

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Thursday, 27th September, 2012

Present:- Councillors Robin Moss (Chair), Ben Stevens (Vice-Chair), Patrick Anketell-Jones, Brian Simmons, Michael Evans and Manda Rigby

Also in attendance:

26 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

27 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chairman drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

28 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Councillor Lisa Brett had sent her apology to the Panel.

Councillor Cherry Beath (Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development) had sent her apology to the Panel.

29 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Robin Moss declared the interest on item 9 of the agenda (Assets of Community Value) as a Member of Westfield Parish Council.

30 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There was none.

31 ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS - TO RECEIVE DEPUTATIONS, STATEMENTS, PETITIONS OR QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THIS MEETING

Peter Duppa-Miller made a statement under item 11 on the agenda (BDUK – Connecting Devon and Somerset Broadband Project).

32 MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 12TH JULY 2012

The Panel confirmed the minutes of the previous meeting as a true record and they were duly signed by the Chairman.

33 COMMUNITY SAFETY PLAN: 'STUDENT WATCH' - BATH SPA UNIVERSITY AND UNIVERSITY OF BATH (20 MINUTES)

The Chairman invited Sue Dicks (Community Manager Partnership Delivery) to give the presentation.

Sue Dicks highlighted the following points in her presentation:

- Introduction and background of the scheme
- Student Watch launched in June 2010 due to steady increase of students being victims of crime and due to increase in house fires
- Overall aim was to increase students' awareness by running a campaign, work with Community Safety partnership and communicate with students
- Experience of one student who was victim of theft crime
- Water Safety Awareness - activities with Fire and rescue in terms of education on this matter
- Leaflets about the danger of being near river when on night out
- Property Marking campaign - over 4,000 mobile phones and laptops are registered
- Scam Mail
- Partnership
- Useful web links

A full copy of the presentation is available on the Minute Book in Democratic Services.

The Panel made the following points:

The Panel welcomed the presentation and welcomed the scheme as such. The Panel was also pleased that students are taught about self-help and asked who ensures the continuity that students will go on representing themselves.

Sue Dicks replied that generally there is behaviour change as students get older. Also, third year students mentor 1st year students.

The Panel commented that lot of cheap drinks are available for students and makes them easy target. The Panel asked if those messages could be passed to students.

Sue Dicks agreed that students become easy target once they get their hands on cheap drinks and took that suggestion on board.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to note the presentation and report.

34 ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE - UPDATE (25 MINUTES)

The Chairman invited Andy Thomas (Group Manager for Partnership Delivery) to introduce the report.

The Panel made the following points:

The Panel welcomed the report and commented that it will be interesting to see how assets of community value will work in practice.

Councillor Rigby (who sit also on resources PDS Panel as Vice-Chair) commented that this matter was on Resources agenda not so long ago. The Panel set up working group and the Panel decided to go for couple of site visit. Councillor Rigby invited Members of this Panel to join Resources Panel for site visits.

Councillor Rigby also added that the Resources Panel identified large differences between the assets owned by the Council and those assets that are not owned by the Council. The Resources also looked into what will happen if there is bankrupt scenario with this matter.

Andy Thomas gave more detail about 2nd criteria outlined on pg 25 of the report. The legislation does refer to the Council and it is reasonable that the Council's priority and approach should at least be reflected somewhere. The intention is that some degree of safeguard is in place (in case if it is against to what Council wishes to achieve). We are very aware on the balance between the correct and fair process and light touch.

The Panel commented that this will have limited value as it is restricted to rural area, as oppose to town, simply because land prices are so high. There will be uneven distribution and also, because it will be more rural it will require significant resource from Local Authority to make it work.

Andy Thomas commented that the Government done some assessment on this. The Council discovered that the amount of officers' time to set this up was more than the Government expected because of the complexity of it. In terms of running the programme it is still unknown how it will work.

At this point of the meeting Councillor Robin Moss declared the interest as a Member of Westfield Parish Council.

It was **RESOLVED** to:

- 1) Ask Resources PDS Panel to invite this panel when they organise site visits;
- 2) Request from officers to circulate to Parish and Town Council information about assets of community value.

