



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING : Monday, 25th April 2022

PRESENT : Cllrs. Field (Chair), Pullen (Vice-Chair), Ackroyd, Dee, Gravells MBE, Hilton, Kubaszczyk, O'Donnell, Padilla, Sawyer and Wilson

Others in Attendance

Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy, Councillor Stephanie Chambers.

Head of Place.

Principal Planning Officer.

Democratic and Electoral Services Officer.

APOLOGIES : Cllrs. Durdey, Castle, Evans, Organ and Zaman

122. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

123. DECLARATION OF PARTY WHIPPING

There were no declarations of party whipping.

124. MINUTES

124.1 The Chair indicated that he was happy to approve the minutes as a correct record. However, he highlighted a typing error at 119.13 relating to the CLS Energy action plan and it was agreed that this error would be amended ahead of the next meeting.

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 28th March 2022 be corrected with the above amendment for approval at the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 6th June 2022.

125. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
25.04.22

There were no public questions.

126. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS (15 MINUTES)

There were no petitions nor deputations.

127. ACTION POINT ITEM

127.1 Councillor Gravells raised concerns that the information he had requested during the Gloucestershire Airport session was not included in the update. It was agreed that follow-up enquiries would be made with Gloucestershire Airport to obtain this information.

127.2 It was agreed that further requests would be made to Gloucestershire Airport for the gross profit split by income categories, and a copy of their management accounts.

127.3 Councillor Hilton also suggested that the Committee request a further presentation from Gloucestershire Airport and the Leader of the Council in due course on the latest end of year accounts and outlining their profit and loss.

RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee **NOTE** the updates.

128. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME AND COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

128.1 The Chair introduced the latest version of the Council Forward Plan and invited suggestions as to any items Members wished to add to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme. It was agreed that following a revised Cabinet date, the Gloucester Local List would be added to the agenda for the meeting on Monday 6th June. The Committee agreed that they would be content to receive a written update on the Community Infrastructure Levy Review (New Charging Schedule) to note for information only.

128.2 The Chair confirmed that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were due to hold a Community Safety session on Monday 4th July and invited suggestions from Members as to what they were hoping for from the session. Councillor Hilton suggested that the Committee request an update from Gloucestershire County Council's Emergency Planning Team. The Chair added that he was aware that representatives from 'Put The Knives Down' had expressed an interest in attending the session. Councillor Sawyer expressed an interest in inviting representatives from organisations working to improve safety for women in Gloucester.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
25.04.22

- 128.3 Councillor Hilton requested that the Committee receive an ICT recovery update and it was agreed that this update would be added to the agenda for the meeting on Monday 4th July.
- 128.4 Councillor Gravells suggested that the Committee request an update on how the Homes for Ukraine scheme was progressing in Gloucester and the Committee agreed to add this item to the meeting on Monday 4th July.
- 128.5 Councillor Pullen requested that the action point item providing updates on previous Council notices of motion be reinstated. It was noted that this item had been deferred from Overview and Scrutiny Committee agendas for the past few months due to the ongoing IT disruption which the City Council was experiencing. Members agreed to remind officers of the wording of motions which had been approved by full Council, and to send requests for an update on a particular notice of motion to the Democratic and Electoral Services Officer.

RESOLVED –

- 1) That the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme be amended to reflect the above and
- 2) To **NOTE** the Work Programme.

129. GLOUCESTER CITY PLAN - MAIN MODIFICATIONS

- 129.1 The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy introduced the report and welcomed the Head of Place to his new role at Gloucester City Council. She confirmed that the purpose of the report was to outline the proposed Main Modifications to the Gloucester City Plan which Cabinet were being asked to approve for public consultation. She noted that this would be the penultimate step in achieving final approval for the City Plan.
- 129.2 The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy thanked the Planning Policy team for their hard work in preparing the report. She further noted that two former Cabinet Members were also instrumental in its development, and paid tribute to Councillor Organ and Councillor Gravells for their efforts.
- 129.3 The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy expressed the view that should the Gloucester City Plan be approved; it would deliver the homes and jobs needed in the city. She added that the Planning Inspector had also strengthened elements of the plan with regards to climate change. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy confirmed that back in August 2021, the Planning Inspector had confirmed that the City Plan would be legally compliant with the proposed changes set out in the report, noting that without these changes, the Council would not be able to adopt the plan. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy further explained that the delay in publishing the Sustainability Appraisal Addendum at

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
25.04.22

Appendix 4 was due to some adjustments requested by the Planning Inspector.

