

Time Commenced – 6:00pm  
Time Finished – 7:30pm

## **Regeneration and Housing Scrutiny Review Board 25 January 2023**

Present: Councillor Roulstone (Chair), Councillor Testro (Vice Chair)  
Councillors M Holmes, and Pandey

In Attendance: Verna Bayliss, Director of Planning & Transportation  
Nigel Brien, Head of Traffic and Transport  
Henry Cipcer, Housing Renewal Manager  
Ian Fullagar, Head of Strategic Housing  
Chris Morgan, Principal Regeneration Manager

### **16/22 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Khan, Cllr West, and Maria Murphy, Director of Derby Homes

### **17/22 Late Items**

There were no late items.

### **18/22 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **19/22 Minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2022**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

### **20/22 Update on the proposed new A50 Junction and Link Road/South Derby Growth Zone**

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director of Communities and Place which was presented by the Principal Regeneration Manager. The report provided an update on progress towards deliver of the new A50 junction and link road project, part of the south Derby Growth Zone (SDGZ).

The SDGZ includes Infinity Park (IPD), Derby's regeneration project and a Government Enterprise Zone. It also included Infinity Garden Village (IGV) consisting of Wragley Way and Lowes Farm which are major housing development sites extending into South Derbyshire. IGV is one of 14 new Garden Villages announced by the Government.

Most of the benefit of the project will be felt in South Derbyshire rather than Derby City, but the city depends on South Derbyshire to meet its housing needs. The new highways infrastructure will also aid development within the

city element of IPD. Without the new A50 junction and link road, most of the benefits would be lost as only 280 new homes and none of the additional employment floorspace would be put in place. The regeneration and housing benefits of the project include up to 4,500 new homes, £3.4 million square feet of new employment space and an additional 5,000 new jobs.

Partners in the project include the public and private sector, landowners and strategic partners include Homes England and National Highways. DCC internal governance is via the Infinity Park Derby and the SDGZ Programme Board.

DCC is a partner in a Levelling Up Fund (LUF) bid, for this project, which would be led by Derbyshire County Council (DCoC) who are the accountable body. The bid was successful in securing an “in principle” offer of LUF for the full amount, but to secure the funding DCoC needs to finalise the LUF Business Case.

The total cost of Highways infrastructure is £55.6m, the LUF bid was £49.6m the remaining £6m is from the private sector. The plan was to split the risk 50/50 between public and private sector partners. The split between the 3 local authorities will be finalised shortly and will included in the collaboration agreement.

The Board noted that the Collaboration Agreement was still to be finalised and approved by the respective parties. DCC’s Cabinet report will request authorisation to enter into the agreement.

The next steps for the project were detailed by the officer. The Board noted that DCC will:

- support DCoC to finalise the Business Case
- enter into collaboration agreements with project partners
- delegate the exercise of highways and compulsory purchase order (CPO) in DCCs administrative area to DCoC.

A report will be taken to the February meeting of DCC Council Cabinet for authority for these actions.

- In March 2023 DCoC will make a CPO resolution to acquire the necessary land for the new A50 junction and link road.
- In April 2023 a construction contractor will be procured by DCoC using Midlands Highways Alliance Framework.
- In late summer 2023 DCoC will complete the LUF Business Case.
- If the project goes ahead DCoC will enter the LUF funding agreement.
- In late summer 2023 work will start on site.
- March 2025 the project will be completed.

Section 106 obligations were highlighted. They including a new primary school funded by the developers. A new secondary school funded by the DfE. A new health centre, call a Cavell Centre at Sinfin District Centre contributions may be required from the project. There will be a 10% biodiversity net gain from the new development.

Councillors then discussed the project and raised their concerns and questions. A councillor was concerned that as there were 3 local authorities involved each with different footprints for revenue and council tax. It was felt that those LAs who would get the biggest gains from the project should take the biggest risks. It was noted that the project would bring massive benefits to the city, it will help to accelerate development and Infinity Park will bring revenue.

It was noted that the LUF Bid was still “in principle” and a councillor asked about the timescale to formalise. The officer explained that an outline Business Case was ready now, a Construction Contractor would be procured in April 2023 by Derbyshire. A report will be going to Cabinet in April detailing the next steps. Derbyshire County Council are also working with landowners to put land agreements in place, work on site could commence at the end of summer 2023. It was then explained that a report to Cabinet in February 2023 will set out the share of the risk.

