

EXECUTIVE – 13 JULY 2023

RECOMMENDATION FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN – SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT

Executive Summary

At its meeting on 10 July 2023, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee received the Executive report 'Town Centre Masterplan' as pre-decision scrutiny. In view of the concerns of Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, in regard to the impact on the Borough's villages, it was agreed that an extract from the minutes should be submitted to the Executive. The minute is set out below:

"The Committee discussed the expenditure on the consultation and what outcomes were drawn from it. It was confirmed that the Council had spent £160,000 on the consultation with £60,000 having been received as a grant. The cost also included expenditure on preparations ahead of the consultation.

The responses to the consultation could be used to inform the Local Plan and its three consultations which were required by law. The Committee indicated that any scrutiny of the money spent on the consultation was born of a concern for the Council's wider finances.

The Leader of the Council, in attendance at the meeting, noted that the Town Centre Masterplan had been designed so that there was greater clarity as to the Planning Authority's considerations for an application which would benefit both developers and the Council. It was anticipated that the Masterplan would help to reduce the number of appeals to the Planning Inspectorate and thus reduce costs.

The Committee agreed that the proposed strategy in the Town Centre Masterplan was the most appropriate given the Council's finances however the Committee expressed its reservation about the impact the Masterplan may have on other parts of the Borough.

Several Members raised concern that there could be unforeseen consequences on the Borough villages derived from the Town Centre Masterplan proposing height limits for buildings and the extant Local Plan limiting green belt construction. The Committee discussed potential impact from the new Town Centre Masterplan and the Local Plan on construction across the Borough. There was particular concern from several Members that an intensification of construction, particularly multi-storey, would occur in the Borough's villages to offset limits in building high-rise buildings in the Town Centre.

The Committee agreed to provide the minute of the item to the Executive to ensure those concerns were noted in the following terms:

- (i) the Overview and Scrutiny Committee accepted that the Town Centre Masterplan, as part of a new Local Plan, would be the most appropriate only given the financial situation of the Council; and
- (ii) the Committee's reservation as to the potential impact on the Borough's villages in the future due to the proposed height limits for buildings in the Town Centre Masterplan."

**Recommendation from Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Town Centre Masterplan
Supplementary Report**

Recommendations

The Executive is requested to:

RESOLVE That the minute of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 10 July 2023 regarding the Town Centre Masterplan, including the Committee's concerns, be noted.

The Executive has the authority to determine the recommendation(s) set out above.

Background Papers:	None.
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