

MINUTES

STRATEGIC PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

29 OCTOBER 2019

Councillors: Barrett
Beauchamp
Birnie (Chairman)
Ransley
Riddick
Rogers
Silwal (Vice-
Chairman)
Stevens
Taylor
Timmis
Woolner

Officers:	Sharon Burr	Corporate and Democratic Support Officer
	Lesley Crisp	Strategic Planning & Regeneration Officer (MBC)
	James Doe	Assistant Director - Planning, Development and Regeneration
	Mary Jeffrey	Assistant SPAR Officer

Also Attendance: Councillor Graham Sutton

Councillor Colette Wyatt-Lowe

The meeting began at 7.30 pm

40 MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed and signed.

Matters arising from minutes:

Cllr Timmis raised the subject of Luton Airport and informed the Committee that a few weeks ago London Luton Airport Ltd came and gave a presentation to members in the Council Chamber regarding their expansion. Councillor Timmis said that the presentation was very positive, with very little about the down side that parts of Dacorum are likely to experience with an increase by 2050 of 32 million passengers. Instead the focus appeared to be on how the new airport would look and how there will be a second terminal there. They are keeping the existing main runway and they will have a support runway which is basically where planes line up so that they can take off more quickly.

Cllr Timmis added that you can find the information on their website and they are producing a consultation which will run from now until December 16th and they will be

visiting most villages and towns in the area, but the consultation is almost entirely about the expansion, which in her opinion is a 'tick box' to say they have consulted. Cllr Timmis felt that as a Council and more specifically, as a Committee we should be aware of this consultation that is going on and respond to it as they are still considering doubling the present number of passengers and flights.

J Doe said that the official letter has been received from the airport regarding the consultation and a response would be organised. We will be looking at what the County Councils and local councils particularly St Albans are saying as well.

Cllr Birnie asked if this should be considered for a future meeting, and who would deal with it?

J Doe responded that Stephen Mendham has been the point of contact within his team and he would arrange something with him.

Cllr Ransley pointed out that transport to Luton Airport is not going to be confined to the M1 and any increase would adversely affect Ickneild Way and the A41.

Cllr Beauchamp said that one of the largest developments seems to be parking in and around Luton Airport and even though they are encouraging the use of The Dart and public transport, they are massively increasing the parking.

Cllr Timmis responded that Luton Airport has increased the number of car parks although the airport says that they are expecting a lot of passengers to come in using public transport and The Dart, the stats show that the majority of their passengers come from the three surrounding counties, so they are likely to be coming by car or coach. In answer to Cllr Ransley's point about the traffic, she agreed that the roads will become more congested.

J Doe said that what members need to look at in the documentation is transport assessment and surface access strategy. They told us they are trying to put the main shift onto the train system and The Dart etc., but the concerns around increasing road access are probably well founded. He added that there might be a number of private landowners that want to make land around the airport available for surface car parking with a shuttle bus, which would not necessarily be run by the airport.

Cllr Birnie said that there was some discussion in an earlier meeting regarding DEFRA modified emission figures in the AQMA but he had not received any information on that from the relevant officer. He added that he will follow that up with Emma Walker and Dave Austin by email.

Cllr Birnie went on to ask when the responses to the Car Parking Consultation will have been evaluated leading to a report being ready for scrutiny.

J Doe said that the consultation is basically done and they are just putting the report together and now need to take Cllr Sutton's direction as to where this is taken next, but it is in hand.

Cllr Birnie asked if that meant it would be going to Cabinet or would the Committee get sight of it before that.

J Doe said that he would need to consult with Cllr Sutton.

Cllr Sutton said that if there is time he thinks it should come back to the Committee first.

Cllr Timmis said that she mentioned fly-tips in the last meeting and Flamstead Parish Council are going to put up the notices that she showed to the Committee themselves in order to try and discourage fly-tipping in that area.

Cllr Birnie confirmed that fly-tipping would need to be followed up by email with the relevant department.

41 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Anderson, Hearn and Hobson.

42 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

43 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

44 CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE IN RELATION TO CALL-IN

None.

45 JOINT SOUTH WEST HERTS PLAN

J Doe presented the report.

J Doe explained that the report his was presenting was short due to the fact that the work on the plan is ongoing. He said that the five South West Herts authorities plus the County Council are all involved.

J Doe spoke about the strategic plan for the long-term that is being developed – planning for growth in a more co-ordinated and long-term way. Each district and borough would continue to work on their own local plans under the strategic guidance of the joint strategic plan. Funding for infrastructure was also discussed and J Doe said that Oxfordshire was a County that had been very successful at this as the councils had collaborated, giving investors confidence to bring the money in. He added that a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by the six partners last January, and that a grant of £300,000 had been secured from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government under the Planning Delivery Fund. There is now a dedicated director in post.

