

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4)
held at 9.30 am on Wednesday, 15 December 2021

Present:

Members: Councillor L Bigham (Chair)

Councillor R Auluck
Councillor M Heaven
Councillor A Hopkins
Councillor J Mutton
Councillor S Nazir
Councillor D Welsh

Other Members: Councillor D Welsh, Cabinet Member for Communities and Housing

Employees (by Service Area):

Law and Governance: V Castree, G Holmes

Streetscene and Regulatory Service: C Eggington

Apologies:- Councillors R Bailey and S Walsh

Public Business

18. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

19. Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 2 December, 2021 were agreed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

20. Consultation on Supplementary Planning Documents - i) Affordable Housing; ii) Energy; iii) Open Space

The Cabinet Member for Communities and Housing introduced the item. The Scrutiny Board considered a Briefing Note, together with a presentation at the

meeting, which provided information on the consultation about the Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD).

The Scrutiny Board noted that any feedback provided would be considered as part of the consultation process.

The presentation included;

- An explanation of an SPD – that it articulates and amplifies policies within the Local Plan; Cannot exceed the requirements in the Local Plan; had been drafted in conjunction with relevant departments within the Council; required a period of public consultation before adoption and that it would become material consideration in planning decisions
- The consultation launched 30 November and had been extended to 7 weeks duration due to festive break
- Responses would be considered, alterations made as required and Cabinet paper submitted in the new year

Supplementary Planning Documents – Affordable Housing

Issues covered in the presentation included

- A definition of Affordable Housing provided by National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- The SPD included an indicative housing mix to maximise large property provision
- The SPD maximises value of commuted sum where on-site provision is impossible
- The SPD establishes CCC as an alternative purchaser of Affordable Housing
- A Template 106 agreement had been provided

The Scrutiny Board asked questions and received responses on a number of issues, including:-

- The definition of affordable housing.
- Opportunities to increase levels of social housing, as opposed to affordable housing.
- Members were informed Shelter were promoting nationally the challenge of affordable housing.
- There was a push to try and secure a high proportion of social housing in areas of the City where there is currently less.
- Concerns were raised that developers did not complete the levels of affordable housing as per the agreed section 106 application, often citing viability issues. If this happened, developers were required to provide evidence regarding viability. There was now a monitoring officer in planning who reviewed the outcomes of developments compared to the agreed 106 agreements. It was noted that in one local authority area, it was insisted that the affordable housing was built first to ensure that it was built.
- Delivering affordable housing requires a one Coventry approach and other teams across the Council are involved. The Cabinet Member informed the Scrutiny Board that a Housing Strategy would be developed to demonstrate this.
- It was discussed that the policy would include the 'pepper potting' of social housing throughout areas to avoid 'ghettoisation'. Equality Impact assessments

and Health Inequality assessments included the impact of including affordable/ social housing in developments including the impact of doing nothing.

- There had been lots of work to improve the mix of housing being developed to meet Coventry's needs, which included social and affordable housing, larger family homes and suitable accommodation for older people.
- Section 106 agreements were the result of negotiation so there was scope to amend agreements as appropriate – for example, to accept a lower amount of social housing where family homes would be provided as opposed to flats and apartments.
- An explanation as to how the SPD enhances the existing policy was given.

Supplementary Planning Documents – Energy

Issues covered in the presentation included that the SPD

- Establishes the aspirations of the Council for energy efficient development
- Encourages and supports best practice
- Details the requirements for Energy Statements and provides a template
- Re-asserts and updates Heatline information

The Scrutiny Board asked questions and received responses on a number of issues, including:-

- The level of power within the SPD to compel developers to include specific energy saving initiatives.
- The interlink between national government policy and the SPD documents.

Supplementary Planning Documents – Open Space

Issues covered in the presentation included that the SPD

- Sets the volume and typology of Open Space required based on size of development
- Sets standards for the Open Space being provided
- Ensures City Centre developments contribute to Open Space (be that accessible green space or high-quality public realm)
- Provides a Section 106 template

The Scrutiny Board asked questions and received responses on a number of issues, including:-

- What was considered to be a wellbeing space. A wellbeing space could be a variety of things depending on the location of the development including pocket parks, rooftop gardens or balconies.
- There push to encourage open space innovation for developments in the City Centre.
- Public realm open spaces could provide a internal psychological lift.
- Open space in applications was reviewed to ensure it was of high quality and in a suitable location.
- Whether a gendered approach to planning had been considered.

RESOLVED that the Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4):-

- 1) Note the presentation as attached at Appendix 1**

- 2) **Note the draft Supplementary Planning Documents attached at Appendix 2,3 and 4 and agree with their contents in principle**
- 3) **Request that their comments on the draft documents as outlined above be considered as part of the consultation responses:**
- 4) **Request that the consultation link be sent to Members of the Scrutiny Board and the Planning Committee**

21. **Work Programme and Outstanding Issues**

The Scrutiny Board considered and noted the Work Programme for 2021/22.

22. **Any Other Items of Urgent Public Business**

There were no other items of urgent public business.

(Meeting closed at 10.45am)