

# ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES of the meeting of the Environment and Communities Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday 22 November 2017 commencing at 10.00 am at the Cabinet Suite - Shire Hall, Gloucester.**

## **PRESENT MEMBERSHIP:**

Cllr Robert Bird (Chairman)	Cllr Patrick Molyneux Cllr Stephen Hirst
Cllr Dr John Cordwell	
Cllr Kevin Cromwell	

**Substitutes:** Cllr Phil Awford  
Cllr Bernard Fisher  
Cllr Graham Morgan  
Cllr Loraine Patrick

**Apologies:** Cllr Jeremy Hilton, Cllr Sajid Patel, Cllr Keith Rippington and Cllr Rachel Smith

## **35. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Cllr Jeremy Hilton (substituted by Cllr Bernie Fisher), Cllr Sajid Patel (substituted by Cllr Loraine Patrick), Cllr Keith Rippington (substituted by Cllr Phil Awford), and Cllr Rachel Smith (substituted by Cllr Graham Morgan).

## **36. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2017 were approved and signed by the Chairman, subject to an amendment to page 4, item 32, paragraph 3, where it should read 'it was also noted that the draft Integrated Risk Management Plan 2018-21 would be reported to the Committee for comment at its meeting in November, and that Registration Services were currently monitoring new legislation.'

## **37. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made.

## **38. MINERALS LOCAL PLAN**

Robin Drake, Principal Planner: Mineral and Waste Policy, and Kevin Phillips, Team Manager (Planning/Mineral), presented the report on the emerging Minerals Local Plan for Gloucestershire (2018-2032). The report detailed the analysis of

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representations received to the draft plan consultation, and the proposed significant changes to be considered for incorporation into the Publication version of the plan.

Members noted that Gloucestershire County Council was the local Minerals Planning Authority for the County, and that the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 required planning authorities to produce local plans. Gloucestershire County Council was currently seeking to replace the existing Gloucestershire Minerals Local Plan, which was adopted in 2003.

Work into producing a replacement plan commenced in 2005, however was halted temporarily due to the Gloucestershire Waste Core Strategy. Work recommenced on replacing the Gloucestershire Minerals Local Plan from late 2012. Between autumn 2014 and summer 2016 a comprehensive draft Minerals Local Plan for Gloucestershire (2018-2032) was prepared, which was subject to public consultation between September and November 2016.

Members were informed that the public consultation received over 2,500 individual representations, and over 25 percent of representations were concerned with the acceptability or otherwise of the proposed local policy for assessing any future oil and gas developments. Regarding the candidate allocations, the Redpool's Farm allocation and the Stowe Hill/ Clearwell quarry complex allocation received the most interest.

It was explained that the Cabinet Panel: Minerals Local Plan had scrutinised and supported the proposed changes to the plan covering oil and gas extraction, and it was noted that Gloucestershire was currently not subject to any licences. The proposed changes relating to oil and gas extraction included:

- The removal of draft policy MW06 Oil & Gas and its supporting text;
- The expansion of the spatial portrait to explain the current circumstances surrounding the diminished likelihood of oil and gas resources in Gloucestershire being exploited; and
- The inclusion in the spatial portrait of a new commitment to instigate a review of the plan if renewed interest is shown in oil and gas extraction in the future through any attempts to acquire new PEDL licences, if these are made available by the Government.

It was noted that the changes also included the removal of candidate allocation 07 – Preferred Area at Redpool's Farm, Twynning, and that a number of the detailed development requirements for candidate allocation 01 – Preferred Area at Stowe Hill/ Clearwell, had been reworked and expanded.

The Committee was informed of the proposed timescale for the progression of the emerging Minerals Local Plan for Gloucestershire (2018-2032). The next step was for Cabinet, at its meeting on 31 January 2018, to consider making a recommendation to full Council for the approval of the Publication version of the plan, and to also enable the plan to be subsequently submitted to the Secretary of State.

In response to concerns raised by some Committee members that the emerging Minerals Local Plan for Gloucestershire (2018-2032) would not include an oil and gas policy, it was explained that officers were confident that the proposed approach would be acceptable to the planning inspectorate. It was also suggested that, in light of the significant public interest of the issue, the proposed approach was the most pragmatic way forward, and that should there be a renewed interest in oil and gas extraction in the future, the policy could be reviewed separately to the rest of the plan. It was added that the plan included thematic policies to cover related issues such as water quality and flood risk. Additionally, it was noted that any policy not in line with the Government's current permissive approach, may not be considered favourably by the inspectorate.

