

North Shropshire Area Committee

Minutes of the North Shropshire Area Committee

7.15 pm on 15 September 2020, Zoom ID: 815 5723 2922

Present: Cllrs Roy Aldcroft (Vice Chairman), Market Drayton TC, Barry Bell, Hadnall, Patricia Budgen, Baschurch, Claire Crackett, Stanton, Keith Mycock, Adderley, Paul Gouldbourne, Ellesmere TC, Kerry Edge, Wem TC, Paul Sharp, Shawbury, Ann Wignall, Ellesmere TC, Janet Gargiulo, Ellesmere Rural, Lawrence Foulsham, Myddle, Broughton & Harmer Hill, Jilly Higgin, Woore, Kevin Sutherland, Hinstock, and Clerks Lynda McCormack, Cockshutt-cum-Petton/Loppington, Amanda Roberts, Whixall (Secretary)

Also present: Dianne Dorrell, County Secretary SALC, Allan Wilson, Vice Chair SALC

1. Shropshire Fire & Rescue Service

Guy Williams, Head of Transformation and Collaboration at Shropshire Fire & Rescue Service outlined the Integrated Risk Management Plan. The Plan is currently out for consultation and Guy encouraged all Town and Parish Councils to respond.

The plan aims to recognise the change in risk for the county and how funding should be allocated to address this risk. He highlighted changes that have affected the county, including an ageing population with a high number of incoming retirees, diversification in agriculture (eg solar farms, campsites etc.) and environmental changes with increased storm and river flooding.

The proposed plan will meet the challenges in three ways:

1. Responding to emergencies

Ensuring people understand the emergency response times which are currently 15 minutes regardless of location. The proposed times are within 10 minutes in urban areas, within 15 minutes in towns and fringe areas, and within 20 minutes in rural areas. The aim will always be to exceed these timescales but the majority of fire stations are not staffed full time.

2. Prevention

Following the Grenfell Tower fire, the Home Office has identified that this area of work is under-resourced nationally. In Shropshire it is proposed that the Fire Protection Team should increase from nine fire prevention specialists to twelve. Shropshire F&R service is also looking at how the service communicates with people living independently in their own home, particularly in rural areas. Currently they make around 4,000 such visits per year and are investigating using a balance of volunteers and technology in future.

3. Protection

Working with businesses to ensure the safety of places where people sleep, work and meet for leisure are safe.

The Service has been assessed by the Home Office as efficient, effective and good with 'our people' and the proposals aren't change for the sake of it, but rather predicting where change will be required in the future.

Guy encouraged town and parish councils to complete the survey and give their comments which he stressed will be analysed independently with the Fire Authority receiving the results by December.

In response to the presentation, the dedication and effectiveness of retained firefighters across the county was praised. Nervousness was expressed about the proposed merger between the Fire Authority and the Police.

Guy stated that there is a fire engine available 'on the run' for around 97% of the time. He encouraged town and parish councils to publicise the 'What3Words' app which helps emergency services to find properties, particularly in rural areas.

2. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

Cllr Roy Aldcroft (meeting chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Cllrs: Lawrence Haughton, Welshampton & Lyneal; Mark Whittle (Chairman), Market Drayton TC; Peter Taylor, Cheswardine; Ryan Hartley, Ellesmere TC; Malcolm Carter, Woore; Geoff Soul, Wem TC; Roger Drummond, Wem TC; Bob Harris, Whixall; and Lyn Bearman (Stoke-on-Tern)., and Clerks: Jane Evans, Adderley.

3. Local Plan Consultation

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Dan Corden, Senior Policy Officer, Shropshire Council. Dan outlined the consultation on the Local Plan and its potential impact on the North Shropshire area (the presentation will be circulated with the minutes of this meeting).

This 'Regulation 18, Pre-Submission Draft of the Local Plan' is the first full draft at the 'Plan Making' stage and was approved by Cabinet in July. It covers four key areas:

1. The strategic approach focusing on the distribution levels of development. The proposed approach is for high levels of housing growth, supplemented by balanced employment growth. The majority of developments would be centred around the larger settlements which already have the requisite infrastructure. This would see 30,800 new dwellings and 300 hectares of employment land across the county between 2016 and 2038 (25% of housing to be affordable).
2. Localised strategies for individual settlements. Settlements will be categorised in a hierarchical approach. This will be consistent with the SAMDEV approach. North Shropshire has two principal centres (Whitchurch and Market Drayton), two key centres (Ellesmere and Wem) and a number of community hubs (detailed development proposals can be found in the presentation).
3. Strategic Settlements and Sites. There are three sites including Clive Barracks, Tern Hill, where the MOD are looking to release the site after 2025. Around 750 dwellings and 6 hectares of employment land are anticipated. Some of the development at this site is expected to take place beyond 2038. The remaining two sites are the former Ironbridge Power Station (1,000 dwellings/6 hectares of

employment land) and RAF Cosford (to facilitate the expansion of existing uses, not for redevelopment). M54 Junction 3 is not identified as a strategic settlement or site within the plan.