35 SCRUTINY INQUIRY DAY: THE RIVER CORRIDOR REPORT (10 MINUTES)

The Chairman invited Donna Vercoe (Policy and Development Scrutiny Manager) to introduce the report.

The Panel made the following points:

The Chairman confirmed that 3 Members of the Panel sitting on the steering group are Councillors Anketell-Jones, Stevens and Moss.

The Chairman also invited Members of the Panel to send their comments and suggestions for Scrutiny Inquiry Day to Donna Vercoe via email.

It was **RESOLVED** to:

- 1) Note the Terms of Reference and agree with the proposal to have a joint Scrutiny Inquiry Day investigation;
- 2) Confirm that Councillors Anketell-Jones, Stevens and Moss will act as key contacts for the co-ordination of the Scrutiny Inquiry Day; and
- 3) Invite Panel Members to send their comments and suggestions for Scrutiny Inquiry Day to Donna Vercoe via email.

36 BDUK - CONNECTING DEVON AND SOMERSET BROADBAND PROJECT (20 MINUTES)

The Chairman invited Jeremy Smalley (Divisional Director for Skills and Employability) and Anna Garner (Principal EEB Development Officer) to introduce the report.

The Chairman invited Peter Duppa-Miller (Secretary to the BANES Local Councils Association and the Clark to Combe Hay Parish Council) to address the Panel with his statement.

Peter Duppa-Miller asked the Panel to note that the B&NES Draft Core Strategy's Schedule of Rolling Changes (Core Document CD6/E2.2) now contains a further "Strategic Issue in the Rural Areas", which reads – "The urgent need to provide reliable broadband, with adequately fast speed, to every home and business." This addition was proposed by Peter Duppa-Miller and accepted by the Inspector at the Draft Core Strategy Examination in Public session on 24 January 2012.

Peter Duppa-Miller also asked the Panel to recognise that all the Parish Councils in the Rural Areas of B&NES are most eager, willing and able to assist the project – as a free resource. John Wilkinson and Anna Garner have been asked to update the Parishes Liaison meeting on 17 October 2012 concerning the progress of the project.

Peter Duppa-Miller asked the following questions: Referring to paragraph 4.13 of the report to this meeting, when will the data relating to B&NES be made available? It is understood that there are 10% (or is it 15%?) "hard to reach" areas in B&NES – where are these areas and when will they be identified? What is the status of the relevant Local Broadband Plan (LDP)? It is understood that the Connecting Devon and Somerset (CD&S) LDP was adopted by the CD&S Board in early 2012 – but what is the status of the "B&NES Addendum"?

The Panel made the following points:

The Panel asked about the State Aid process with European Commission and when realistically there will be an announcement from Brussels considering that the resolution of the State Aid process was expected by the end of September 2012.

Jeremy Smalley responded that the Council still don't know when the resolution on State Aid will be available. As soon as it is known it will be communicated with the Panel.

Anna Garner said that there is certain information on that which does give an indication on phasing. Following the model that Cornwall is taking announcement on delivery will not be made until 4 weeks in advance on going live in the area. There are two reasons for that: to manage the expectations for the area and to assess the area in terms of how difficult it is to deliver. Because of the assessment of area uncertainty it is difficult to say what are those 'hard to reach' areas in BANES.

The Panel asked if BT is the only bidder in the area. Businesses that are too close to telephone exchange are not scheduled to get superfast broadband.

Anna Garner said that there is some good news on that matter. Those areas that are close to telephone exchanges will be considered along with the areas that are already part of the BT Infinity project (rural areas).

It was **RESOLVED** to note the report and to request from officers to inform the Panel on the outcome of the State Aid process.

37 X MEDIA LAB (20 MINUTES)

The Chairman invited Anna Garner to introduce the report.

The Panel made the following points:

The Panel said that their ambition is to advertise more of these events and asked if the X-Play is funded by the Council.

Anna Garner responded that Council is providing the Assembly Rooms for the event.

The Panel commented that this is an interesting view of investment, something that Local Authority should be doing. It is not only promoting the area in terms of high-tech businesses we are looking for but also bringing the other businesses into the area.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the report and to endorse the approach set out in the report with next steps to include exploring alternative delivery models and core sponsorship, such that the Council may make a fixed contribution but is not required to underwrite the project.

