

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE REGENERATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 16TH MARCH, 2022

MEMBERS: Councillors Mahmut Aksanoglu, Margaret Greer, Charith Gunawardena and Andy Milne

Officers: Vincent Lacovara (Head of Planning), Sarah Cary (Executive Director - Place), Helen Murch (Head of Strategic Planning & Design)

Apologies: Councillors Tim Leaver, Chinelo Anyanwu and Edward Smith

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair, Councillor Greer welcomed all the attendees to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Cllr Smith who was substituted by Cllr Rawlings.

Apologies were received from Cllr Anyanwu and Cllr Tim Leaver.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There was no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Cllr Rawlings left the meeting as she had not been present at the previous meeting and therefore could not comment on the minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 2nd February 2022 were agreed as complete and accurate.

The amendments of the minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2022 submitted by Cllr Gunawardena were not agreed by all members, the Chair Cllr Greer proposed a vote to agree the original minutes as complete and accurate.

Cllr Greer and Aksanoglu voted for. Cllrs Milne and Gunawardena voted against. The Chair, Cllr Greer made the casting vote to agree the minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2022 were agreed.

4. LOCAL PLAN

Vincent Lacovara, Head of Planning, presented this item and highlighted the following points on a planning update and local plan.

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The Environment Act 2021 requires new schemes within planning to include improvements to biodiversity with 10% net gain. The local authority has an obligation to have a local nature recovery strategy with specific topics. Conservation covenants will require us to conserve the natural or heritage features of the land.

The national planning policy has had no substantial changes.

The Built Environment Committee report highlights issues around uncertainty on government reforms including the need to have up-to-date and simplified Local Plans, the skills crisis which we experience at Enfield and the need to increase resources.

The Housing Delivery test monitors the number of homes delivered and how it compares to the target has been run over the last few years. This includes housing provided by local authority and the private sector. Results over last 3 years show we are overall failing. This will be improved with an up-to-date Local Plan.

Planning application performance measures the length of time to make a decision from the time an application is submitted, which we are doing very well on. As part of member training, we are working to improve the quality measure which relates to the number of applications lost at appeal.

Government requires us to produce a yearly statement showing money made from CIL and S106 and how this was spent. As a consequence of covid19 the amount collected in 20/21 is substantially lower.

C7000 responses were received from the consultation held in the summer of 2021, a consultation statement will be produced once the responses have been logged, acknowledged, redacted, and analysed. The Local Development Scheme programme currently remains unchanged but is subject to further consideration.

Questions and comments:

The Chair confirmed that questions submitted prior to the meeting by Cllr Gunawardena have been sent in MEQ and will be responded to via this system. However Cllr Gunawardena was invited to ask questions if he wished.

Cllr Aksanoglu asked is the local authority prepared for the changes within the Environment Act 2021. Officers advised that we are ready for some parts but don't have all skills necessary in house so will be calling on consultants.

Cllr Rawlings requested clarity on how the 10% net gain of biodiversity is measured. Officers explained it is based on an assessment of what is on site before development takes place and the proposals would need to set out how it would be enhanced.

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Cllr Gunawardena asked if officers had considered a 15-year local plan instead of 20 and officers confirmed as part of proposals they have considered early reviews.

Following queries from Cllr Rawlings, officers confirmed that converted houses and flats are included in the housing delivery test and targets were reduced due to the impact of covid.

Cllr Gunawardena had questions around growth in population and the government plans being linked to the London plan. Officers explained the housing delivery is measured against the London Plan which is our starting point and leads us up to 2029. We have a duty to plan further than this. The Local Plan is based on the housing target, which does not solely relate to population growth.

Cllr Aksanoglu queried why 20/21 figures of net new homes increased so highly. Officers confirmed it was largely due to significant schemes including a large care home.

Cllr Milne raised queries on processing applications and officers confirmed that a range of barristers and QC's are used.

Members had questions around the targets and numbers on the planning applications. Officers explained the targets are set by the government and the numbers do not consider what type of housing it is. We also hold figures on quality which the government publish statistics on.

Cllr Aksanoglu raised a concern on the number of appeals, officers confirmed this is being analysed and will look to prepare an update for members.

Cllr Milne asked how specific 106 agreements are, officers explained that the purpose is to have mitigations of the immediate development for example a pedestrian crossing. They can be drafted to be more flexible but should not intrude CIL.

Cllr Gunawardena had questions relating to the number of homes included in the local plan which officers explained the plan takes us up to 2039 so it includes housing within this time.

Cllr Milne asked if the high response rate to the consultation has shown support for the plan. Officers explained the responses are complex and in one response can include many different points with detail.

Cllr Greer asked if responses came through paper or online. Officers explained they received around 2000 paper responses and many came from templates, which take longer to process.

Cllr Rawlings commented that the consultation statement should not use the term redating or be more specific.

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The Regeneration and Economic Development workplan has been completed and minutes agreed for the year cycle.

Meeting ended.