A councillor asked who would have the authority to take decisions? It was confirmed that the County Council would, however anything within the city boundary would be DCCs responsibility. Councillors noted the section 106 obligations which they felt were excellent. However, they were concerned about inflation and its effect on the funding for the project, how confident were officers that estimates from the contractor would stay in budget. Another councillor noted there was a 25% risk pot available, there was space even with inflation, the figures were big, but they were realistic.

Regarding climate implications a councillor asked about the anticipation of the project to use a lot of council resources. The officer explained that the Climate Tool used indicated a lot of resources would be used from Housing, Regeneration, Environmental and Legal Services Teams. However, a capital grant had been obtained from Homes England towards the up-front costs of the business case. Another councillor was also concerned about internal resources and given the financial pressures across the council how it would impact on other Council projects and growth plans. The officer explained they were in discussion with DDoC, there was a risk it would impact on other departments, they would try to avoid where possible. A councillor asked if the project had been factored into the MTFP given its huge revenue effect. The officer confirmed there was no revenue pressure from staffing, sums had been committed to cover for future maintenance costs.

Councillors discussed the social and economic implications; they felt the project would be of a positive benefit to the city. It would create a new community through Infinity Garden Village and bring new opportunities for economic growth and provide new schools. The main construction contract may enable local people to get work and provide skills training. Overall, the Board felt the project would have a positive impact for Derby.

**The Board accepted the report and noted the next steps and actions.**

## 21/22 Traffic Priorities - Corporation Street

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director of Planning, Transport and Engineering which was presented by the Head of Traffic and Transport. The report provided information on the change to traffic priorities made on Corporation Street during the COVID Pandemic.

On 27 May 2020 Government announced the COVID 19 Emergency Active Travel Fund. The aim was for Local Authorities to provide temporary interventions to create environments that would be safer for walking and cycling. Proposals were submitted to the Department of Transport by 5<sup>th</sup> June 2020, there were only 6 working days for submission. The funding criteria allowed schemes to be implemented without formal design and to operate as a test of proposals that were not fully developed. A condition of the grant was that work on the ground had to start within 4 weeks of funding release and be substantially completed within 8 weeks.

Derby's proposals included Corporation Street for restrictions to reduce through traffic to enable public transport to have quicker journey times. Historically congestion through Corporation Street and Morledge had caused issues with the operation of the bus station. The scheme proposed was to alleviate this and provide a quieter street environment.

Initial restrictions were put in place under Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) powers. These started in early August 2020, only buses and taxis were allowed access to Corporation Street between 7am and 7pm in both directions. The use of TRO meant implementation was quick and that formal consultation was ongoing immediately. There were only 6 objections.

The scheme attracted local media attention during the initial implementation and when the formal restriction was confirmed. There was an FOI request for information on the number of fines collected and complaints about the signage, which was then improved. The adequacy of the signs was tested through the independent national Traffic and Parking Tribunal. In cases brought to them, the signage was confirmed as satisfactory. There were also positive comments made about the purpose of the scheme and how it was implemented. Evidence collected shows that the number of PCNs issued since November 2021 and December 2022 declined. A councillor asked how the money from PCNs was used and was advised that it supported highways helping with highway development and repairs.

The scheme was supported by public transport operators because it stopped daily congestion on the route and helped the bus station to function more efficiently. The scheme created the opportunity to consider amending the existing restriction on Phoenix Street to allow improved access in the Riverside area, and benefits to the city centre.

The scheme benefited the environment in the city by giving a reduction in traffic and creating a better space to walk and cycle in cleaner air. The biggest benefit was for public transport users and operators by removing daily congestion and supporting the recovery of passenger transport.

A councillor noted the return of use to public transport, which was more reliable with the removal of congestion, was positive in terms of keeping the city moving and the environmental impacts of the scheme were enormous.

The officer highlighted the reduction of vehicles on Corporation Street, historically there were between 500 to 600 vehicles per hour. Now there were approximately between 10 to 15 per hour. This area of the city was now a quieter and safer area for pedestrians.

**The Board noted the report.**

## **22/22      Update on Home Energy Efficiency Programmes**

The Board received a report from the Director of Communities and Place which was presented by the Urban Renewal Manager. The report provided an update on progress of home energy improvements that the Council and Derby Homes were delivering in homes in the private sector and Council owned stock

The Board were informed that the Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) had announced several Fuel Poverty schemes as funding opportunities for Local Authorities. The LAD scheme aims to raise the energy efficiency of low income and low energy performance homes with a focus on energy performance certificate (EPC) ratings of E, F or G. The funding also supports low-income households with the transition to low carbon heating. The eligibility for owner-occupiers was restricted to people whose household income was below £31k per year.

