



CABINET – 18 SEPTEMBER 2020

ORDER PAPER

ITEM DETAILS

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Mr. B. L. Pain CC

1. MINUTES (Pages 3-10)

Proposed motion

That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2020 be taken as read, confirmed, and signed.

2. URGENT ITEMS

None.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of the Cabinet are asked to declare any interests in the business to be discussed.

4. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY LATEST POSITION (Pages 11-36)

- *This report was considered by the Scrutiny Commission at its meeting on 14 September and a draft minute is attached to this Order Paper marked "4".*

Proposed motion

- (a) That the comments of the Scrutiny Commission be noted;
- (b) That the latest position of the 2020/21 revenue budget and capital programme as at the end of July 2020 and the effect of Covid-19 be noted;
- (c) That the changes to the 2020-24 capital programme as set out in the report be approved;
- (d) That the approach outlined in the report to updating the Medium Term Financial Strategy be approved.

5. WHITE PAPER ON DEVOLUTION AND LOCAL RECOVERY (Pages 37-44)

Comments received from Mr. M. Mullaney CC, are attached to this Order Paper, marked "5a".

Comments received from Dr. T. Eynon CC on behalf of the Labour Group, are attached to this Order Paper, marked "5b".

Proposed motion

- (a) That the Leader write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government requesting an invitation for councils in the administrative boundaries of Leicestershire County Council to come forward with their proposals for the establishment of unitary local government as a prerequisite to a devolution settlement for the East Midlands;
- (b) That officers be requested to
 - (i) develop and update the draft strategic business case for a unitary structure for local government in Leicestershire having regard to the criteria and requirements of the White Paper;
 - (ii) Take steps to engage an independent social research company to undertake a stakeholder engagement on the revised business case;
 - (iii) Following publication of the White Paper submit a further report to the Scrutiny Commission and Cabinet before the matter be debated by the full Council with a view to an ambitious proposal being put to Government which recognises a once in a generation opportunity to improve local government in Leicestershire in the context of a strong economy and powerful voice for the East Midlands.

6. ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES DEPARTMENT STRATEGY 2020-24 - DELIVERING WELLBEING AND OPPORTUNITY IN LEICESTERSHIRE (Pages 45-86)

- *This report was considered by the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 7 September and a draft minute is attached to this Order Paper marked "6".*

Proposed motion

- (a) That the comments of the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted;
- (b) That the outcome of the consultation on "Delivering Wellbeing and Opportunity in Leicestershire: Adults and Communities Department Ambitions and Strategy for 2020-2024" be noted;
- (c) That the "Delivering Wellbeing and Opportunity in Leicestershire: Adults and Communities Department Ambitions and Strategy for 2020–2024" be approved.

7. STATUS ON SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY MANAGED LIBRARIES (Pages 87-96)

- *This report was considered by the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 7 September and a draft minute is attached to this Order Paper marked "7".*

Proposed motion

- (a) That the comments of the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted;
- (b) That the baseline support offer to Community Managed Libraries be enhanced to:
 - (i) increase the lease extension period from five to 10 years;
 - (ii) offer more officer visits to provide support and training and, via Voluntary Action Leicestershire (VAL), support for volunteer recruitment and retention, business planning, and income generation;
- (c) That it be noted that the position of Community Managed Libraries will be kept under review during the recovery from Covid-19 and further reports will be made to members as necessary.

8. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) AND INCLUSION STRATEGY 2020 TO 2023 (Pages 97-146)

Proposed motion

- (a) That the responses to the consultation including the comments of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted;
- (b) That the Leicestershire local area Special Educational Needs and Disability and Inclusion Strategy 2020-2023 (appended to the report) be approved.

9. LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20 AND BUSINESS PLAN FOR 2020/21 (Pages 147-180)

Proposed motion

That the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership (LRSCP) Annual Report for 2019/20 and the joint Business Plan of the LRSCP and the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board for 2020/21 be noted and welcomed.

10. LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20, STRATEGIC PLAN 2020 TO 2025, AND BUSINESS PLAN 2020/21 (Pages 181-220)

- *This report was considered by the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 7 September and a draft minute is attached to this Order Paper marked "10".*

Fran Pearson, Independent Chair of the Leicestershire and Rutland Local Safeguarding Adults Board, will attend the Cabinet meeting to present this item.

