

# ENVIRONMENT AND LIVING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

12 December 2012

**PRESENT:** Councillor Hunter-Watts (Chairman); Councillors Bond, Mrs Brandis, Cashman, Fealey (Vice Chairman), Hughes, Stuchbury and Vick.

**Apology:** Councillors Adams, Mrs Bloom, Mrs Chapple, Foster, Isham, Mrs Russell, Mrs L Smith and Winn.

## 1. MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2012 be approved as a correct record.

## 2. AYLESBURY VALE INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY PLAN

The Vale of Aylesbury Plan (VAP) (Strategy) proposed 13,500 new houses over the Plan period to 2031, 6,000 of which were still to be planned for. The Council needed to demonstrate that the policies and proposals contained within the Vale of Aylesbury Plan would be delivered in a sustainable way and that included identifying any crucial infrastructure requirements. It was important to distinguish between three different sides to securing infrastructure through the Vale of Aylesbury Plan:-

- (i) Infrastructure that shaped the Plan – locationally-fixed infrastructure that can only realistically be delivered through developments or where a substantial proportion of it is provided directly as part of developments. For example, the Eastern Link Road at Aylesbury was not realistically going to secure full funding from the public purse in the foreseeable future, but was seen as a very high priority. In such cases the need to secure the delivery of infrastructure effectively dictated some allocations through the Vale of Aylesbury Plan.
- (ii) Strategic Infrastructure – which would not be delivered directly by development “on-site”, but where developments will be making a financial contribution towards that delivery elsewhere. At present this is generally secured through S106 developer contributions, but in future this would be dealt with through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Examples of this would include East-West Rail and infrastructure serving the District as a whole.
- (iii) Non-strategic Infrastructure – that was required as part of development wherever that development was located and whatever its magnitude. This relates primarily to infrastructure directly linked to the additional needs of the additional development and will generally be “local” facilities. However this was generally infrastructure required by the development itself, and so cannot be looked upon as an infrastructure “gain” for the broader area.

On larger schemes this latter category was likely to be provided on-site directly by the developer (e.g. primary schools, community and sport facilities or equipped areas of play as part of the play provision requirements). On smaller schemes this might come through financial contributions to improving facilities in the locality (e.g. sport & leisure improvements) and so in delivery terms may land up being secured under a mixture of S106 agreements and CIL. Affordable Housing also falls under this category as it is

proportionate to the overall level of development and generally provided on site rather than through financial contributions.

There was an emphasis in both the VAP and CIL processes on the need to identify infrastructure requirements necessary to support the anticipated development and growth across the district.

The Committee received a report setting out the initial thinking on infrastructure requirements set out in an Infrastructure Development Plan (IDP) for planned growth. The IDP had been developed based on two major strands of information gathering:-

- a review of existing legal agreements detailing infrastructure provision that was already signed up to by outstanding developments – such as the Berryfields MDA at Aylesbury and the London Road Development at Buckingham, and
- from discussions with specific service providers including utility companies.

Members were informed that the content of the IDP was primarily informed by the responses and requirements of service providers and this could differ from what was perceived by others as the key infrastructure requirements. Infrastructure planning needed to identify as far as possible infrastructure needs and costs, timescales and responsibilities for delivery and funding sources. These were set out in the schedules of the IDP attached as Appendix 1 to the Committee report. The IDP includes three time periods – short term, medium term and long term. Some of the elements are quite specific, especially in the short term whereas others were expressed in a formulaic way, especially in the medium to long term.

The IDP would be a 'living' document and be updated throughout the life of the plan period (2011-2031) to accurately reflect current and future infrastructure requirements and allow programming of projects in accordance with reviews of the CIL. Other factors to be considered included annual funding allocation processes and changes required in response to Government policy. It was also clear that some service providers found it easier to predict and justify future requirements than others.

