

PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY ADVISORY GROUP

Meeting - 7 March 2019

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

Apologies for absence: J Jordan

127. MINUTES

The minutes of the Planning and Economic Development PAG held on 29 November 2019 were approved.

128. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

129. UPDATES FROM MEMBERS/ SENIOR OFFICERS ON CURRENT ISSUES

It was proposed to progress the introduction of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and a further PAG meeting had been set up for 4 April 2019.

The Local Plan consultation was due to begin in May/June. The Members would be notified of the dates through the Members Bulletin.

Training for Town and Parish Council Members and Clerks had been arranged for 12 March on Planning – Development Management and Enforcement.

130. FUTURE HIGH STREETS FUND

Central government had made a fund of £675 million available to regenerate High Streets across the UK. Up to £25 million could be claimed but bids of £5-£10 million were expected. Expressions of interest had to be submitted by 22 March 2019 which gave only 2 weeks' notice.

131. PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FEES

As part of creating an exemplary planning service, it was proposed to improve the Pre-application planning advice service. This was a service that developers wanted, it was helpful to them to more fully understand our policies and processes. It would also improve the quality of applications coming forward and improve the Council's performance figures. To staff the service adequately, it would be necessary to charge fees that fully cover the costs. The report compared charges with neighbouring Councils' and fees within the joint service.

It was proposed to increase fees by 20% and streamline the charges across the joint service. This would fund the extra resources needed to adequately staff the service. Members were concerned that if developers had paid for the service, they would automatically expect that their application would be passed at planning committee but were reassured that it would be made clear to the applicant that this was not certain to lead to permission granted.

Members agreed to the following recommendation:

The PAG was asked to advise the Portfolio Holder and Head of Planning and Economic Development on the following recommendation:

RECOMMENDATION

- 1. That the Head of Planning and Economic Development adopt the revised fee structure and in particular to: -**
 - A) amalgamate/streamline the two current charging schedules into one, set fee based structure. Such a fee structure is consistent with those operated by the majority of Local Planning Authorities, and**
 - B) introduce a 20% minimum increase across the board on all fees payable for pre-application advice, and**
 - C) streamline the current fee charging categories relating to different forms of commercial development, such that they relate to one non-residential/ commercial category (based on proposed floor space divisions), and**
 - D) introduce a new Pre-application category in respect of the use of bespoke Planning Performance Agreements (PPA's): this would be applicable when dealing with large scale development proposals in respect of schemes comprising 50+ dwellings and non-residential floor space over 2, 000m2), and**
 - E) A corollary of the above would also address the current shared service deficiency in not having a consistent charging schedule, and therefore not recovering the full costs, of providing pre-application advice in respect of proposals relating to Listed Buildings.**

132. PLANNING SERVICE UPDATE

The appendix set out the key actions being undertaken and the last column the latest position. Much improvement had been made since last year; IT systems had started to work together and vWorkspace challenges overcome, staff turnover had been a problem but now there were new teams in place. The focus now was on refining best practises across the services. It was confirmed that there were now approximately 80

Officers in the service. With regard to the enforcement backlog, it was acknowledged that the Interim Officer had done a great deal to address this. It was noted that there was no statutory obligation to do enforcement but it was important to residents.

Members asked for easier access to the Enforcement Team and it was advised that it should be quicker now to get an email reply. Members were asked to include the case reference number when they contacted the team.

It was **RESOLVED** the report be noted.

133. EXEMPT INFORMATION

RESOLVED that under 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.

134. HS2 PROJECT REPORT

The project was still currently at Stage One as notice to proceed had been delayed until the autumn. A programme of work with details had been requested from the contractors but this had still not been received. Any information provided would be shared in the Members Bulletin.

The Colne Valley Regional Park Panel (CVRPP) had received an allocation of a fund of £3 million to offset the impacts of HS2 and an update on those projects was listed in the table on page 18.

A community forum was planned to inform the community of progress on the project but was not well attended previously. This time it would be advertised in the local press on the website.

The Colne Valley Viaduct Design Schedule 19 pre application discussion had commenced but the Council had requested details of the landscaping plan and the commitment by HS2 to provide the landscape and noise mitigation has become an issue. The Council has said that it was critical in its view that landscape commitment be secured at the same time otherwise determination of the Schedule 17 would be very difficult.

An update on the funding of the HS2 team noted that time for Officers could be recharged for the next 12 months with the exception of community engagement that would be paid for by the existing contingency reserves.

It was **RESOLVED** that Members note the report and progress made on the project including the financial implications contained in the report and that they will be met in 2019/20 from reserves of each authority for these purposes.

The meeting terminated at 7.02 pm