4. Draft development management policies. Lessons learned from the existing policies have been used to develop these and they are considered to be 'evolution rather than revolution'.

Town and Parish Councils were encouraged to respond to the current consultation. Following the consultation, Regulation 19 (formal consultation stage) will go to cabinet in November 2020 and if approved, a 6-week consultation will follow (November and December). Full Council will then be asked to approve the submission of the Plan for examination in February 2021. This examination process that will take around 12 months after which the Local Plan should be adopted around April 2022.

In response to a number of questions:

- There is a statutory requirement to review the Plan every five years. This time the review has been very significant because there have been so many changes at a national level. As a result of that there are a number of new site allocations proposed. There are a number of national consultations about the future of the planning system and these might have an effect upon allocations. Having an up to date plan and putting a plan in place will provide greater certainty to communities, and identify a strategy through to 2038.
 - There are currently two national planning consultations. One is the White Paper 'Planning for the Future' and the other covers things like the calculation of local housing need and thresholds for affordable housing contributions. Shropshire Council is looking closely both consultations and will be providing its own responses. Currently the Shropshire Council view is that the Local Plan provides certainty but the Council will need to respond to changes at a national level. There are transitional arrangements proposed as part of the consultation and the emphasis from Government is that local authorities should continue plan-making.
 - The proposed change in land classifications is not such a significant shift from where we are at the moment. There are some positive proposals about affordability and how ratios should change, but an area for concern is the reliance on 2018-based household projections (this is fairly significant for Shropshire).
 - Locally, affordable housing is a high priority. The policy requires a set proportion, but only for sites with 10+ dwellings (or 5+ in rural areas). A cross-subsidy policy is proposed within the Plan. The national policy is clear on these thresholds.
 - The consultation cannot be extended past the 30th September deadline. The statutory period is only 6-weeks but Shropshire Council has already allowed 8-weeks. Where there are concerns, specific details will be taken after the meeting. Some discussion can go on after the consultation has closed.
- Dianne Dorrell acknowledged Shropshire Council's extended consultation period, but commented that the 8-week period came a time when many Councils were having difficulty meeting as normal. Dan was asked to take back the message that these are difficult times for meetings and an extension might be helpful for those councils requiring Extraordinary Meetings to consider the consultation.

- The Development Control School-Based Planning Team has had significant input. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan will look at school building issues, but, where there are local concerns, local councils should raise them in their response.

A number of specific local planning and development issues were raised and Dan undertook to take these issues back to Shropshire Council colleagues.

4. SALC County Secretary's Report

Dianne gave a short report noting that the Executive Meeting the previous day received presentations from Mandy Thorne (Non-Executive Chairman: Marches LEP) and Andy Wilde (Interim Head of Highways: Shropshire Council). Andy was representing Steve Smith, the newly appointed Deputy Director of Highways. The Highways Team is developing a highways customer engagement and liaison strategy. SALC is likely to be involved in a monitoring role. Councils are encouraged to invite Andy and Steve to a meeting in the future.

SALC will be working from home for the foreseeable future, followed by a period hot-desking in Shirehall before eventually moving into an office in the Pride Hill Centre. The planning consultations have been discussed extensively and SALC will formulate a response for circulation to town and parish councils for comment.

The SALC AGM will probably be a low-key, Extraordinary AGM. Fees are likely to increase by 1p per elector - this will be confirmed.

Dianne handed over to Allan Wilson, SALC vice-chair who outlined the Climate Action Partnership which was launched in August. SALC will be the conduit for sharing information with local councils and information can be found at www.ZeroCarbonShropshire.org. (Information has also been sent by email to all NS Clerks).

5. Minutes

Proposed by Cllr Aldcroft and seconded by Cllr Mycock.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2019 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

6. Future Meeting Dates

Proposed by Cllr Aldcroft and seconded by Cllr Gouldbourne.

RESOLVED: That the remaining meetings of 2020/21 will take place on 16 November 2020 (virtual) and 15 March 2021 (format tbc).

7. Renewal of Financial Mandate

Proposed by Cllr Aldcroft and seconded by Cllr Goulbourne.

RESOLVED: The authorised signatories are to be changed by the addition of Mrs Amanda Roberts and the removal of Mr David Wise.

8. Matters Raised by Parish and Town Councils

Baschurch (Cllr Budgen): A local development is incomplete because the developer is no longer in business. There is an ongoing question over existing developer contributions for highways works. Cllr Budgen was advised that this is probably a legal rather than a highways matter.

Market Drayton (Cllr Aldcroft): Concerns about speeding vehicles and County Lines/drugs and the Council intends to write to the police invite them to a meeting to outline police activity there is in the area. This also concerns Woore and Norton-in-Hales.

9. Correspondence Received

None

10. Future Speakers /Topics

- John Bellis, Drainage and Flood Risk Manager (November)
- Steve Davenport, Portfolio Holder for Highways and Parking (November)
- Police & Crime Commissioner (March)

11. Date of Next Meeting

16 November 2020 at 7.15pm (to be held over Zoom)

The meeting closed at 8.55pm

Signed:
Chairman

Dated: