

Shaping Places Consultation – position statement for 18th February 2014 Scrutiny Committee meeting

On 15th November 2013, the Scrutiny Committee considered a report on the Shaping Places Consultation. The aim of the report was to explore how the public, partners and stakeholders had been engaged in the development of the Plan to date, how feedback from the consultation on the Strategy & Options (S&O) document would influence detailed proposals and the approach to consulting on the detailed plans in the spring 2014.

It was agreed that plans for the spring 2014 Shaping Places consultation would be brought back to the Committee, demonstrating how their comments from 15th November had been taken on board. The purpose of 18th February meeting is therefore for the Committee to consider these plans.

At the meeting on 15th November a number of additional comments were also raised. Although not directly related to the subject of the Scrutiny review, it was agreed that responses would be provided. These are set out at the end of this report.

Plans for the Shaping Places Consultation April-June 2014

In June-July 2013, the public were consulted on the Shaping Places S&O document which sought views on the proposed strategy (scale, type and broad location of development), the findings of which would then be used to inform the Local Plan.

The next stage is consultation on a document which sets out possible sites for future housing and employment development. This responds to feedback from the S&O stage on the need to see more specific details on where development sites could be located and case law which has emphasised the need to allocate sites in the Local Plan.

It is proposed to undertake the consultation between April-June 2014 over an 8 week period to allow for school and bank holidays. As set out at the 15th November meeting, it is proposed to carry out this consultation in a similar way to the one on the S&O document, taking into account the suggestions from Scrutiny. More specifically, this will include:-

- Inviting all Parishes and Town Councils (including neighbourhood plan front runners) to attend a presentation by Council officers at the start of the consultation period to gain an understanding of the site allocations process and the aims and objectives of the consultation
- Offering all Parish and Town Councils the opportunity for individual meetings if required
- Contacting all 1652 consultees registered on the shaping Places data-base
- Advertising the consultation through a range of media including Facebook, Twitter, local press releases, radio, Your Voice and notices in public facing Council buildings (leisure centres, community centres, First Points & libraries)
- Holding a session with the Young Persons Forum
- Supporting Parish and Town Councils with the organisation and facilitation of individual drop-in sessions for local people to view the possible sites identified in and around their Parish. Council planning officers will be on hand to support and posters will be provided to Parish and Town Council in advance to help with their advertising of the sessions

- Keeping the shaping Places website www.telford.gov.uk/shapingplaces up-to-date to ensure people understand the consultation process and how they can comment

In drafting Local Plan documents it is recognised that a balance must be struck between meeting the regulatory requirements and ensuring they are accessible to the general public. As discussed with the Committee in November, consultation on possible sites is anticipated to attract more comment.

To aid communications, a non technical summary, leaflet and maps of possible sites in and around each Parish area will be available.

The following table summarises how the consultation will address the comments received from the Committee:

Scrutiny Committee comment	How this will be addressed
As the document goes forward, deeper engagement with Town & Parish Councils is essential particularly with those advancing Neighbourhood Plans	Through a presentation to all parishes, Town Councils, the offer of one-to-one meetings and support with public drop-in sessions for each Parish/Town council
Consideration should be given to greater use of social media to encourage the engagement of children and young people in the development of the Plan	Twitter and Facebook will continue to be used along with a session with the Young Persons Forum.
While acknowledging the legal requirements for consultation documents, it is essential that documents are readable and understandable for members of the public, and consideration must be given to achieving this for example by including a one page summary for each section of the document	A non-technical summary of the consultation document will be produced together with maps of the possible sites in and around each Parish.

As a Co-operative Council, engagement in the plan making process continues to be on-going and opportunities for people to get involved are not restricted to the formal consultation periods. The Councils Community Engagement Team, PR and Equalities Officer also continue to be involved, ensuring the process is fair and inclusive.

Non Shaping Places Consultation Comments raised by Scrutiny

On 15th November Scrutiny committee made a number of comments which fell outside the remit of the Shaping Places consultation. Responses to these are set out in the following table.

Scrutiny Committee comment	Response
Members agreed with the need to see more details of the business growth and job creation in the Plan	As a business winning authority, business growth and job creation are key priorities reflected in the emerging Local Plan. Many positive comments were received during the Strategy & Options consultation, including support for employment sites providing a range of opportunities across the borough, including the rural area. The April-June consultation will seek comments on potential employment sites which will support future jobs in the borough

<p>Linked to the above comment, the Committee agreed they would like to see an emphasis on encouraging broadband access across the borough and that the Council should endeavour to explore any funding opportunities via the Local Enterprise Partnership</p>	<p>It is appreciated that while general coverage across the borough is reported as good there are a number of concerns that have been raised in relation to the rural area. As part of the Shaping Places infrastructure work, officers are meeting with broadband providers to ensure they are aware of future growth areas, allowing them to plan accordingly. The Local Plan will support improvements in broadband provision, appreciating the viability issues associated with more remote, rural areas.</p> <p>With regards to funding opportunities, the council has supported the inclusion of priorities in the Marches European Structural Investment Fund strategy associated with “Enhancing the value and applicability of digitally networked businesses to the Marches economic growth”.</p>
<p>Members felt the Plan should encourage the development of affordable / social housing and affordable rent in both the social and private sector and the Council should continue to work with and influence the HCA, developers, social and private landlords to achieve this.</p>	<p>The Strategy & Options document included a section on housing which emphasised that “local planning authorities should help meet the housing needs of the whole community by supporting the delivery of affordable housing”. A policy approach which supported this was set out, seeking views on separate or borough-wide affordable housing targets.</p> <p>The Authority works closely with the HCA, developers, social and private landlords to aid the delivery of affordable housing. In recent years, the average levels of affordable housing delivered have been around 15% compared to 13% in Shropshire.</p>
<p>Members wanted to ensure that the increased demand for schools and education facilities arising from proposed new housing development are factored into the Plan.</p>	<p>The Councils Education & Skills team are being engaged throughout the plan making process, ensuring that potential areas of growth and associated demand for school places are being factored into Educations organisational planning. Likewise, their views are being taken into account in relation to the location of future development.</p>

Conclusion

This report has set out plans for the April-June 2014 consultation, responding to the comments made by Scrutiny in November 2013. It also responds to the additional queries raised.

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