Cllr Birnie asked if POS Enterprises were doing the transport study. He added that he had a figure of £242,000 as opposed to the £300,000 in the report, and asked if that had been spent on the officer now in post.

J Doe replied that the transport study was being done by a company called ITP who worked closely with David Locke Associates on the growth study. POS Enterprises

are a non-profit organisation with an advisory arm which is open to local councils. J Doe explained that the overall grant was £300,000 and the £242,000 related to one of the financial years and that the money, together with top up money from each of the councils, was paying for the officer in post and also a lot of the study work referred to in the report. He added that the money will not deliver the plan in full and the next step would be for the member councils to agree whether they want to commit more resources to take the plan onto its next stages of development. He confirmed that another report to the Committee would be made once further decisions were made.

Cllr Ransley asked what would happen in one of the councils decide that it is too expensive to continue.

J Doe said that the study is based on all five being involved, it would be possible to continue with a smaller number but some of the evidence would have to be re-cast to ensure that the right information is available.

Cllr Timmis asked how the approach to water would work as there would be a much greater demand on water if more houses are being built.

Cllr Birnie raised the point that this would also impinge on the Local Plan.

J Doe confirmed that there would need to be a report into water if the project moves further forward, at the moment the priority is to look at where the growth locations might be and see what the area can physically accommodate. J Doe agreed that it would affect the Local Plan and it is subject to the Hertfordshire Water Study which is yet to be finalised, the early indications are that there are not any obvious concerns regarding the supply up to 2036 but it was being kept under review.

Cllr Wyatt-Lowe said that Water Companies do not appear to do enough to harvest and protect the water that they collect and they should be encouraged perhaps by financial penalties to be more vigilant. Cllr Wyatt-Lowe added that as commercial enterprises they want to expand their markets and one of the ways that they could do this is to transport water from those areas that have surplus to those that need more.

Cllr Birnie said that there had been an article in the papers regarding the water regulator who is taking a tough line with the Water Companies regarding seepage and leakage, and is considering financial penalties.

Cllr Timmis asked whether the Green Belt would be protected and if the CPRE were involved.

J Doe said that these areas need to be taken very much into account and this would be across the whole area. J Doe added that the intention was always to preserve and conserve those areas while balancing this with the development pressures. At the moment the plan is very much about evidence gathering and if it moves forward into a draft plan there would be consultation with a variety of bodies including the CPRE.

Cllr Barrett asked what the extent of the funding for infrastructure from Government might be, and by having a strategic plan for all the areas was there more chance of getting a bigger figure?

J Doe said that was the idea, with the strategic plan giving confidence to the government.- They cannot put a figure on it at present, but the aim would be go get forward funding wherever possible.

Cllr Stevens asked J Doe when the paragraph regarding issues and options in the report would be coming into play.

J Doe replied that this was a hard question to answer because no time table has been set by the group. He said the earliest it could happen would be 2021 but that is just an estimate as there would need to be a discussion with the public giving them the options and asking for their thoughts. J Doe added that just as we do for the Local Plan, for this procedure a local development scheme would have to be published setting out the published timescale for all the statutory stages and all the issues and options.

Cllr Birnie said the he noticed overlap in a lot of the items that the Committee are looking at. He added that he thought something like fibre to premises as detailed in the next report would be something that would certainly be more successful if it were approached on a joint basis rather than just by one Council alone.

The report was noted.

46 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Lesley Crisp presented the report.

L Crisp said that the Enterprise and Investment Team now have three full time and four part time posts and only 1.5 of these are paid for by DBC as the rest are self-sustainable. She added that in order to continue to be a sustainable model, they now charge for many of their services.

L Crisp explained that in 2018 there were 7,900 enterprises in Dacorum which were responsible for £3.6 billion of gross value added and as an area Dacorum is doing very well. L Crisp discussed how they are working very closely with start up businesses to get them off the ground through the European Regional Development Fund – the ERDF programme, which has been extended to run for a further 2 years until 2023.

There was a conversation regarding events to encourage local residents into the area including the Halloween event and the Christmas Light switch on which, this year, is going to be a joint venture with The Marlowes, Riverside, The Hemel Hempstead Bid and the Market combining together to make a much bigger event than in the past.

Cllr Birnie asked how many businesses comprised the 16.6% mentioned in paragraph 1.2.