Proposed motion

That

- The comments of the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted;
- The Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report for 2019/20, Strategic Plan for 2020-2025, and Business Plan for 2020/21, be noted and welcomed.

11. CORPORATE ASSET INVESTMENT FUND ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2019-2020 (Pages 221-248)

Proposed motion

- The comments of the Scrutiny Commission as set out in the report be noted;
- The performance of the Corporate Asset Investment Fund for the period April 2019 to March 2020 be welcomed.

12. PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE WHITE PAPER (AUGUST 2020) (Pages 249-282)

- *This report was considered by the Scrutiny Commission at its meeting on 14 September and a draft minute is attached to this Order Paper marked "12".*

Proposed motion

- That the comments of the Scrutiny Commission be noted;
- That the proposals set out in the Planning for the Future White Paper (August 2020), be noted;
- That the County Council's response to the consultation on the proposals set out in the White Paper as appended to the report, be approved, subject to (d) below;

- (d) That the Chief Executive be authorised, in consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Lead Member, to agree a final response to the consultation having regard to the comments made by the Scrutiny Commission.

13. ITEMS REFERRED FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

No items have been referred from the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

14. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN HAS DECIDED TO TAKE AS URGENT

None.

Officer to contact

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SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 14 SEPTEMBER 2020

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY UPDATE

MINUTE EXTRACT

The Commission considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources which provided an update on the 2020/21 revenue budget and capital programme monitoring position and set out the proposed approach for updating the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2021 to 2025. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 7' is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Mr J. B. Rhodes CC, the Cabinet Lead Member for Finance and Resources.

In introducing the report, the Director of Corporate Resources used a power point presentation to highlight the key issues and a copy of that presentation is filed with these minutes. The Director emphasised the following key points:

- i) The position now outlined showed an in-year overspend of £18million which was a reduction from the previous forecast. However, given the volatility of the situation it was difficult to forecast precisely the likely year end impact. If the overspend was maintained at this level the use of the General Fund could be avoided which would be a significant achievement;
- ii) Whilst noting the impact of Covid 19 on the budget it was important not to lose sight of the other significant budget pressures facing the Council in particular around SEN and Children Social Care budgets. The Government had indicated it was reviewing SEN funding, but the outcome of that review was yet to be published and the indications were that this could be delayed until later in the year;
- iii) The Government had not progressed their commitment to Fair Funding and implementation had been delayed until at least April 2022. In addition, given the recent decision by the Government to

- pause the need for payment of business rates there was some concern about the risk to authorities continuing to pursue business rate retention as a funding stream in the long term;
- iv) The Comprehensive Spending Review would provide the earliest indication as to whether the Government would make additional resources available to local government. Given the significant pressures across all Government Departments the likelihood of additional resources was felt to be remote.

Regarding the Capital Programme the Director outlined the changes that had been made so that resources could be released to underwrite the overspend in the current year. This included removing the requirement for funding of the Lutterworth Development Spine Road. Members noted that the position on this would be monitored and looked at again if the Council were to be successful in obtaining other government funding for the scheme.

In response to questions the Director and Cabinet Lead Member advised:

- a) The reduction in funding of School Accommodation related to a reduction in forward funding of schemes and greater reliance on developers building directly. This was a review of funding approach for schemes several years in the future rather than a change to planned places;
- b) Further investigations were being undertaken in relation to Zouch bridge including going out to competitive tender with a view to reducing costs. Works on the bridge were not likely to start this year as previously planned;
- c) All Departments had been asked to look at how additional savings could be delivered to meet the financial gap in the MTFs. These discussions had just started, and it was noted that given the significant financial savings already delivered the task ahead would be challenging. The Director, however, pointed out that the experience gained from working with Newton Europe to develop a new Target Operating Model for Adult Social Care had shown that there were still areas of the Council which might benefit from a new approach and to that end Newton Europe had been asked to work

with staff in Children Social Care on processes and demand management.

Members of the Commission noted the challenges facing the Council and commended the Director of Corporate Resources and other officers for their work and effort to ensure financial sustainability.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the update on the 2020/21 revenue budget and capital programme monitoring position be noted;
- (b) That the proposed approach and timetable for developing and rolling forward the MTFS for 2021 to 2025 be noted.