The IDP would also form a key element of the evidence base to inform the justification of the Council's proposed Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule. CIL was a new levy that local authorities could choose to charge on new developments in their area to fund necessary infrastructure. By providing additional infrastructure to support development of an area, CIL was expected to have a positive economic effect on development across an area in the medium to long term.

The CIL legislation came into force in 2010 and would largely replace Section 106 developer contributions as the means to fund off-site infrastructure. In order to continue to require contributions to off-site infrastructure requirements, local authorities must have a CIL in place by April 2014. The Council was proposing to bring a CIL into effect before April 2014, which would replace the existing developer contributions regime for new and future development approved after adoption.

However, it was not the role of the IDP to prioritise what infrastructure elements should be delivered, and in particular what funds should be allocated to the delivery of infrastructure. These decisions would be taken by the relevant individual service providers and, in the future for CIL through the governance arrangements which would need to be established to allocate CIL monies.

Members were informed that they should not expect all infrastructure identified in the IDP to be delivered, within the timeframes identified, or at all. Inclusion of

infrastructure schemes within the IDP did not automatically result in schemes being included on the Council's list for schemes to be funded through CIL. It was anticipated that some of the schemes included within the IDP might be funded, or part funded, through CIL but they could also receive funding from other sources – such as Growing Places Fund; Local Major Transport Funding and the service providers own capital programme or funding regime.

Members are asked to consider whether there are any particular areas of the IDP that would like to investigate in greater depth and, if so, how they might wish to carry out that investigation.

Members requested further information and were informed:-

- (i) On the differences between the current Section 106 agreements, and how the process would operate from April 2014 for CIL and Section 106 contributions.
- (ii) That CIL would be payable on the commencement of developments, although it would be phased for larger developments.
- (iii) That the IDP was a living document and would be updated as information became available from service providers and other sources.
- (iv) That the figure of 9 allotment plots per 1000 of population was in line with national requirements.
- (v) That many of the short term infrastructure requirements linked to growth had already been secured through Section 106 agreements.
- (vi) Affordable housing was that which was low cost market and subsidised (irrespective of tenure, ownership-whether exclusive or shared-or financial arrangements) that would be available to people who cannot afford to rent or buy houses generally available on the open market. Specifically it could refer to Housing which was social rented, offered at an affordable rent or through a shared ownership scheme amongst other forms of tenure. AVDC part funded a Rural Housing Enabling Officer, who worked with Parishes to develop rural housing exception schemes..
- (vii) That the Aylesbury – canal towpath improvements were tied in with developer contributions relating to the ARLA development and the Aylesbury East proposals.
- (viii) That the Aylesbury-Marylebone Chiltern line railway improvements were tied in with the Chiltern rail franchise and with works on the London rail network.
- (ix) That the retail development / restaurants hubs as part of the Waterside project remained under discussion.
- (x) That the Council would continue to work with the Environment Agency relating to mitigate flooding issues at Buckingham and in other parts of the Vale.
- (xi) That the IDP was dependent on the County Council to provide information on future library and museum provision, although it was believe that the way they assessed this need had recently changed.
- (xii) That information on future infrastructure provision for Buckingham would be included in the Buckingham Neighbourhood Plan that was currently being put together by the Town Council.
- (xiii) That the County's transport infrastructure plans for the future did not include for a Waddesdon by-pass.
- (xiv) That no definite decision had been made by the PCT on who would operate a new healthcare centre at London Road, Buckingham. A decision was unlikely

to be forthcoming in advance of the new commissioning arrangements for health services commencing in April 2013.

- (xv) That once the new leisure management contract commenced the Council would speak with the contractor about improvements to the Swan Pool complex noting that a full business plan would have to be developed and consulted with / agreed by the Council before any works could commence.

