

FULL COUNCIL

2ND FEBRUARY 2021

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE, PLANNING & HOUSING

1. COUNCIL UPDATE REGARDING CLIMATE CHANGE, PLANNING & HOUSING PORTFOLIO

1.1 Purpose of Report

To advise Members that a decision making session was held on 17th December 2020 covering CPH Climate Change, Planning & Housing.

1.2 Background

1.2.1 This report highlights some of those decisions which have been made, but not all. Members wishing to view all decisions made can find these at:

<http://eservices.solihull.gov.uk/mglInternet/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=654&Year=0>

1.3. Decision Session – 17th December 2020

Brownfield Land Register

1.3.1 A report was presented seeking approval to formally publish the third annual review of the Solihull Brownfield Land Register. This is a formal requirement placed upon the Council by MHCLG. The recommendations presented to me were all agreed. This included a small suite of changes to the existing register, primarily as a result of planning permission having been granted or development having commenced; and a small number of additional sites being added to Part 1 of the register. For the avoidance of doubt, two sites were updated by way of verbal update at the meeting to reflect the most recent change in events. This again related to the granting of planning permission and commencement of development.

1.4. Decision Session – 27th January 2021

Local Development Scheme

1.4.1. A report is to be presented to my decision making session on the 27th January with a view to updating the Local Development Scheme (LDS). At the time of writing the decision hasn't been made so I will provide a verbal update at the Council meeting itself. In summary however the recommendations seek to (1) update the LDS to reflect the publication and expected submission of the Local Plan; and (2) include an updated summary on the expected review of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's), both of which support the Local Plan.

1.5. Good News and Issues of Interest

1.5.1. Draft Local Plan Update

1.5.2. Members will be aware that the statutory period of representations on the draft Local Plan ended on the 14th December following a formal engagement period of just over 6 weeks. The Council received thousands of representations from more than 950 different representors. Officers are continuing to review all representations in advance of the planned submission of the Plan for public examination.

1.5.3. The Low Carbon Energy Framework and Net Zero Action Plan (NZAP)

1.5.4. The development of the NZAP has made good progress since my last report. Following the member workshop, we continued with the early engagement process. Two workshops were held; one with key officers and one with the business community. Both workshops were very well attended.

1.5.5. The team working on the NZAP has now developed the NZAP Green Paper I will be presenting this to Cabinet at the February meeting to seek agreement to start Public Consultation. The Green Paper is a key stage in the development of the NZAP as it sets out the potential interventions that can be taken to decarbonise the Borough. Once the consultation is complete we will start to draft the final NZAP.

1.5.6. Wildlife Ways

1.5.7. One strand of the Wildlife Ways project is a £2m grant programme aimed at improving biodiversity, covering the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership area (GBSLEP). The aim of the grant is to increase the amount of wildlife (flowers and fauna) in an area, improve their quality and health, and encourage them to use areas that they currently are not using.

1.5.8. To date, 14 applications have been received including ones from Cannock Chase, Tamworth, Lichfield, East Staffordshire, Solihull, Redditch and Bromsgrove. There have been 3 applications from the Council, working in the areas of Dorridge, Shirley and Langley. The grant had an initial target of 20 hectares to be improved in 'habitat value', and to date, the grant has enabled 185.78 hectares of land to be improved, which is a fantastic result.

1.5.9. Since the start of COVID 19 restrictions, we have continued to market the grants programme and are accepting applications, and will continue to accept applications throughout 2021. Following National Guidance that construction work is able to continue, we expect minimal impact on this worthwhile programme.

1.5.10. Climate Change Commission

1.5.11. In November, I met with the recently appointed Chair of Solihull's Climate Change Commission along with other Members of the Climate Change, Planning and Housing Committee. The purpose of the Commission is to make recommendations as to how Solihull can further the aims of our Climate Change Prospectus and achieve the aims of our October 19 Climate Emergency – Statement of Intent. At the meeting the Chair outlined his priorities for the commission which included ensuring a voice for young people to speak on climate change issues and nature, health and arts. The Chair is currently recruiting the other members of the Commission, which will include youth representation, with a view to holding the first 'quarterly progress meeting' with myself and other members of the Climate Change, Planning and Housing Committee towards the end of March/early April

1.6. Future Decisions

At my future decision making sessions, I will be considering the following:

- Revenue and Capital Monitoring 2020/21 as at 31st December 2020