L Crisp answered that she had made a table which she would pass round for the Committee to see, she said that micro business accounted for 7,205, small businesses, which have about 10-50 employees is 555. In addition there are 105 medium and then there are 35 larger businesses.

M Jeffery clarified that the 16.6% related to large businesses increasing by 5 in 2018.

Cllr Ransley asked a question relating to 3.2.10 and where £1.8 million was spent with regard to leisure facilities in Tring.

L Crisp replied that she did not know the answer but would find out and forward it via Sharon Burr for Cllr Ransley and the Committee.

Cllr Riddick asked what kind of rail crossing had been built in Apsley as referred to in 3.2.5. The answer was the bridge to the Manor Estate widening. J Doe replied that this was the additional bridge at Featherbed Lane, entirely funded by Bovis.

Cllr Birnie said that it would be useful if the source was mentioned when figures are used in reports.

Cllr Riddick asked how the figures regarding the Tourism Industry were reached as in paragraph 4.7. as 3.4 million visitors into Dacorum seems a large figure.

M Jeffery replied that it is actually about visitors both internal and external to Dacorum.

Cllr Riddick said that in paragraph 4.8 it states that there have been 64 days of filming in Dacorum but the income was only £14,455 which seems low.

M Jeffery said that we have a lot of filming which takes place in Dacorum that is not managed by the Council as it does not happen on Council owned or managed land.

L Crisp said that we charge a small administration fee mainly so that we are aware of where and when filming is taking place and if it is likely to affect businesses in the area, but if it is not on our land we cannot charge for it.

Cllr Birnie asked if it was a small administration fee.

L Crisp confirmed that it was.

Cllr Beauchamp said that in the report it talks about filming in 2015/16 bringing in an estimated £5 billion to the local economy and he asked if there are any up to date figures available.

L Crisp said that the figures were the 'knock on' effect of the filming, people want to see where things were actually filmed, she added that she could get an updated figure.

Cllr Beauchamp asked if there was a filming policy, and asked if within that policy there could be some consideration for the shop owners and traders in the Old Town because their businesses are seriously impacted during filming.

L Crisp said that there was a filming policy in the making and that they were working closely with other areas of the Council like Parking, who also charge for filming, as there is a lot of parking suspension required. L Crisp added that the policy should be ready by the end of the year.

Cllr Birnie suggested that it would be a good idea to inform the appropriate Councillor when filming would be taking place in their area.

Cllr Silwal asked if local business have been affected by Brexit.

L Crisp replied that the main reaction from businesses is that they just want it resolved.

Cllr Birnie said he was disappointed to see that the failed bid for fibre optic was concentrated mainly on supplying schools with FTTP because for the development of industry in the Borough, it is most important that businesses have FTTP.

L Crisp said that although it is not her team that deals with this, her understanding was that to get the fibre in the schools and other public buildings are used almost as connection points so that in rural areas businesses can actually get the full fibre.

Cllr Birnie asked that as we have pulled out of the Visit Herts contract has our tourism budget increased, he also asked how much the saving was.

L Crisp answered that we have not increased our budget, but are working with Tourism businesses on a one to one basis to see how we can help them.

J Doe said that £21,000 had been saved on the Visit Herts contract and that was part of the Council's saving target for the current financial year.

J Doe said that the feedback that they had regarding the FTTP bid was that it was a very competitive bidding round and there that perhaps there was not enough critical mass in our bid. He added that a key point was that it was not just about supplying the schools with FTTP, but about identifying any public sector assets where you

could potentially take a connection point from when high grade fibre is laid elsewhere in the area. Indeed the experienced consultant has advised us to bid again in future rounds, because the underlying case is very strong.

The report was noted.

47 **WORK PROGRAMME**

J Doe suggested that the report on the Water Gardens could be brought to the November meeting.

Cllr Birnie asked J Doe about the Parking Report and when that would be presented, he also asked for confirmation that CIL would be on the March 2020 Agenda.

J Doe replied that he would let Cllr Birnie know about the Parking Report as soon as he could and confirmed that the CIL and Section 106 would be on the March Agenda. J Doe added that the report on The Bury was delayed as there was ongoing survey work being done on the building at the moment so there is nothing to report on as yet. He said that he hoped to bring Planning Performance Agreements to the next meeting, but was aware there was a lot on the Agenda.

Cllr Birnie said that a Commercial Waste Report should be presented in November, and that he would liaise with J Doe regarding adding any other reports to the Agenda.

Cllr Birnie said that he thought the Environmental Management System Report from the Director of Finance was going to go on the Agenda in March now, as there is likely to be a new officer appointed.

The meeting ended at 20:35. The next meeting is November 19 2019.

The Meeting ended at 8.35 pm