

# MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE REGENERATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON THURSDAY, 24TH JUNE, 2021

**MEMBERS:** Councillors Chinelo Anyanwu, Margaret Greer, Tim Leaver and Edward Smith

**Officers:** Peter George, Programme Director, Meridian Water, Susan O'Connell, Governance & Scrutiny Officer

## 1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

The Chair, Councillor Margaret Greer welcomed all attendees to the meeting, which was being broadcast live online.

Apologies had been received from Councillors Charith Gunawardena (Substitute Cllr Daniel Anderson), Andy Milne and Mahmut Aksanoglu. Apologies had also been received from the Leader of the Council Cllr Nesil Caliskan and Sarah Cary, Executive Director Place.

## 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

## 3. INTRODUCTION - PURPOSE OF THE EVENING

The Chair explained that the purpose of this meeting was to look at the work programme and prioritise items for the coming Municipal Year. She advised that suggestions provided by both the Executive Director Place and the Leader with details of suggested topics including suggested timings for the panel's consideration had been sent out to all panel members.

The work programme from last year had also been sent out to members to ensure that any areas from the previous year could be picked up as necessary.

## 4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED the minutes of the meeting held on the 17 March 2021, subject to two amendments for clarity.

It was queried where a summary of each scrutiny panels work could be found other than in the individual minutes of each meeting that details comments and recommendations made during the year. Members mentioned that in previous years a report on all the scrutiny panels had gone to Council on this. Officers agreed to look at this. The Chair confirmed that last year each panel

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had reported to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the work that had been undertaken during the course of the year

### 5. LOCAL PRIORITIES FOR 2021/22

The Chair advised the Peter George, Programme Director Meridian Water is representing Sarah Cary the Executive Director of Place and to feedback to the Leader of the Council.

The Leader had advised that had she been able to attend she would have discussed the following areas:

- Lead the response to economic recovery after the pandemic, growth and employment
- Produce a new Local Plan for Enfield and deliver in major housing and regeneration programmes to shape the future landscape for the borough.

The following was highlighted by Peter George:

- The suggested items provided to the Panel by the Executive Director Place, broadly fall into the three categories that the Leader has suggested:
  - Focus on economic development in particular around the post Covid recovery. Business support item
  - Following the recent publication of the Regulation 18 Local Plan draft for consultation, it was suggested to look at Local Plan and also consider within the context on national planning reform. Related to this is the suggestion on the planning improvement plan. This will be looking at the operational side of the planning service at the work to improve efficiency of how planning applications are administered.
  - Third category is a focus on the housing pipeline. A number of suggestions relate to this; annual review of housing development pipeline. This will cover progress on the council's housing schemes in particular on Housing Revenue Account land for example estate regeneration projects, small sites projects and where the council is with the GLA grant target; housing supply pipeline within this would cover bringing empty homes back into use, encouraging new homes into planning, pipeline or planning applications and how many homes have been contented within a given year against the target. There are also three Meridian Water items. Officers are working on a revised Meridian Water Masterplan it is hoped that this will go to Cabinet by the end of the year. It is suggested that this item comes to the panel for feedback before it goes to Cabinet. The revised plan will need to consider competing priorities such as the level of affordable homes, level of family accommodation, level of open space, level of employment space and building heights. They will be a consultation with local people in terms of how these should be prioritised. The Housing Infrastructure Fund work programme review, the Council was awarded a grant

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of £170 million and works must be delivered by March 2024 to comply with the grant conditions. Given the level of grant and the conditions attached, officers felt it is appropriate for this item to be considered at least annually so that members can feel assured of progress. Meridian Four is a huge project Cabinet has approved a scheme for 800 homes. This will be the biggest scheme that the council is going to be leading on a design and build basis. This means that the council will be taking on construction risk. As this is a higher risk in return for a higher reward. Officers are keen for the high-risk elements of Meridian Water there is the right level of member scrutiny on this. Meridian Water is broader than a regeneration and economic development project, so items are also suggested for the Housing Scrutiny Panel and the Environment & Climate Change Scrutiny Panel.

