

PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY ADVISORY GROUP

Meeting - 9 September 2019

Present: J Read (Chairman)
J Jordan, M Lewis and G Sandy

Also Present: Dr W Matthews and R Sangster

Apologies for absence: G Hollis

139. MINUTES

The minutes of the Planning and Economic Development PAG held on 4 April 2019 were approved.

140. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

141. UPDATES FROM MEMBERS/ SENIOR OFFICERS ON CURRENT ISSUES

The Head of Planning and Economic Development reported that the Regulation 19 process, which was the second stage of the consultation process when forming a Local Plan had now finished. This phase of the consultation process provides local communities, businesses and other interested stakeholders with the opportunity to comment on the policy content of a draft Local Plan, within a specific remit. The remit for public consultation relates to the 'Tests of Soundness' and also includes legal compliance, as set out in National Planning Policy Framework.

Once Regulation 19 was complete, an independent Planning Inspector would then undertake a 'public examination' of the draft Local Plan where recommendations could be made to further improve it. There had been approximately 2,700 responses with over 6,000 comments in total. The Planning Inspectorate were expected to sit in early to mid-December. Members congratulated the Team on their work in getting the Local Plan to this stage.

The Community Infrastructure Levy consultation had now closed and 36 people had responded with 40 comments. The response to consultation was expected to be low due to the technical nature of the document. Following this stage of consultation, the charging schedule will then be submitted for an independent Public Examination to be arranged in which a Planning Inspector would consider evidence from the Councils and from developers, planning agents, stakeholders, Parish Councils, residents' groups, the County Council, infrastructure providers and other likely interested parties. The IPE would be used for this purpose rather than the Planning Inspectorate as they would be able to undertake this more quickly. Hearing sessions were

expected to take place in early November with a report submitted before Christmas. The Charging Schedule would then need to be adopted by both Councils early in 2020 and hopefully be implemented by mid-February 2020.

The Strategic Planning Consultant reported that information forwarded to the Planning Inspectorate would be summarised. An analysis would be made of issues raised on particular policies. No modifications would be made to the Plan.

The Portfolio Holder clarified that the CIL would be sent to the Parish Council for smaller projects that would make a difference to the community. In terms of the new Buckinghamshire Council funding would be put into one budget and allocated according to infrastructure needs, which may not be geographically balanced.

142. RESPONSE TO HEATHROW AIRPORT CONSULTATION

The PAG received a report that identified the key planning and environmental issues extracted from Heathrow Airport's recent consultation relating to South Bucks District Council which is summarised as follows:-

- The Heathrow expansion would have implications for residents of South Bucks District and the response of the Council would be considered by the Planning Inspectorate through their determination of the Development Consent Order (DCO) application in 2020. It was the largest DCO application to date proposing a major expansion of the airport with consequences for the District in terms of land use, transport and quality of life due to noise and pollution all of which need to be mitigated against.
- The Council was not the determining authority for the DCO application. Heathrow Airport Holdings Limited (HAL) proposed to submit the DCO application to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) in mid 2020 with its examination due in 2020/21 and a decision in 2021. The Council's views were matters of interest to PINS in their determination of the DCO.
- The Airport Expansion Consultation (AEC) was being held separately to the consultation on air space. On the AEC only 4,000 responses had been received so far but the deadline was 13 September 2019. For Chiltern the air space consultation was more significant. There was a concern that each consultation was being held separately.
- Currently there were 80 million passengers at Heathrow and this was expected to increase to 142 million by 2050.
- The construction period was critical with a completion date of 2026 which was an extremely optimistic deadline bearing in mind the realignment of the M25, moving of A4 (and rivers), new flood surge ponds.

During discussion the following points

- There were significant gaps in the proposals put forward by HAL despite the 38 consultation documents covering 17,000 pages. Benefits had been put

forward by HAL which covered mainly business opportunities. There were gaps in information for example in management arrangements, HGV routes, alternative routes for the realignment of the M25, the impact of the new railhead, surface access strategy etc. The relocation of the M4 and M25 during construction was a cause for concern as the timetable for these projects was not in line with similar projects completed elsewhere in the country.