Members also commented:-

- (a) That they would like to see more consideration given to community waste collection systems as a part of future infrastructure planning.
- (b) That more consideration should be given to providing dedicated cycling / walking ways, including linking them to existing networks.
- (c) That it would be helpful for Members to have some sort of priority mechanism in the IDP which indicated the need for particular infrastructure.
- (d) That other areas the IDP should have covered included respite care for carers of children with severe mental health issues, and that there was no provision for a special school for autistic children in Buckinghamshire.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That Members of the Scrutiny Committee should inform the Chairman if there were any issues from the Infrastructure Development Plan that they would like the Committee to explore in greater depth.

**3. THE VOLUNTEERING LEGACY OF 2012 IN AYLESBURY VALE  
(Mr Dave Rollins from Aylesbury Vale Youth for Christ also attended for this item)**

The Committee received a presentation that highlighted a number of the volunteering initiatives that were supported in Aylesbury Vale in the delivery of the London 2012 Games, and which also asked Members to consider ways in which AVDC could further support initiatives to help deliver a lasting legacy for volunteering within the Vale.

Events delivered in the Vale during the London 2012 Games such as the successful torch relay events and spectacular flame festival celebrations could not have been delivered without the willing assistance of an army of almost 500 community volunteers. As part of the Legacy Programme for the Games in Buckinghamshire, Cabinet had agreed at its November meeting that maintaining the momentum of volunteering should be one of the 6 priorities of a post games legacy for both this Council and the Buckinghamshire 2012 Partnership.

The Buckinghamshire 2012 Manager had been working with Community Impact Bucks, the umbrella body supporting the Volunteer network across the County, to help develop a database of people who supported the London 2012 Games in a voluntary capacity and help target local volunteering opportunities to help maintain their involvement and enthusiasm. Three of these volunteering programmes that had been instrumental in the success of the London 2012 Games, and would hopefully continue their involvement into the future were:-

- Sports Makers – a group of approximately 900 people who had pledged to commit a minimum of 10 hours of volunteering to deliver new sporting opportunities within their communities.

The intention in 2013 was for Sports Makers to help further develop local Reactivate and Workplace Challenges and to extend the Community Games scheme, a new resource that could greatly enhance village fetes and community events.

- Aylesbury Youth for Christ / Church Together – this team had been active in the Vale for a number of years working alongside the Council to develop a programme of volunteer youth clubs and large scale community events such as the Parklife event in Vale Park, Aylesbury.

In 2012 the team extended their programme to deliver a major public event at Stoke Mandeville Stadium on the evening of the Paralympic Games Opening Ceremony. Over 2500 people enjoyed this free event whilst many hundreds of young people enjoyed a drop in café and digital games experience at Aylesbury College that ran for the duration of the Olympic Games. This experience was set to continue throughout 2013 following the successful award of a Lloyds TSB Legacy Funding grant that would enable the digital café to continue its stay at Aylesbury College.

- Volunteering Opportunities for People with Disabilities – the Buckinghamshire Disability Service (BuDS) were core supporters of the torch relay and flame festival events, staffed by volunteers they provided invaluable advice to ensure that the Olympic and Paralympic flame experience could be enjoyed by people with disabilities in both Aylesbury and Buckingham town centres.

Community Impact Bucks, following support from the Community Chest, had been able to support individuals with a range of disabilities to provide regular volunteering opportunities as part of its Opportunities for All Programme. The scheme was set up to provide help and assistance to people who would find it difficult to volunteer without support. The project worked closely with individuals to identify roles in a wide range of settings including farm work, gardening, driving, playgroups, retail or administration, depending on skills and interest. Roles can also be tailored for particular needs. Once a suitable role has been identified, we can organise and accompany volunteers to interviews and initial start date, help fill in application and CRB forms, regularly keep in touch and arrange 6 and 12 month meetings to talk about progress.