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Comments from Mr Michael Mullaney CC, De Montfort

I write to object to Item 5 on the agenda the White Paper on Devolution and Local Recovery, that seeks to push the County Council further into supporting one Unitary Authority for Leicestershire and the abolition of Hinckley and Bosworth and the other 6 Districts and Boroughs in the county. I object to the proposals as I believe they are the wrong time; when efforts should be on fighting the Covid-19 pandemic we should not be undertaking disruptive changes to local government. And because I believe it will see communities like Hinckley further cut off from decision making and it will not be in the financial interests of people in Hinckley and Bosworth.

To abolish Hinckley and Bosworth and the other Boroughs and Districts in Leicestershire would be a hugely disruptive, time consuming distraction at a time when people are trying to get through the Covid-19 pandemic. Getting through Covid-19 must be the top priority that occupies council officers time and effort not reorganisation.

Plans for one unitary authority for Leicestershire will mean decision making being taken further away from local people particularly in areas like mine in Hinckley which are on the edge of the county. One authority for Leicestershire's 700,000 population will mean communities like Hinckley feeling even more remote from decision making.

The previous Conservative Local Government Minister Simon Clarke said that any new Unitaries should have populations between 3-600,000. With exceptions only if the places are one united community (such as a single city). Given Leicestershire's population is around 700,000 and our county is a large sprawling geographical area of many varying and spread out towns and villages, Leicestershire is clearly too big and too diverse to be squeezed into one authority.

Furthermore it has been trailed that a move to Unitary status would save residents money in Council Tax (an assertion I challenge due to the likely costs of the disruption of moving to the new Unitary system and the continued government underfunding of Leicestershire) but even taking that into account, it has been stated by the County Council's leadership that after the Unitary plans the Council Tax cut would not be given to residents in Hinckley and Bosworth because they currently pay the lowest Council Tax in Leicestershire. I believe it is unfair that residents in my area of Hinckley will not receive any benefit from a move to Unitary status but will lose out by having a more remote form of government, that will not be local and see key decisions currently taken in Hinckley taken in future many miles away from our area.

In conclusion I object to the proposals to move to one Unitary authority in Leicestershire and I hope you drop the proposal on today's Cabinet Agenda that says that Mr Rushton should write to the government encouraging them to press on with the Unitary plans.

Michael Mullaney
County Councillor for Hinckley De Montfort

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Submission to Cabinet Item 5

18th September 2020

From Terri Eynon CC, Labour Group Leader on behalf of the Labour Group

WHITE PAPER ON DEVOLUTION AND LOCAL RECOVERY

The Labour Group supports, in principle, the establishment of unitary local government within Leicestershire and agrees that the draft business case for a unitary authority “A Vision for Local Government in Leicestershire: Strategic Business Case” published in October 2019 should form the basis for any discussions with the Secretary of State.

Whilst we recognise the need for a strong economy and powerful voice for the East Midlands, we have reservations regarding the use of Leicestershire’s proposal as a prerequisite to a devolution settlement for the East Midlands.

The Labour Group do agree that the current local government structure is fragmented and frustrating for residents. A Unitary Council, as described in the draft business case will simplify relationships with our stakeholders. The Area Committee model and establishment of Town Councils should mitigate against the risk of centralization, ensuring that local decisions are made, wherever possible, by locally elected Members.

The establishment of a combined authority also demonstrates the benefits and risks of centralisation. The 3 counties and 3 cities of Leicestershire, Leicester, Nottinghamshire, Nottingham, Derbyshire and Derby have many economic issues in common. Their mutual responsibility for the development area around East Midlands Airport and the former Ratcliffe Power Station suggests there should be a natural Strategic Alliance in the East Midlands. Calling the constituent authorities ‘The 6C’s’ suggests a unity of purpose. The history of the N2D2 project suggest that such unity may be hard to achieve in reality.

Combining six politically disparate authorities under one Metro-Mayor assumes that Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire can overcome their own problems with co-operation. It also brings with it the risk of directing power up the hierarchy leaving communities, currently represented by District and Borough Councils, feeling increasingly distant from the democratic processes that shape their lives. The Labour Group would be keen to understand how this risk is to be mitigated to ensure that local decision making remains local.

