brought before the Panel to seek the input of SPEDR, and thanked Cllr Tonkin for his engagement with town and parish councils as well as Cllrs James and Cronnelly for their engagement with young people on this topic as the Council's Young People's Champions. He also emphasised that the intention was not to discuss any specific sites for development at this stage, as this would happen later in the development of the Local Plan.

The Planning Policy Manager delivered the report recommending that the Panel consider the issues arising from and feedback received on the Challenges and Choices stage of the North Somerset Local Plan and make recommendations to the Executive Committee in respect of the approach to be taken to the selection of the preferred spatial strategy and key issues identified in the report.

The following questions and comments were received from Members (officer replies in italics):

- The Council's Young People's Champion asked that his thanks be put on record for the communication the Planning Team and the Executive Member had had with young people. He also wished to investigate the possibility that the views of younger and disabled people be given more weight in the consultation process.
- The misconception that people had of green fields versus Green Belt land was discussed, which led to the question of what the 'exceptional circumstances' were for being able to place development in the Green Belt. *There is no specific definition as to what constitutes an exceptional circumstance in relation to amendments to the Green Belt.*
- The Local Housing Needs Assessment was being jointly prepared with the West of England authorities, and was to be ready before the end of April. Would housing design be incorporated in the Local Plan? *Work was being done with WECA on the Placemaking Charter, and design aspects were being actively considered.*
- What was the weighting for planning application appeals between the existing and the new local plan? *The new local plan is at an early stage of preparation and will acquire weight as plan making progresses.*
- Under the existing plan, renewable energy projects had not been permitted in the Green Belt. Would this be changing? *This was one of the policy areas that were being looked at.*

Concluded: that it be **recommended** to the Executive:

that it applies the following principles to inform its consideration of the Local Plan preferred spatial strategy:

1: Priority should be given to locating new residential and mixed use development in or close to urban areas where there is an existing or proposed wide range of facilities, services and jobs, and where there are opportunities to

encourage active travel, particularly at locations which are currently, or have the potential to be, well served by public transport.

2: Employment opportunities should be encouraged at accessible locations well-related to the urban areas and on sustainable transport corridors.

3: Residential development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided outside the towns.

4: The amount of development at villages and in the countryside should be minimised and should relate to local community needs.

In addition, the Local Plan must ensure that new development demonstrates high quality design standards and energy efficiency.

SPR 20 Wyndham Way Study (Portishead) Area (Agenda Item 7)

The Assistant Director (Placemaking and Growth) presented a report on the collaborative working between North Somerset Council, Portishead Town Council and Aberdeen Standard Investments along with local business representatives, in which the challenges and opportunities of development of brownfield land near the site of the future MetroWest station.

Members were asked to consider and support the partnership approach used, the policy and commercial issues presented by the enterprise, and the overall intended Stage 2 process in preparation of a Development Framework.

Concluded:

(1) that the report be noted, and comments sent to officers in the form of minutes; and

(2) that the Panel supported the work thus far, as well as the forthcoming Stage 2 work.

SPR 21 North Somerset Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) Review (Agenda Item 8)

The Lead Transport Planner and the Transport Policy Officer jointly gave a presentation on the preparatory work that had been done before public consultation on the review of the Parking Standards SPD.

The review set out the approach to parking, cycle parking, electric vehicle charge points and the minimum number of parking spaces for new developments. The reduction in spaces was not being imposed on developers, but rather allowed them flexibility in design and did not include features such as garages and rear parking courts.

The Panel's approval of the review was being sought prior to taking the proposal to the Executive Committee before public consultation could begin. The results of the consultation would then be brought back before the Panel.

Officers responded to Members' comments and queries as follows:

- There were issues with parking spaces in existing developments, such as in Portishead and Locking Castle; would the new SPDs help in these developments? *Prior to the 2013 standards, NSC used 'maximum standards' at new developments which resulted in parking*

issues at Port Marine/Locking Castle. The 2013 standards introduced minimum standards to avoid these issues. The proposed update would retain these minimum standards but enable a reduction in accessible locations in line with the proposed assessment. In the cases of Locking Castle/Port Marine, the revised standards, even with the proposed discount, would provide more usable spaces than was provided at these developments and the required parking provision would exclude garage spaces and rear parking courts to ensure spaces are usable.

- Some surfacings were more environmentally friendly for parking spaces, such as grasscrete compared to concrete. Was this within scope of the SPD? *This was not covered by the SPD.*

Concluded:

(1) that the report be noted, and comments sent to officers in the form of minutes; and

(2) that the Panel supported the work thus far, and would consider the consultation results when they were available.

SPR 22 SPEDR Panel Work Plan - March 2021 (Agenda Item 9)

The Democratic Services Officer presented the Panel's Work Plan and asked for Members' input into areas to focus on.

The Sustainability Coordinator updated Members on the review of the Creating Sustainable Buildings and Places SPD, which was out for public consultation and was to be an interim improvement on the existing SPD until the Local Plan was introduced in 2023.

The Scrutiny Officer referred Members to the Work Plan appendix containing a note of Members' conclusions at the informal Draft Active Travel Plan briefing held on 18th February 2021. It was confirmed that the Panel endorsed these conclusions supporting the draft strategy, including the proposed areas for strengthening following the public consultation and:

Concluded: that it be **Recommended** to Council that the proposed Active Travel Strategy be endorsed.

In response to a query about the outcome of the recent Planning Peer Review, Members noted that a report would be provided at or before the next formal SPEDR meeting.

Concluded: that the work plan be updated, picking up actions and discussion outcomes from the present meeting.

Chairman
