

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Thursday, 24th January, 2013

Present:- Councillors Robin Moss (Chair), Ben Stevens (Vice-Chair), Patrick Anketell-Jones, Brian Simmons, Lisa Brett, Manda Rigby and Anthony Clarke (In place of Michael Evans)

52 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

53 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Senior Democratic Services Officer drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

54 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Councillor Michael Evans had sent his apology to the Panel. Councillor Anthony Clarke was a substitute for Councillor Evans.

55 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

56 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There was none.

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

The Chairman informed the meeting that Nicolette Boater will address the Panel under item 13 on the agenda (River Corridor Report).

58 MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 22ND NOV 2012

The Panel confirmed the minutes of the previous meeting as a true record and they were duly signed by the Chairman subject to the following amendment:

- Page 5 of Minutes, second paragraph, first sentence should read: 'The Chairman said that the Panel received confirmation that the BDUK will go ahead with the State Aid as agreed with the EU.'

The Chairman said part of the Medium Term Plans discussion at the last meeting was about the Victoria Art Gallery charges and the Panel was informed that discovery card owners will not be charged admission to the gallery. However, that has changed now and the Chairman asked what the latest position in terms of admission charges is.

Mike Butler (Interim Divisional Director - Tourism, Leisure & Culture) said that the situation had changed slightly. Static exhibition will be free for everyone whilst for special exhibitions all adult visitors charged (children are free) and charges will vary by exhibition. Season tickets will be available and there will be no other concessions.

The Chairman said that he appreciated discussions are fluid and things can change between two meetings but if there are changes like these in future then the Panel Members should be informed as soon as those changes take place.

Mike Butler took that comment on board.

59 CONNECTING FAMILIES IN BATH & NORTH EAST SOMERSET (20 MINUTES)

The Chairman invited Paula Bromley (Principal Youth Officer and Operational Lead for Connecting Families) to give the presentation.

Paula Bromley highlighted the following points in her presentation:

- Overview
- The way we will work
- Degrees of the Family Intervention Services
- Purpose of Connecting Families
- Map of households matching ≥ 2 Criteria
- How we will work with our families
- Family Intervention
- Measures of Success

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

The Panel made the following points:

The Panel commented that for some of the methods in the scheme will require co-operation and positive participation of all people involved and asked if there is active participation and/or resistance and how the service will deal with those issues. The Panel asked if benefit payments will be affected with this scheme. The Panel also said some families have been known in the system for a number of years and asked how this new scheme will make the difference. The Panel also asked if there is intention to work together with the housing associations.

Paula Bromley reminded the Panel that the team have not started to work yet as the plan is to start with the scheme from 1st February this year. The team is still working on methodology of the scheme. Paula Bromley said that it is good to have sanctions for those families who do not participate in the scheme though we also have to have rewards. This scheme is about making an approach to those families with an offer and taking that offer to them explaining that this is to help them, their future. If they don't accept that offer then sanctions will be enforced. There will need to be clear understanding on what the offer is and what the sanctions will be. Skilled workers will be working alongside families and they will be their advocates and best friends. The difference from previous schemes is that even the social services don't have very often a real feel for the whole family. They tend to work with mum, dad, etc but not the whole family. The proposal here is that families will have skilled worker who will spend 2,3,4 hours a day providing the support to them. The Government feels that this scheme does work and there are lot of positive trials across the country and the evidence from those trials will be looked at.

The Panel asked how the team will be able to demonstrate that the efficiencies had been made in order to continue the financial support from the Central Government.

Paula Bromley responded that this will be crucial for the service to prove these to the Central Government. Staff will be looking at data mapping in order to focus on families and also to work with the housing associations and the Police in data exchange (i.e. do housing repairs go down or up, is there reduction in Anti-Social Behaviour). All these information will then be used to calculate financial implications of the scheme.

The Panel asked about the number of families in the scheme.

Paula Bromley replied that at the moment there are 117 families and the number for three years is 210 families in total.

The Panel commented that these families are quite difficult to get back to work, in terms of the reliability, though the easiest way for them to find their feet is voluntary work.

Paula Bromley agreed with this comment from the Panel and said that some organisations are much more flexible with volunteers than with the paid staff (i.e. delays for work, etc.).