- 129.4 The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy referred to some of the proposed modifications from the Planning Inspector, such as amending Policy C6 on the Cordon Sanitaire to make the wording more positive, as well as the recommendation of the Planning Inspector on Policy A6 to reduce the requirement for 50% of new homes to meet 'accessible and adaptable homes' to 25%, in line with the latest Government guidance. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy also confirmed that the Planning Inspector had concluded that the affordable housing is a strategic matter which should be addressed through the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) rather than the City Plan. She confirmed that if the Main Modifications were approved by Cabinet on 4th May, the City Plan would go to public consultation for 6 weeks, and the hope was that the plan would be fully adopted in Winter 2022/23.
- 129.5 The Chair commented that the report was very extensive. Referring to Policy C6 relating to the Cordon Sanitaire – Netheridge Sewage Treatment Works, he noted that the Council's previous position was not to allow development on this land and asked for the Cabinet Member's comments as to the type of development she envisaged there. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy confirmed that the wording had changed to reflect the modification proposed by the Planning Inspector. The Principal Planning Officer further clarified that the Planning Inspector had an obligation to make the City Plan sound and she had decided that prohibiting all developments was not sound policy. By way of example, the Principal Planning Officer noted that the previous policy would have prohibited extensions to existing properties and businesses, and the Planning Inspector did not consider this fair or reasonable. She expressed the view that the modified policy still offered plenty of protection for the sewage works but was more realistic in providing opportunities for the right development.
- 129.6 The Chair noted his understanding that Severn Trent were developing new technologies to reduce sewage odour and asked whether any progress had been made with this technology. The Principal Planning Officer confirmed that she was happy to query this with contacts in Severn Trent and it was agreed that an update would be circulated to the Committee in due course. She expressed the view that advancing technology supported the Planning Inspector's modification to allow some flexibility for change.
- 129.7 Councillor Wilson referred to Main Modification (MM) 32 concerning the requirement for developments to provide tree lined streets, noting that this was a principle which he very much welcomed. He asked whether there was anticipation that developers would oppose this policy, and whether the Council would take a strong line on enforcing it. The Principal Planning Officer explained that this requirement was a direction from central Government and therefore the Council would insist that developers meet the requirement for tree lined streets.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
25.04.22

- 129.8 In response to a request from Councillor Hilton to clarify the timeline for the City Plan to be adopted, the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy confirmed that Cabinet were being asked to approve the Main Modifications Report on 4th May and if approved, the public consultation would run for 6 weeks from May to June 2022. She noted that the results of the consultation would be submitted to the Planning Inspector in July or August, and it was anticipated that the Council would receive a response from the Planning Inspector around October 2022. She further confirmed that the hope would be for the Gloucester City Plan to be adopted around December 2022.
- 129.9 In response to a further query from Councillor Hilton, the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy confirmed that pending approval from Cabinet, the public consultation would begin on 16th May 2022.
- 129.10 Councillor Hilton noted that he agreed with the policy around Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) and the Principal Planning Officer thanked Councillor Hilton for his input on this matter during Planning Policy Members Working Group and for his request that it be included in the City Plan. In response to a query from Councillor Hilton, she confirmed that smaller HMOs would not be covered by the policy as HMOs with under 6 people living in the property did not require planning permission.
- 129.11 Councillor Hilton referred to MM8 and the requirement that HMOs would represent no more than 10% of properties within a 100-metre radius of the application property. He asked whether the same criteria were adopted by other local authorities, or whether some required less. The Principal Planning Officer confirmed that the 100-metre radius was a standard requirement and noted that Cheltenham and Birmingham Councils had adopted a similar approach.
- 129.12 Councillor Hilton welcomed the strengthening of the Specialist Housing policy at MM1. With regards to the Cordon-Sanitaire, Councillor Hilton raised concerns about the modification making it easier for major applications to apply for planning permission. In response to a suggestion as to whether the wording at MM23 should be changed to 'planning permission will be considered' as opposed to 'planning permission will be granted', the Principal Planning Officer explained that the wording had been chosen by the Planning Inspector and it was her recommendation that this policy needed to be more positively worded.
- 129.13 In response to a further query from Councillor Hilton concerning comments from members of the public and whether the revised wording made development on the Cordon-Sanitaire inevitable, the Principal Planning Officer confirmed that she would encourage members of the public to engage with the consultation process should the report be approved by Cabinet. She also noted that decisions on major planning applications were not just in the gift of Development Control but also with the Planning Committee, who would consider applications alongside the updated JCS strategy. The Principal Planning Officer explained that the Council was not in