The Labour Group has consistently supported the principle of Unitary status for Leicestershire, but we are also concerned about the timing of this proposal. The Covid-19 pandemic has added to the financial risks facing this Council, increasing the need for services and reducing Council Tax receipts. Unitary Status cannot be a solution to longstanding inadequacies in the funding for Adult and Children's Social Care.

It is disappointing to see the current Government more interested in reorganising Councils rather than remunerating them properly. This Council is expected to respond to the risks of leaving Europe with no deal, the inevitable chaos around East Midlands Airport, a total rewrite of the Planning system, all the while managing its relationships with District and Borough Councils facing a reorganisation many of them do not see to be necessary. It is a big ask.

If the Secretary of State does support this proposal the Labour Group would need to see the full costs of reorganization centrally funded.

Dr Terri Eynon MRCPsych FRCGP
Leader of Leicestershire County Council Labour Group



**ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE – 7 SEPTEMBER 2020**

**ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES DEPARTMENT STRATEGY 2020-24
DELIVERING WELLBEING AND OPPORTUNITY IN
LEICESTERSHIRE**

MINUTE EXTRACT

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Adults and Communities which provided an update on the outcomes of the consultation on 'Delivering Wellbeing and Opportunity in Leicestershire: Adults and Communities Department Ambitions and Strategy for 2020–2024' and sought the Committee's views on the revised draft Strategy which would be presented to the Cabinet for final approval on 18th September. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 11', is filed with these minutes.

Members praised the service users that had agreed to tell their personal stories to help inform the Strategy; it was felt these provided a much deeper level of insight which was invaluable in shaping new, and improving existing, services.

The Committee commended officers for the work that had been undertaken to produce a wide-reaching Strategy and confirmed its support for its implementation across the Department with no further amendment.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the outcomes of the consultation on 'Delivering Wellbeing and Opportunity in Leicestershire: Adults and Communities Department Ambitions and Strategy for 2020–2024', and the update now provided be noted;
- (b) That the comments now made by the Committee be submitted to the Cabinet for consideration.

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**ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE – 7 SEPTEMBER 2020**

STATUS ON SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY MANAGED LIBRARIES

MINUTE EXTRACT

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Adults and Communities which provided an update on the impact of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic on Community Managed Libraries (CMLs) and their medium-term sustainability, and which proposed amendments to the current support package on offer. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 12', is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion the following points were raised:

- (i) It was clarified that the Click and Collect Service enabled registered library members to request a selection of books online by genre or author; once library staff had collected the books a suitable pick up time could then be arranged. Library members that did not have access to online services could make a request to their local CML by phone. In terms of collections made by library members, it was acknowledged that with the social distancing measures currently in place there were limitations to the number of people that could physically make a visit. However, monitoring would continue going forward to ensure the best offer was in place for service delivery.
- (ii) It was confirmed that the mobile library service continued to be paused as a result of the pandemic. However, an extension to the Click and Collect Service was being considered to keep pace with service demand. In response to a member's request, officers undertook to give further consideration to the mobile service options available to residents of the Barwell community in light of its size.
- (iii) Part of scaling up the current baseline offer would include the County Council putting forward an additional support offer that CMLs could choose to buy into which focussed on the management of soft facilities. In response to a question it was confirmed that due to the scale, it was intended that the provision of book stock and ICT equipment would remain the property of the County Council and that the usual book swapping arrangements between the CMLs involved would be able to continue.

- (iv) Members commended the respectable level of contingency which was there to provide additional support to CMLs in unforeseen circumstances such as an emergency roof or boiler failure. The introduction of an additional one-off grant payment for 2020/21 that CML's could apply for to support running costs where there had been a shortfall of income due to Covid-19 was welcomed.
- (v) Looking to the future, it was suggested there could be opportunities arising from the Covid-19 pandemic for CMLs to move to more cost-efficient premises. The Committee requested that officers continue to take proactive action in exploring further possible options to support CMLs beyond 2021-22, including exploring with them any potential alternative premises arrangements.
- (vi) Members noted the good practice examples of work outlined in the report and asked officers to take appropriate measures to ensure these were shared across the library network.
- (vii) The Committee confirmed its support for the service proposals, subject to the comments raised, and welcomed further updates at future meetings.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the update on the status of support for Community Managed Libraries be noted;
- (b) That the Committee's comments on the proposed amendments to the current support package on offer to Community Managed Libraries be submitted to the Cabinet for consideration;
- (c) That the Director of Adults and Communities be requested to take appropriate measures to ensure that the good practice examples of work outlined in the report is shared across the network;
- (d) That the Director of Adults and Communities be requested to give further consideration to the mobile service options available to residents of the Barwell area.



**ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE – 7 SEPTEMBER 2020**

**LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND SAFEGUARDING ADULTS
BOARD - ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20, STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2025 AND
BUSINESS PLAN 2020/21**

MINUTE EXTRACT

The Committee considered a report of the Independent Chair of the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Adults Board presenting the draft Annual Report of the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Adult Board (LRSAB) for 2019/20, the Strategic Plan of the LRSAB and Leicester Safeguarding Adults Board (LSAB) for 2020-2025, and the Business Plan of the LRSAB for 2020/21. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 14', is filed with these minutes.

In introducing the report, the Independent Chair of the LRSAB highlighted that much of the consultation and engagement work undertaken during the annual reporting period had included engagement with representatives of the prison service. Members were also informed that join up with the Community Safety Partnership would remain a key focus over the coming year.

The understanding and application of the Mental Capacity Act required a multiagency approach; the delay in national guidance, now confirmed by the Department of Health and Social Care, around Liberty Protection Safeguards had greatly influenced some of the approaches being undertaken by organisations such as hospitals and local authorities, who had been working hard to prepare for the increased role they would be undertaking under the new arrangement. In terms of the approaches being undertaken to identify and address mental capacity issues it was confirmed that focus would be given to a number of key areas such as staff training, feedback on case reviews and analysis of audit findings. It was also stated that gathering enough qualitative data was a key challenge that would be worked on.

RESOLVED:

That the Annual Report of the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Adult Board (LRSAB) for 2019/20, the Business Plan of the LRSAB for 2020/21 and the Strategic Plan of the LRSAB and Leicester Safeguarding Adults Board (LSAB) for 2020-2025, be noted.

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SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 14 SEPTEMBER 2020

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE WHITE PAPER (AUGUST 2020)

MINUTE EXTRACT

The Commission considered a report of the Chief Executive concerning the Government consultation on the Planning for the Future White Paper and the proposed draft response that had been prepared by officers which would be considered by the Cabinet at its meeting on Friday, 18th September. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 8' is filed with these minutes.

The Commission welcomed to the meeting the Leader, Mr N. J. Rushton CC, Deputy Leader and Lead Member for Planning, Mr B. L. Pain CC, and the Lead Member for Highways and Transportation and Strategic Planning, Mr T. J. Pendleton CC.

The Commission was advised that the Government had issued a separate consultation paper regarding proposals to improve the current planning system including the method for assessing local housing need which appeared to significantly increase housing numbers for the County. Members noted that this was a technical consultation affecting the current system and had not therefore been covered as part of the report now presented.

The Assistant Chief Executive confirmed that officers would, in line with usual practice, respond to this technical consultation and would raise robust concerns about the substantial increase in housing numbers proposed to be built in the County, as well as question the underlying evidence to support this. Members were invited to submit comments for consideration by officers for inclusion in the response but were asked to provide these by no later than Wednesday, 23rd September given the short timetable for submitting a response to government.

With regard to the Planning for the Future White Paper the Commission was advised that the aim of the changes proposed was to simplify the current planning process and increase the number of houses built. Members acknowledged the need for reform and noted the Government's view that the current system was overly complex and delayed development.

In response to a question regarding existing Local Plans, members were advised that those agreed more recently would be likely to remain in force for about two years before local councils were asked to renew these. Those with plans agreed some time ago are expected to be asked to prepare new plans in line with the timetable set out in the White Paper.