It was **RESOLVED** to note the presentation. The Panel also requested further update at one of the future meetings.

60 LEISURE STRATEGY (20 MINUTES)

The Chairman invited Mike Butler to introduce the report.

The Panel made the following points:

The Panel commented that the report suggested that there were a number of capital success in getting investments but the evidence shows in order to get capital investment you have to have a proper revenue budget to get the best out of the capital investment so it doesn't deteriorate.

The Panel also commented that there is nothing about the accessibility in the report so as many residents as possible could make use of the facilities.

The Panel also commented if the aim is to reduce the net expenditure on various facilities to zero over the next few years then they would like to see some kind of interim business plan on that could be achieved. The Panel noted that this might not be possible considering that the recommendation 2.4 of the report mentions the cost to BANES due to inactivity. The Panel also noted that bullet point 3.11 of the report says continue to work closely with commissioners to enhance and develop front services to meet the challenge though part of the budget and the business planning is that there may need to be revenue investment in order to offset the expenditure on another part of the budget. So, aiming for zero within the leisure services provision may increase expenditure on Health and Wellbeing part.

The Panel felt that the report made more questions rather than giving answers and Members felt that they could not support the recommendations as printed in the report (bullet point 2, recommendations 2.1-2.4).

Some Members of the Panel commented that they were not aware on the consultation on this Strategy.

Mike Butler responded that the consultation process hasn't started yet. The only thing that has been worked on is the platform for the Strategy.

The panel also commented that they would wish to see more information on whether there are plans to build something new in Keynsham or other sites in the area in order to replace the existing.

Mike Butler said that the Council is in constant communication with the partners on how best they can use the existing facilities.

The Panel expressed their concerns with the plan to stop investing in Sport and Leisure though the Council will soon, as from April 2013, take over responsibilities for Public Health.

Mike Butler responded that 3.13 of the report is about the emphasises that the Leisure Strategy is down to put on working with other directorates to improve the health and wellbeing in the area. Mike Butler also said that the report could be more clear on what the Council try to achieve with the Strategy.

The Panel suggested that the future report should first outline what the Council want to achieve in providing sports facilities, than what sports facilities will be provided in order to achieve those outcomes and at the end to look at the cost of it.

The Panel requested for further report on the Leisure Strategy for their March meeting and to invite the relevant Cabinet Member for the same meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Panel:

- 1) Noted the report
- 2) Raised a number of issues that they wanted to see addressed in more detail to include:
 - a. Accessibility
 - b. Business planning
 - c. Holistic sports coming across BANES
 - d. Current public health costs to potential revenue investment.

The Panel also **REQUESTED** that further report be presented at the next meeting of the Panel (14th march 2013).

The Panel also **ASKED** the Cabinet to delay the approval of this strategy until they have the opportunity to scrutinise further report on Leisure Strategy.

61 BATH TOURISM PLUS LTD - COUNCIL FUNDING (20 MINUTES)

The Chairman invited Mike Butler to introduce the report.

The Panel made the following points:

The Chairman reminded the Panel that at the last meeting on 22nd November 2012, under Medium Term Plans, the Panel requested the following: ' A report on the discussions with the Bath Tourism Plus in terms of the consensual agreement on transition of funding' due to Panel's concern on how would that work if the Council would reduce direct funding and replace it with the tourism levy.

Councillor Cherry Beath (Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development) said that nothing has been set out, nothing agreed, yet in terms of tourism levy. The idea of levy is something that it will be worked on.

The Chairman agreed with Councillor Beath that the Panel also asked a report on how Tourism Levy will come out in practice, including models of charging versus income. The Chairman said that the Panel did not have anything against tourism levy s long as it works in practice and as long as Bath Tourism Plus get involved in those discussions. The Chairman informed the meeting that Bath Tourism Plus did not have any problems with the principle if the funding regime change but they needed to know details. That is why the Panel wanted a report on the funding for the Bath Tourism Plus.

The Chairman said that he appreciated that officers could not give more details in the report and said that the Panel will be looking forward for more detailed report in near future.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the report and receive further update at one of the future meetings.

62 BATH WORLD HERITAGE SITE - 25 YEARS ON (20 MINUTES)

The Chairman invited Tony Crouch (World Heritage Manager) to give the presentation.