Members requested further information and were informed:-

- (i) That the Community Impact Bucks (CIB) website was the primary site for people to obtain information on support services available to charities, community groups, social enterprises and rural organisations throughout Buckinghamshire, and was also the Volunteer Centre for Buckinghamshire, helping members of the public to get involved in community activity.
- (ii) That Cabinet had resolved at their meeting on 13 November that a bid for £60,000 would be made at the time of the budget considerations for 2013/14 to support the implementation of the Olympics Legacy Plan.
- (iii) On the success that the Aylesbury Youth for Christ had accomplished in reaching out to hard-to-reach groups and people from different religious backgrounds.

Members also commented:-

- (a) That it was very pleasing to see that so many young people, and people who had previously not been involved, were becoming involved in volunteering.
- (b) That it might be helpful for CIB to have a matrix of volunteers' skills, which would then help to match them to events where volunteer help was being sought.
- (c) That more needed to be done to encourage the unemployed to participate in voluntary work in the community.
- (d) That volunteers would also be able to make a positive contribution with issues on the County's health agenda.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That Mr Rollins be thanked for attending the meeting and presenting to Members.
- (2) That the Committee was fully supportive of the efforts being made to further develop community volunteering within the Vale and of the bid for £60,000 as part of the 2013/14 budget to support this aim.
- (3) That an article on Community Impact Bucks should be included in a future edition of the Aylesbury Vale Times.

#### **4. SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

Following the work programme planning event held on 25 October 2012, the Scrutiny Committee had agreed at its last meeting that 14 identified issues should be taken forward and included on the future work programme.

The Chairman informed Members:-

- that he and the Vice Chairman had met with Officers to prepare a work programme taking account of the issues raised at the last meeting. A further item on the Bucks Home Choice (Local connections criteria), following up on some of the issues raised at the November meeting, would be submitted to the next meeting in February 2013.
- that working groups comprised of members from this Committee might more usefully be thought of as "Research Groups" rather than Task & Finish groups. A member, or group of members, could propose a topic to examine using the scoping form agreed by the Committee, consider it over a period of weeks, and present a report back to the whole Scrutiny Committee, which could then be discussed and endorsed, rejected or amended.
- that the decision to research a particular topic should be made by the whole committee, which would agree the mandate for the Research Group.

It was agreed that the Chairman and Vice Chairman should continue to work with Officers to ensure that the Committee had a balanced work programme for 2013 and, it was –

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the approach, as detailed by the Chairman, be agreed.

- (2) That Councillor Cashman would submit a scoping form for a review of 'A local list of buildings of local architectural or historic interest' to the February 2013 meeting.
- (3) That Councillor Vick would submit a scoping form to the 13 February 2013 meeting for a review of the issue relating to AVDC being the business providing energy efficiency solutions to local people.
- (4) That other Members of the Committee who wished to take the lead on scoping any of the other 11 identified issues identified at the work programme event held on the 25<sup>th</sup> October 2012 should be encouraged to do so, with a view to submitting a scoping form to the February 2013 meeting.

## **5. QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE DIGEST – JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2012**

The Council's new Corporate Plan had been adopted in October 2011 and set the direction for the administration up to the elections in May 2015. The Corporate Plan was based on four themes:-

- Improving our communications and interaction with our customers.
- Protecting and improving the living experience of the Vale.
- Delivering efficient and economic services.
- Growing the economy of the Vale.

There were a number of objectives that needed to be achieved for the four themes to be realised. The Committee was provided with a quarterly monitoring report on the actions and targets within their remit and informed that one action had not achieved its milestones for the last quarter. This related to developing and maintaining Public Realm and Urban Design Guides and working with partners to implement those standards. The reasons for this were stated in the report.

Members requested further information and were informed that some Rural Design Guides had been produced to date, although doing so was not one of the identified actions within the Corporate Plan.

Members asked for the actual figures for affordable housing to be included with future performance reports, and to receive a crime update from the Thames Valley Police at a future meeting.

**RESOLVED –**

That the contents of the Quarterly Performance Digest (July to September 2012), insofar as they apply to the work of the Environment and Living Scrutiny Committee, be noted.