

**Coventry City Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) held**  
**at 2.00 pm on Wednesday, 12 November 2014**

Present:

Members: Councillor G Duggins (Chair)  
Councillor R Bailey  
Councillor L Bigham  
Councillor J Birdi  
Councillor K Mulhall  
Councillor T Skipper  
Councillor S Thomas (Substitute for Councillor Sweet)  
Councillor S Walsh  
Councillor D Welsh

By Invitation: Councillor K Maton  
(Cabinet Member (Business, Economy and Enterprise))

Employees (by Directorate):

Place M Andrews

Resources G Holmes, M Salmon

Apologies: Councillor J McNicholas (by invitation)  
Councillor H Sweet

## **Public Business**

### **18. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **19. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2014 were agreed and signed as a true record.

Further to minute 13 headed 'Carbon Management Plan' the Cabinet Member (Business, Enterprise and Employment), who attended the meeting by invitation, confirmed his support for a letter, signed by the Cabinet Member (Business, Enterprise and Employment) and the Chair of the Business, Enterprise and Economy Scrutiny Board (3), to be sent to the Department of Energy and Climate Change on the inclusion of schools in the Carbon Reduction Commitment.

### **21. Initial Feedback on the Local Plan Period of Public Engagement - 12th September 2014 to 31st October 2014 and Initial Feedback on the Draft Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) Period of Consultation - 12th September 2014 to 31st October 2014**

Members of the Board agreed that, due to the strong link between the Local Plan and the Housing Land Availability Assessment, it was appropriate to consider the feedback of consultation for both issues together at the meeting.

The Board received briefing notes of the Executive Director of Place that provided Members with summaries of the feedback received in respect of the period of public engagement for the Local Plan – Delivering Sustainable Growth (September 2014) and the Draft Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) that ran from 12<sup>th</sup> September and 31<sup>st</sup> October 2014 and was subsequently extended to allow additional time for local resident groups to submit their views and thoughts. The extension was primarily in response to difficulty arranging suitable neighbourhood meetings and presentations within the original seven week period and concerns raised by some neighbourhood groups about their understanding and awareness of the plan. The briefing notes covered the feedback received by the Planning Policy Team to 24<sup>th</sup> October 2014, covering the first 6 weeks of the consultation period. Further summaries of the additional feedback received in the final week of the consultation processes and during the extended period were presented at the meeting.

Throughout the period of engagement the Council's Planning Policy Team worked jointly with the Communications Team to ensure that comprehensive communications strategies had been delivered and that the SHLAA supported the Local Plan. This was carried out in full accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement and also included the first stage of an Equalities and Consultation Analysis.

The SHLAA represented a technical evidence document that was required by National Guidance to support the development of a Local Plan. It provided an initial overview of opportunities that could exist within the Local Authority area to meet the identified housing need, and as such supported the Council in demonstrating a robust housing land supply to 2031. These opportunities could be immediately available for development or offer longer term options should the site become available. Sites that were identified through the SHLAA were not guaranteed to be allocated in the Local Plan or be granted planning permission. They were still required to satisfy relevant planning policy through an application process and overcome any identified constraints. The SHLAA was also subject to regular review to ensure the sites identified within it were regularly assessed. This consultation supported this process and would help ensure the Council continued to identify a robust housing land supply.

The SHLAA was focused on site specific proposals and this had been reflected in the feedback received to the consultation process. A table in the Briefing Note circulated highlighted the sites within the SHLAA that had generated discussion and commentary as part of the consultation process.

In addition to the sites identified within the SHLAA, a further seven sites had been identified to officers for further consideration, of which one of those sites was adjacent to the City boundary within a separate Local Authority area. It was common practice that when consulting on a draft SHLAA, landowners, agents and developers identified new sites for consideration. This was another important aspect of the consultation process and helped keep the land supply database up to date. These seven sites were new to the SHLAA process and would be considered as part of the review.

In addition to site specific comments, the SHLAA often triggered debate from the development industry around more general aspects of the SHLAA, most notably the methodology, the total housing requirement and the robustness of the sites identified. At the time of preparing the Briefing Note no such comments had been submitted.

A full review of all responses received to the engagement process for the Local Plan would be reported to Cabinet and Council in February 2015.

The Board questioned officers and raised the following issues:

- Concerns over the robustness of the process and practice of the consultation:
  - Number of responses
  - Quality of the information provided in Citivision – lack of map information
  - Timings and location of drop in sessions
  - Maximising the use of social media in effective ways and ensuring technical issues with the webpages are minimised.
  - Whether lessons will be learned from this consultation process for subsequent consultations
  
- Concerns over Greenbelt brownfield and green space:
  - High level of respondents in opposition to development on greenbelt
  - Need to address the lack of amenity green space in densely populated areas and ensure the green spaces that do already exist are protected and improved in quality where possible and appropriate.
  - Where possible and viable, prioritise development on brownfield land.
  - Need to balance the need for jobs and housing on brownfield sites
  - Need to audit the quality and value of the existing greenbelt to ensure the most valuable and sensitive areas are protected and that the best use of available land is promoted
  - Explore opportunities for designating new areas of Green Belt land to replace any areas that may be removed from the Green Belt.
  
- Social Housing requirements:
  - Quality of the existing stock
  - Ensuring there are opportunities for social housing development as well as private
  - Ensuring there is a suitable mix of properties – smaller as well as larger to enable downsizing opportunities due to spare room supplement
  
- Infrastructure:
  - That all developments are supported by sufficient infrastructure
  
- Empty properties – ensuring all endeavours are made to bring them back to use
  
- Student accommodation – is the requirement for student accommodation being considered as part of the wider housing need

**RESOLVED that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3):**

- 1) Notes the content of the briefing notes.**
  
- 2) Requests that the following comment be forwarded to the Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment for consideration:  
'That the Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment ensures that there is due consideration for the need for utility green space in inner city areas and how green space sites within inner city areas can contribute to carbon reduction and sustainability of the city within the scope of the Local Plan'.**

- 3) **Requests that any fundamental changes that arise prior to the submission of the Local Plan to Cabinet and Council in February 2015, be reported to the Board.**

22. **Outstanding Issues**

Outstanding issues were included in the Board's Work Programme.

23. **Work Programme 2014/2015**

**RESOLVED that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3):**

- 1) **Notes the Work Programme for the Municipal Year 2014/2015.**
- 2) **Requests that detailed reports be submitted to the 17<sup>th</sup> December 2014 meeting of the Board in respect of the agenda items scheduled relating to 'City Centre Developments' and 'Friargate'.**
- 3) **Notes that a Joint meeting of the Education Services Scrutiny Board (2) and Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) has been arranged on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2015 for them to receive a progress update on those not in education, employment or training.**

24. **Any other items of business which the Chair decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved**

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 4.15 pm)