The LAD bids were used to tackle the worst properties, such as Wimpey No Fines (WNF) and other non-traditionally constructed properties in the private sector. These properties were mainly concrete or cast-iron panel buildings which do not retain the heat well but can be improved with the installation of External Solid Wall Insulation (EWI).

The funding awards included an administrative allocation, the allocation was used to create a full client-side team. Previously there had been no capacity to support delivery. The team ensured a quality and compliant finished product for homeowners and also provided preparation for projects.

The bids were focused on the northwest of Derby where it was estimated there were 650 WNF properties in the private sector, the majority of which were assumed not to have external or internal wall insulation. This area has the 4<sup>th</sup> highest level of fuel poverty and low income in the city.

Derby Homes also made an independent bid for the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) also administered by BEIS, with an additional top up match funding from the Councils Housing Revenue Scheme. The SHDF scheme will deliver 85 EWI home improvement measures by the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 and a provisional allocation in the next round could support a further 153 EWI home improvement measures.

The officer highlighted the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) scheme which was in phase four (ECO4), to provide energy efficient home improvement free grants for low-income families who are homeowners or in rental housing. Other vulnerable households are also included, such as people living in homes that have too much carbon emissions and need financial assistance such as hardship grants for single mothers and fathers.

Successful applicants to ECO4 must be in receipt one of the qualifying State Benefits or Tax Credits. However, a high proportion of householders suffering from fuel poverty do not receive one of the relevant benefits. Fuel poverty was generally accepted as the need to spend more than 10% of your income to heat your home to an acceptable level.

There also exists an ECO Flex Grants Scheme which helps those householders who are not in receipt of one of the qualifying benefits but who are living on a low income and are vulnerable to the effects of living in a cold home. ECO4 Flex permits local authorities and Energy Suppliers to identify and designate households as eligible under the Affordable Warmth Scheme. The scheme is optional for both energy suppliers and the council. It was planned to appoint a managing agent to administer ECO4 Flex on behalf of the council and to support as many households as possible in fuel poverty.

A councillor asked if the schemes were household income limited or are there schemes available for households that can help people who use a lot of electricity and gas or do not have funding available to replace windows. It was confirmed that all the schemes concentrated on households with an income below £31k. People in work were not eligible for those schemes. However, the local authority was aware of this issue. It was planned to bid for funding to employ someone to investigate how a loan scheme could be rolled out across Derby to better insulate properties for climate purposes.

Another councillor asked if the project in the northwest of Derby was running to timescale, was in budget and was up to standard. The officer confirmed it was in budget and up to standard and should be finished by the end of April 2023.

### **The Board noted the report**

## **23/22 Empty Homes Update**

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director of Communities and Place which gave an update on Empty Homes. The report was presented by the Head of Strategic Housing.

The officer informed the Board that since the last update in October a further Empty Homes loan application had been received. The team was on track to bring another 78 homes back into use.

A change in process had been identified to save money by bringing down the cost of the compulsory purchase programme. All straightforward compulsory purchase cases are now dealt with internally, rather than engaging external

legal services. It was expected to deliver a saving of approximately £3,500 per year.

The Government's annual calculation of the council tax base had been released. Analysis indicated that nationally the number of long-term empty homes had increased by 4%. The number of empty homes in Derby had increased in line with the national average, an additional 56 homes in Derby had become empty. Derby was relatively low in comparison to neighbouring authorities.

A councillor queried why there was an increase, the officer explained there had been changes in the housing market and people were waiting to sell homes. Another councillor asked if empty properties had a higher or lower council tax, it was confirmed that empty properties would have a higher rate of council tax dependent on how long they had been vacant.

It was also suggested investigating the option of using "stalled sites" or sites of schemes with planning permission that were not being implemented.

Another councillor asked of the empty properties in Derby how many had been subject to a compulsory purchase order (CPO). The officer confirmed none had been in the last quarter, but there are usually 4 to 5 CPOs each year.

**The Board noted the report**

## **24/22      Remit, Work Programme and Topic Reviews**

The Board considered a report which allowed the Board to study its Terms of Reference and Remit for the remainder of the 2022/23 Municipal Year. The report also allowed officers to inform the Board of any key work areas, issues, or potential topic review subjects within the service areas for discussion or inclusion in the work programme.

The Board members discussed the year's work programme.

**Resolved**

- 1. To agree the proposed work programme for 2022/23 which was discussed at the meeting**

MINUTES END