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
25.04.22

the position to amend the wording of the Inspector's modifications, however the public could write to the Planning Inspector with their views as part of the public consultation.

- 129.14 Councillor Hilton queried whether there was any way that the policy maps relating specifically to Gloucester could be added to the JCS strategy as an appendix. The Head of Place noted that this could be made clearer, including providing an electronic copy of the JCS maps alongside the City Plan webpage. He confirmed that the team would also explore the possibility of adding a Joint Core Strategy layer to the Council's online mapping tool.
- 129.15 Councillor Pullen referred to MM21 and the Policy concerning protection for public open spaces from redevelopment. He asked who would be responsible for undertaking any assessments demonstrating that a site was of low value and poor quality. The Principal Planning Officer referred to the Council's Open Spaces strategy which she confirmed was regularly updated and explained that assessments would be undertaken by specialists in consultation with local ward Members.
- 129.16 In response to a further query from Councillor Pullen as to whether the community would be consulted on any proposed redevelopment on public open spaces, the Principal Planning Officer confirmed that there would be public consultation and this was set out in the Statement of Community Involvement. She confirmed that the Council would also encourage developers to undertake their own consultation so that any proposals were not a surprise to residents.
- 129.17 Councillor Castle referred to the requirement for developments to provide tree lined streets and asked whether consideration had been given to additional resources needed to deal with dead leaves and debris during the Autumn. The Principal Planning Officer confirmed that the City Council would need to engage with Gloucestershire County Council on this matter as the responsible authority for highways issues.
- 129.18 The Chair noted that there might be well be resource issues in this area and suggested that Councillor Castle raise the matter with the Leader of the Council.
- 129.19 Councillor Gravells reflected on his former experience as Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy and paid tribute to the Principal Planning Officer for her hard work. He expressed the view that the City Plan was a stronger plan for the cross-party support. In response to a query from Councillor Gravells, the Principal Planning Officer confirmed that this was the first City Plan at local district level since 1983. Councillor Gravells commended the innovative policies in the plan, particularly Policy C7 relating to fall prevention from tall buildings.
- 129.20 In response to a further query from Councillor Gravells regarding whether Members would be consulted if the City Plan moved into the public consultation phase, the Principal Planning Officer confirmed that the Gloucester City Plan with modifications at Appendix 6 would be the final

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
25.04.22

document if approved by Cabinet. She also confirmed that if the Planning Inspector's findings in October were positive, the report would be brought back to Council for approval.

RESOLVED – that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee **NOTE** the report.

130. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2021-22

130.1 The Chair introduced the Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2021-22 and invited comments from Members. He confirmed that he would update the Chair's foreword in due course to mention the Task and Finish Group on engagement with young people which the Committee had established.

130.2 Some minor typing errors were identified, and it was agreed that these would be amended ahead of the report going to Council in July.

130.3 Councillor Pullen commended the achievements of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee over the course of the year and expressed the view that the Committee deserved recognition for these achievements, particularly given that many Members were newly elected in May 2021.

RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee **APPROVE** the Annual Report subject to the correction of minor typing errors.

131. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 6th June 2022 at 6.30pm.

Time of commencement: 6.30 pm hours

Time of conclusion: 7.48 pm hours

Chair