Members welcomed the general proposal for a quicker and clearer planning process as this would provide certainty for residents. However, in considering the draft response to the White Paper consultation, outlined in the Appendix to the report, Members raised a number of concerns and asked the Cabinet to have regard to the following points when considering its response:

- (a) There was a general lack of detail in some key areas of the White Paper which made it difficult to understand the true impact of some of the changes proposed. This affected the ability for local authorities to respond in full and it was suggested that this be highlighted as a general issue as part of the Council's response.
- (b) The White Paper was overly focussed on the shortcomings of the current planning system but was silent on the failure of developers to always build on land when granted planning permission. To ensure housing was delivered in practice, this needed to be addressed under any new system as its was currently a matter outside the control of local planning authorities;
- (c) The proposal that Local Plans would in future allocate land for 'Growth' and that applications to build on such land would then automatically be awarded outline planning permission was of particular concern as this would:
 - i) place significant pressure on the process of developing local plans and therefore require a greater degree of robustness in that process;
 - ii) require developers to be clear and transparent on their development proposals early on to ensure there was sufficient clarity for impact assessments to be carried out and appropriate mitigations such as highway improvements identified. The White Paper was currently vague about what would be expected from developers during this part of the process which could negatively impact a Council's ability to undertake its role as the Highway Authority. If the onus was not put on the developers to provide the information necessary at this earlier stage, the process would not be meaningful and add to uncertainty;
 - iii) risk members of the public feeling disenfranchised from the planning process. Members warned that experience showed that the public generally failed to engage in the local plan process which was seen as too generic and strategic. However, they became actively involved when specific applications were received and the impact of a proposal on their neighbourhood known in detail. The new approach would cut out the ability for the public to be involved in the process at that later stage;
 - iv) mean that evidence and supporting statements carried out during the local plan process become out of date by the time specific permissions were sought and which could detrimentally affect the Council as infrastructure provider and local residents.
 - v) add expense to the local plan development process which was already expensive both in terms of time and money. This would particularly impact district councils.

In respect of the points raised in (ii) above, Members requested that the Director of Environment and Transport be asked to identify the implications of the Department having to engage early in the process and for these to be captured in the response more firmly.

- (d) The opportunity for authorities to borrow against future receipts to support the delivery of infrastructure was welcomed, but greater understanding of how that system would work in practice was needed. It was unclear if proposals to introduce a national infrastructure levy would ensure that local councils received the right level of resources required for each development, and such funding would be vital if local councils were to be encouraged to borrow against this. Whilst the merits of a standardised and clear system were noted, there was concern that the new arrangements would not provide the flexibility currently offered through section 106 agreements. The Commission made comparisons with the current CIL system which it was felt disadvantaged the County Council when compared with section 106 agreements.
- (e) The focus on increasing the number of houses built would not necessarily address the current housing crisis and the White Paper did not pay sufficient regard to the issue of homelessness and affordable and social housing. Developers as private businesses would not by themselves focus on less profitable areas such as social housing. The response to question 24 (a) of the consultation needed to be firmer on this point.
- (f) The White Paper needed to be more robust in ensuring any new planning system addressed the growing crisis of climate change and to ensure that new developments were environmentally sustainable. In addition, given the move to greater homeworking all new developments should have superfast broadband. Failure to capture such issues would be a missed opportunity to drive future change in these areas.
- (g) Air Quality and the health impacts of emissions were a major concern and the White paper did not address this issue in any significant way.
- (h) The use of the term 'beauty' would likely be contentious and lead to disagreement and appeals. The term was too vague and subjective and would not be helpful in ensuring clarity in the system. There needed to be greater focus on quality and sustainability.
- (i) The current arrangement for dealing with appeals was often seen as being weighted in favour of developers and whilst it was acknowledged that accountability rested with the Secretary of State, some argued that the process diluted local democratic accountability. It was suggested that the current appeal process needed to be more reactive and timely, particularly when dealing with enforcement matters, and that these issues should be addressed centrally as part of the new proposals. It was highlighted that the zonal allocations in the Local Plan would likely reduce the number of appeals in any event.

- (j) Consideration should be given to requiring developers of commercial sites which generated increased HGV traffic on specific routes to make an appropriate contribution to mitigate future costs arising from the impact of such vehicles on the existing local road network.
- (k) A member requested that reference to 'the golden triangle' as an example on page 22 of the draft response be removed.
- (l) The White Paper should encourage developers to ensure that local companies and tradesmen are given priority much in the same way as local councils are asked to have regard to social value in contracts.
- (m) The removal of a duty to co-operate was disappointing and it was unclear how a zonal system could be introduced and operate effectively without this.

Members of the Cabinet present thanked the Commission for its comments on the White Paper and gave an assurance that these would be taken into consideration when discussing the response to the White Paper.

RESOLVED:

That the comments now made be submitted to the Cabinet for consideration.