38 REGENERATION UPDATE (20 MINUTES)

The Chairman invited Jeremy Smalley to introduce the report.

The Panel made the following points:

The Chairman thanked Jeremy Smalley for the report and asked the Panel to make their comments on the overall report and not on individual regeneration schemes. The Panel asked if we are resourced to do all of these projects or they are considered under some prioritisation process.

Jeremy Smalley responded that all of these projects together are very ambitious agenda with a lot of challenges. It is a complex operating environment and officers had asked Cabinet the same questions through budget process. Jeremy Smalley said that he is not convinced that there is operational capacity for all of the projects at the same time so there has to be prioritisation.

The Panel asked about Keynsham project and archaeological findings on the site and if there is an impact from those findings.

Jeremy Smalley responded that Keynsham is very self contained market with interesting economy there. River Corridor report will also be part of the Keynsham project. In terms of the archaeological findings – the findings are about Roman villa and Roma settlement. Jeremy Smalley said that he was not sure about the details and what needs to happen so he will report back to the Panel on that matter.

The Panel asked about the Planning and Financing Future study and asked if the Panel could have a report on that study on one of the future meetings.

Jeremy Smalley took that request on board.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the update and to receive a report on the 'Planning and Financing Future study' at one of the future meetings.

39 BATH FESTIVALS CONTRACT: ANNUAL REVIEW (20 MINUTES)

The Chairman invited Ann Cullis (Senior Arts Development Officer) and Belinda Kidd (Bath Festivals Chief Executive) to introduce the report.

The Panel made the following points:

The Panel welcomed that, according to the report, this year appeared to be quite successful and asked if there is expectation from Bath Festivals to continue to be successful.

Belinda Kidd replied that it is always a challenge to continue with successful year but Bath Festivals hope that will be the case. Bath has something very special to offer.

The Panel asked if Olympic and Paralympics Games had negative impact on the box office income.

Belinda Kidd replied that those events did have some impact on some festivals (music for example) although not on literature and children festivals.

The Panel asked about the ongoing VAT issue in particular if the decision will have backdate claw back of VAT and financial impact.

Belinda Kidd explained that Bath Festivals were always of view that they don't need to charge VAT on literature festivals under cultural exemption. For Performing Arts there is no VAT charge. For Film there is VAT charge whilst Literature Festivals are grey area. There was a tribunal that happened last November which made the decision on that matter. Normally the decision is passed after three months though in this case the decision is still not made. Belinda Kidd said that it is a worry and Bath Festivals have a backup plan in the worst case scenario.

Belinda Kidd also said that Bath box office has been upgraded recently.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the report and agree that officers should work with Bath Festivals to support improvement in performance.

40 HERITAGE SERVICES PROVISIONAL TRADING FIGURES DURING THE OLYMPIC GAMES PERIOD (20 MINUTES)

The Chairman invited Stephen Bird (Head of Heritage Services) to introduce the report.

Stephen Bird said that it will take couple of months to get the accurate picture of the impact of trading figures during the Olympic Games period.

Stephen Bird informed the Panel that for this year Heritage Services budgeted for 5% drop in the visitation. The updated figures for July and August this year are: down 18% on the previous year in comparison with the forecast of 5%; 7% down on the income by the end of August; spend per head over the summer was up 1%; during 17 days of Olympics total sales were down 17% (as forecasted).

The Panel made the following points:

The Panel asked about long term plan and in particular if Heritage Services talks to Community Safety about issues such as litter, anti-social behaviour, and similar.

Stephen Bird responded that those issues do concern Heritage Services. There are ongoing discussions about those issues with other services.

The Panel commented that they did forecast that Olympic Games will have detrimental effect on Bath and they hoped that we could learn a lesson.

The Panel also thanked Stephen Bird for the honest report and updated figures for July to August period.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

41 WORKPLAN

It was **RESOLVED** to note the workplan with the following addition:

- Planning and Financing Future study report – date to be confirmed

The meeting ended at 3.20 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services