In response to a query, it was highlighted that the emerging Minerals Local Plan for Gloucestershire (2018-2032), once adopted, would have legal weight in planning law, however this would not prevent private developers submitting applications. It was also added that the emerging plan would be more robust than the current plan, which was adopted in 2003.

The Committee discussed the plan in depth, particularly in relation to oil and gas extraction, and noted the report.

### **39. DRAFT INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2018-21**

Stewart Edgar, Chief Fire Officer, informed the Committee about the development and progression of the next Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) (2018-21) for Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service (GFRS).

It was explained that GFRS, on behalf of Gloucestershire County Council in its capacity as the Fire Authority, was required to produce a plan on a periodic basis, which was every three years for GFRS, outlining how GFRS intended to address existing and emerging risks to Gloucestershire communities.

Members noted that the draft IRMP was considered by Cabinet on 27 September 2017, where it was approved for public consultation. The consultation would be open until 8 January 2018, and Committee members were encouraged to make individual representations.

Members were informed that the draft IRMP outlined three objectives that would be addressed by GFRS across the three year life of the plan:

- An increased focus on prevention and protection initiatives by delivering innovative solutions to prevention activities in partnership with other community stakeholders;
- To further develop and maximise opportunities to collaborate with partners and stakeholders in order to effectively use resources, increase efficiency, and deliver activities with tangible 'social value'; and
- To reconfigure and reform GFRS with the aim of driving efficiencies across the Service, delivering continual improvements in working practices, even greater levels of value for money than have already been achieved, and a Service that was fit for purpose.

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It was noted that following completion of the public consultation, a review of the representations would be carried out to allow for any revisions to the draft IRMP (2018-21). The final version of the draft IRMP (2018-21) would then be resubmitted to Cabinet in February 2018 for formal approval.

In response to a query, it was explained that the relationship between GFRS and the Police was strong and that they were collaborating on a number of initiatives.

In response to a further query, it was explained that call room staff had received training to help them effectively assess calls received, and that GFRS had a statutory duty to collaborate with the Police and Ambulance Service.

Members were asked to comment on the plan and consider a submission by the Committee to the public consultation. The Committee agreed to endorse the draft IRMP (2018-21), in addition to individual Committee members submitting representations to the consultation.

#### **40. LOCAL FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY - ANNUAL PROGRESS AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2017/18**

David Parish, Strategic Flood Risk Management Officer, presented the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy – Annual Progress and Implementation Plan 2017/18 to the Committee.

Members were informed that Gloucestershire County Council, as the Lead Local Flood Authority for Gloucestershire, adopted its Local Flood Risk Management Strategy in 2014, which set out the Council's proposals to fulfil its role over the subsequent 10 years. The Council also produced an Annual Progress and Implementation Plan every autumn.

It was noted that a prioritised flood alleviation scheme list was appended to the report.

Clarification was sought on the funding for schemes. Members were informed that, as well as external funding, the revenue budget was heavily relied on, and that a proportion of the annual revenue budget was capitalised for future schemes.

It was explained, in response to a query, that the flood risk for local parishes was assessed using the latest flood modelling information. It was also noted that an online flood data collection service called SWIM (Severe Weather Information Management System) was currently being trialled.

Members were informed, following a query, that liaisons with relevant agencies were complex, and that officers were mindful of the interaction between flood alleviation schemes in Gloucestershire and in neighbouring authorities.

The Committee recognised the significant number of flood alleviation schemes which the Flood Alleviation Team had and continued to deliver for the County. In

particular, it was recognised that since 2007, £48million had been spent on flood alleviation schemes, and over 2000 properties had been protected from flooding within the County. However, it was also acknowledged that there were still schemes that needed delivering to protect further homes and communities within the County.

There was a discussion around soft upper catchment flood alleviation schemes. It was suggested that the Committee may wish to consider soft flood alleviation schemes as an item for scrutiny at a future meeting.