Committee Members raised the following comments and questions:

- The Chair advised that there are items on the suggestions that are also on the Overview & Scrutiny Committee work programme. Members wanted to ensure that overlap between panels are picked up. Officers confirmed that all work programmes for all panels will go to the next meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee who will pick this issue up.
- The Chair will ensure that there is sufficient time at each meeting to allow scrutiny of the selected items.
- It was suggested that a monitoring progress reports could be received biannually on Meridian Water, and Infrastructure fund monies. Peter George confirmed that if the emphasis is on progress against key milestones this report could be quite concise and could be provided.
- Members queried the depth the items are to be explored, need to be more specific on what is required, and specifics should be drilled down.
- Members were agreed in principle with the suggestions but acknowledged this is substantial and overlaps with other panels and would need the detail drilled down. The next stage is to be specifics about what the panel would like to scrutinise, this will be done through the chair.
- Officers advised that members could potentially group themes thematically for example combine the planning ones (Local plan and planning improvement) the Housing pipelines ones and consolidate the Meridian Water items.
- Cllr Gunawardena had asked for the following to be raised in his absence; Meridian Water, the Local Plan period where the draft is going and how this is shaped by Meridian Water and what the plan is suggesting and how this fits in with the framework; Crews Hill and Chase Park within the Local Plan potential developments and review of plans of regeneration of the main town centres. The Chair commented that the greenbelt is still in early stage and until the direction is known other items should be prioritised.
- It was raised that members could have informal meetings or members could do research and report back to the panel. It was important that all

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information is attached to the agenda including any presentations. The chair confirmed this will be the case, should members wish to ask any questions in advance of the meeting the chair requested that this goes through her.

- The Local Plan is also about regeneration and economic development perhaps the panel could scrutinise the basis of regeneration within the local plan to see if this has been incorporated appropriately.
- Officers advised that the consultation on the Local Plan is due to close in mid-September and would not want to bring this to Panel before November to allow time to undertake the analysis on the consultation. If members wanted to look at town centre it was suggested that this item could potentially sit alongside the business support item.
- It was requested and agreed that the work programme is included in every agenda.

### 6. PLANNING THE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2021/22

The Chair opened discussions in terms of the work programme as to whether items should be grouped together, or individual topics taken.

The next meeting is scheduled for September the proposed timeline from the suggestions would be for annual review of housing development pipeline to come to this meeting. This item would include empty homes, Joyce and Snells estates and money from the GLA and the targets and potentially an element of Meridian Water, the revised Masterplan.

The scheduled meetings of the panel are September, November and February and it is important that there is information available for each of these meetings. Looking at the suggested dates they do not all fit to the panel meeting dates.

It was suggested that business support: Covid and post Covid could be taken in September. This could be wider than this and include the end of furlough and the impact of unemployment, changes to the business environment as more people are working remotely. A major change of the pandemic has been people working remotely, unemployment in sectors that you would not expect, the council's strategy and planning around this. The impact on economy, what is the council's response looking at remote working and strategy and planning.

Discussions were held on the most appropriate timings for items.

The following items and timings were agreed:

#### September's meeting

Annual review of housing development pipeline

Business Support: Covid and post Covid, impact on the local economy, what will be and has been the response from the council, including remote working, unemployment impact, and strategy and planning

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### November's meeting

Meridian Water Masterplan

Planning improvement plan (if agenda allows time)

### February's meeting

National planning reform and Draft Local Plan incorporating a report on town centres

Housing Infrastructure Fund work programme review

Meridian Four still needs to be fitted into meetings. It was suggested that Housing supply pipeline goes to the Housing Scrutiny Panel.

Progress reports and against key milestones for Housing Infrastructure Fund and Meridian Water were suggested to come to the November and March's meeting. The dates for this are still to be determined.

## **7. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The terms of reference were noted.

## **8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was noted as Thursday 9 September 2021.