- The Strategic Planning Consultant identified areas of the proposed transport model in the Development Consent Order (DCO) that lacked detail. Members referred to the impact on the roads, particularly HGV routes and the robustness of the Preliminary Environmental Information Report. The Strategic Planning Consultant reported that the transport model required further work. This included doubled freight and its impact on the surrounding transport infrastructure. Members identified that the proposed routes of HGV's were problematic due to the existence of low-weight bearing bridges on the routes. Members emphasised the need for a relief road.
- Members raised concerns regarding the proposed Flood Storage and its effect on surrounding communities. It was identified that residents were not able to access the Heathrow airport expansion compensation scheme as they did not qualify due to geography, even though there would be blight and difficulties obtaining house insurance. Members were also concerned that many of the Flood Storage areas were being built on top of former landfill sites. The lack of detail on how the gravel extraction sites would be managed was noted by Members as HGV's would affect traffic.
- The new flood storage ponds were proposed south of Richings Park with significant landscape features proposed. Bunds need to be secured to provide a noise and visual barrier to Richings Park and the Ivers from the third runway to the south of the M4. Solutions had not been presented that address the groundwater and alluvial flooding risks. A Member referred to the fact that the storage pond would be surrounded on three sides by residential properties. The Strategic Planning Consultant reported that he had discussed this issue with the County Council who also had concerns about flooding and adequate mitigation. In addition Members asked whether any benefit could be made from the storage ponds in terms of recreational facilities.
- The effect of flightpaths on communities was also raised and the Strategic Planning Consultant advised that it was contained in a different DCO and consultation. The Airspace decision would be finalised after the DCO was granted which was not considered to be good practice. The plans for airspace were yet to be finalised, but their aims were to spread the impact to minimise the possibility of it affecting only one area. A Member emphasised the need for respite and the need to provide alternative routes.
- It was reported that air quality in Iver was far below the national average, and emphasised the importance of monitoring through the Air Quality Action Plan in place to address air quality issues. Information should be accessible by local councils and available in real-time.

- A Member asked for clarification on the use of the airspace and noise factors. Reference was made to private jets taking off from Northolt and the need to clarify any changes in airspace relating to the expansion. Reference was made to the need to use monitoring equipment. Aircraft from Heathrow rise quickly and noise from aircraft tends to be under 3,000 feet. If planes were overloaded and the air thin this could have an impact on noise. Members also commented on night flights and the penalties for breaking any regulations. Complaints can be made to the Airports Authority and fines could be issued if regulations were breached.
- The Grundons facility was proposed for relocation in the Slough Green Belt and the Colne Valley Regional Park across from the SBDC boundary. The existing facility would be displaced as a result of the expansion proposal and therefore its relocation should be considered as part of the DCO. Emissions would have a further impact on residents.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the detailed report and appended table, which addressed issues and concerns for each chapter of the Preliminary Environmental Impact Report and other documents contained within the raft of consultation material be noted, including the fact that Bucks County Council would be addressing the subject matters which fall within their remit to a larger extent.
- 2) That the comments made by the PAG be incorporated into the consultation response submitted by the Acting Chief Executive and Director of Services on behalf of the Council in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development.
- 3) That the Council response be shared with Heathrow Spatial Planning Group (HSPG), to form part of the HSPG joint Council response (a recommendation made by the Planning Inspectorate to the HSPG, which was consistent with Minister of Housing, Communities and Local Government guidance.

143. EXEMPT INFORMATION

RESOLVED that under Paragraph 3, Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the following item(s) of business is not for publication to the press or public on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

144. HS2 PROJECT UPDATE

The HS2 Consultant provided an update on the HS2 Project. The Project remained in Stage 1 which was the design, stakeholder engagement, delivery proposals, supply chain engagement and final design proposals. In August 2019 the Government announced a review of the Project to be chaired by Douglas Oakervee, before making

a final decision as to whether or not to proceed with the project as planned or whether to amend or totally abandon the Project. Notice to Proceed had already been delayed and was expected to be announced in December 2019, if the Government decided to proceed then the project would move into its construction phase. HS2 had recently advised the Council that the Department of Transport had committed a large budget for the project to move to the next phase of the project including procurement for equipment and construction and therefore the Council needed to continue to work on the Project until any such final decision was issued.

The Head of Planning and Economic Development informed the PAG that an agreement had been reached with regards to the viaduct, but a formal response had not been received. In response to questions from Members, it was clarified that the perspex used on construction of HS2 should not cause glare but this needed to be clarified. Members requested more detail on the state of projects for the Colne Valley Regional Park Panel enhancements. With regards to biodiversity, it was reported that the HS2 Masterplan would aim for a net gain in biodiversity. A Member asked for further information on how much funding had been spent on wildlife improvements.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

The meeting terminated at 7.30 pm