The Committee noted that a final version of the Plan, which would take into account the Committee's comments, would be added to the Flood Risk related pages on the Council's website.

#### **41. CHIEF FIRE OFFICER REPORT**

Stewart Edgar, Chief Fire Officer, presented the report to the Committee, which detailed information on the portfolio of services provided by Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service (GFRS).

Members noted that discussions were ongoing regarding a pay award for GFRS staff. A 1% pay rise for grey-book staff was being considered.

The Committee was informed that GFRS would be inspected sometime between April 2018 and May 2020, and that Wendy Williams, who had been appointed as the Inspector for the South West, visited GFRS on 14 November 2017. The new inspection would focus on 11 key lines of enquiry across three areas to include effectiveness, efficiency and people, and GFRS had been asked to take part in the pilot inspections planned for January to April 2018.

Members were updated on progress with Police, Fire, and Ambulance collaborative work.

Members also noted that:

- The number of primary fires had reduced again this quarter and were almost back to the lowest number previously recorded;
- On 13 September 2018, due to the significant reduction in the radiological hazard at the site, the Office for Nuclear Regulation confirmed that an Offsite Emergency Plan was no longer required; and
- That Trading Standards and GFRS had agreed a new protocol with Gloucestershire County Council for sharing information.

Members were informed that an update report on the Road Safety Review would be brought to the next Committee meeting.

#### **42. COMMISSIONING DIRECTORS REPORT**

Nigel Riglar, Commissioning Director: Communities and Infrastructure, updated the Committee on current issues. In particular, members noted that:

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- a) In an update on the Highways Contract, the development of contract documents for both the Term Maintenance Contract and the new structural maintenance resurfacing contracts were currently on track;
- b) In an update on the LED Street Lighting Project, Skanska had completed the milestone of over 26,000 (50%) LED Conversions;
- c) Phase Two of the Cheltenham Transport Plan had been completed, construction of Phase Three was planned for early 2018, with work in the vicinity of Royal Well to take place before Cheltenham Gold Cup Week, and Phase Four would include the experimental closure of Boots Corner and was anticipated to start in late May or early June 2018;
- d) Highways England had reduced the A417 Missing Link Scheme options, by ruling out use of a tunnel, and a consultation on shortlisted option(s) would commence in 2018;
- e) Gloucestershire County Council had been awarded £2.7million Government funding for improvements to the Cross Keys roundabout junction of the A38 and B4008;
- f) It was anticipated that the three Joint Core Strategy (JCS) authorities would seek to adopt the JCS before the end of the year; and
- g) In an update on libraries, discussions were ongoing with Stonehouse Town Council about the opportunity to relocate the library into the current Town Council building, and that the first libraries had now launched as Tier 3 Growth Hubs.

It was suggested that an item on libraries be added to the Committee work plan for future scrutiny.

It was requested that the report item under 3.2.1 Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 Agreements relating to a change in process for commenting on planning applications be updated for the next meeting.

In response to a query, it was explained that Gloucestershire County Council was working closely with the community transport sector to better understand the impact of Government changes to the operation of community transport in the County, and that the Council had lobbied the Government over its concerns with the changes.

Clarification was also sought on developments with the Great South West, district council development of CIL schemes, and the M5 Junction 10 upgrade expression of interest submitted to the Housing Infrastructure Fund. A concern was also raised about the warmth of the light issued from the converted LED street lighting.

The Committee noted the report, including the Quarter 2 Strategic Performance Report 2017/18.

#### **43. WORK PLAN**

Members noted that a budget scrutiny session for the Committee would be held on 10 January 2018, and that members would be notified of the arrangements for this session by email.

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At its meeting on 17 January 2018, the Committee would receive a presentation outlining Gloucestershire's flood resilience, Gloucestershire's role as lead local flood authority, and how the flood levy has been used, as part of its consideration of Motion 798: Gloucestershire Flood and Community Resilience. The Cabinet Member for Highways and Flood would also report to the Committee at the meeting in January on measures to improve the inspection and fixing of pavements, as part of the Committee's consideration of Motion 787: Pavements.

#### **44. FUTURE MEETINGS**

The Committee noted the meeting dates for 2018.

#### **CHAIRPERSON**

Meeting concluded at 12.30 pm