

PLACE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

5th June 2023

- Present:** Councillor Robyn Norfolk in the Chair
Councillors Cleary (Vice-Chair), Cooper, Desayrah, Gregson, Lawrance, Lewing, Riaz, Round and Stanley
- Officers:** David Blake, Managing Director
Sian Stroud, Corporate Director – Planning and Governance
Zoey West, Deputy Director – Economic Development
Duncan Rudge, Head of Planning
- Apologies:** Councillors Geraghty and Jagger

1 Appointment of Substitutes

Councillor Lawrance for Councillor Jagger.

2 Declarations of Interest

None.

3 Public Participation

None.

4 Minutes

With reference to minute 50 (Proposed Committee Performance Scorecard 2023-24), the Chair stated that it had been agreed at the last meeting to include in the performance indicators for 2023-24 the number of market dwellings granted planning permission and the number of affordable dwellings granted planning permission. However, this was not recorded in the minutes.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 13th March 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to the above amendment.

5 Major Programmes Update for Future High Street Fund, Towns Fund and UK Shared Prosperity Fund

The Committee received a presentation from the Managing Director. This included the background to the above programmes, the projects which are being funded and progress made to date, and a summary of how these projects relate to the Committee's performance indicators. Following the presentation, Officers responded to questions from Committee Members.

6 Annual and Quarter 4 Performance Report 2022/23

The Committee considered the Committee's annual and quarter 4 performance report. The Managing Director presented the report and summarised the main points. The report included a narrative to explain two indicators which remain overdue and he explained what actions are being taken to rectify the position. The Head of Planning commented on the timetable for consultation on the South Worcestershire Development Plan Review. The Managing Director commented on the Foregate Street/Arches Cultural Development Fund scheme.

Officers responded to questions from Committee Members on detailed aspects of the report.

RESOLVED: That the Committee note the Council's annual and quarter 4 performance for 2022/23.

7 Short Term Lets: Responses to Government Consultation

The Committee considered a report on two public consultations currently being undertaken by the Government with a view to changing the legislation which applies to short term let accommodation. The Corporate Director – Planning and Governance presented the report and explained that one consultation relates to housing standards and contemplates the introduction of a registration scheme. The other relates to planning policy and contemplates the introduction of a new planning use class specifically for short term lets. The purpose of the report was to seek delegated authority to submit a response on behalf of the Council. Details of the recommended responses to both consultations were appended to the report. Officers responded to questions from Committee Members.

In conclusion, the Committee agreed that there should be some form of regulatory reform and expressed support for the proposed responses.

RESOLVED: That the Committee note the contents of the report setting out the Government's consultation on changes to legislation relating to short term lets, and delegates authority to the Corporate Director – Planning and Governance to submit a response on behalf of the Council.

8 Any Other Business

None.

9 Worcester Show 2023 - Charging Proposals

The Committee considered a report on a proposed policy change of charging an entry fee for the Worcester Show. The Managing Director presented the report and explained that the Chair and Vice-Chair had agreed to consider it at this meeting as an item of additional business in order to reach a timely decision as the Show is scheduled for 13th August and the next Policy and Resources Committee meeting is not until 25th July.

The report explained that, as a result of the continued growth of the Show, the costs have increased significantly.

The Managing Director emphasised the Council's significant financial challenges and the importance of seeking cost recovery on discretionary activities such as events. The report proposed that an entry fee is charged for the Worcester Show and that in 2023, the fee be set at £2.00 per adult with free entry for children under sixteen. The proposal was for this year's Worcester Show, following which further consideration would be given to the policy.

Officers responded to questions from Committee Members. Following a debate on the proposal, it was proposed and seconded that it would be appropriate to seek a voluntary donation upon entry, rather than agree a policy change of charging an entry fee for the Worcester Show. Upon being put to the vote, this amendment was supported.

RESOLVED: That the Committee agree that entry to the Worcester Show 2023 should be by way of a voluntary contribution, with no minimum amount specified.

Duration of the meeting: 7.00p.m. – 9.00p.m.

Chair at the meeting on
24th July 2023