Tony Crouch highlighted the following points in his presentation:

- Definition for the 'World Heritage Site'
- Steering Group for Bath
- Impacts: Challenges
- Impacts: Positive
- World Heritage Enhancement Fund
- Moving forward: Great Spas of Europe
- Conclusion

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

The Panel made the following points:

The Panel commented that one of the most distinctive things about the city is the setting with the rural surrounding. The Panel asked what would UNESCO say about developing the rural surrounding considering the housing need pressure.

Tony Crouch responded that UNESCO would be interested in that as one of the reasons Bath is described as the World Heritage Site (WHS) is the way that the built heritage merges into landscape setting. Planning Services recently brought forward Setting Study supplementary planning document which is already been used in possible location of extension sites. There will be inevitably be some degree of harm in any development that happens in the WHS but that needs to be compared with the benefits for the city.

The Panel commented that despite some of the negative headlines in the media about recent developments, Bath still retained the WHS status. The Panel asked if there is special policy that new developments have to use special colour, stone, etc.

Tony Crouch commented that there is a policy document called Vienna Memorandum which states that we should look to replicate past styles. Some inspectors were not in favour of Southgate development yet they were complimentary for Holburne Museum and Bath Spa. It is all about pushing forward and build with the quality. Negative headlines happen all the time. We were never in danger to lose WHS though it only took one headline like 'Bath to lose the WHS?' from famous newspaper and then you are on the back foot.

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

63 LIBRARY SERVICE: CHARGING SCHEDULE FOR PEOPLES NETWORK

COMPUTERS (10 MINUTES)

The Chairman invited Mike Butler to introduce the report.

The Panel unanimously supported the report and supported that the preferred option number 2 be implemented as of April 2013.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Panel supported the preferred option number 2 which be implemented as of April 2013.

64 RIVER CORRIDOR GROUP REPORT (20 MINUTES)

The Chairman invited Nicolette Boater to read her statement.

Nicolette Boater thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Panel. Nicolette Boater congratulated a number of people who had their input in the report. The work described in this report has been undertaken over a period of unprecedented financial challenge, uncertainty and structural change for the Council, but also one full of opportunity for those who want things to be done differently or better than before. Nicolette Boater said she was pleased how the vision and change agendas of many diverse organisations can combine and develop momentum in this way. However, as the report also recognises, a strong and widely owned vision is not enough alone. Therefore, Nicolette Boater hoped the Panel will urge the Cabinet to grab the opportunity inherent in our River Corridor by wholeheartedly supporting the two main recommendations suggested in this report, and be forthcoming with suggestions as to how the report might be made even more complete, persuasive, and authoritative.

A full copy of the statement is available on the Minute Book in Democratic Services. The Chairman thanked Nicolette Boater for her statement.

The Chairman introduced the report and thanked everyone who took part in the report.

The Panel made the following points:

Councillor Brett said that she couldn't attend the Scrutiny Inquiry Day (SID) and asked if the Trust could influence planning decisions, would the Trust have resources, would the Trust work with Councils and Ward Councillors so the vision becomes reality.

The Chairman said that the simple answer to all these questions would be yes. The Chairman also said that quite a range of people and organisations were involved in this review. To come up with very specific proposals that would have unanimous agreement from all involved would not be possible. But, if we are looking to make developments in the future it has to be on basis involving all those with interest and expertise, which is why the independent Trust model is one of the suggestions in the report. The Chairman said he would hope that BANES representative (officer and/or Councillor) sits on the Trust as the Council is the main landowner along the river but not the only one. If we have an independent Trust then it makes it better and easier

to influence planning decisions as there will be minimum of conflict in the interest. The Trust should also work with local Councillors.

Councillor Brett welcomed the comment from the Chairman and added that she would like to see the Vision of what the entire river corridor could potentially look in the future as a driver for the future. Councillor Brett also said that the Trust could become only talking block unless they have the Vision.

The Chairman responded that it is up to the Trust to define the vision.

Councillor Clarke said that he was not keen on the Trust. Councillor Clarke was very much in favour for river to be developed but this would not be done if we decided to redevelop another part of the city or authority (i.e. formation of the Trust) and the concern he had was democratic accountability for what it is actually quite a major group of policies that have to come forward. Councillor Clarke added that he is in favour to get the best possible advice though he would be very concerned to hand over democratic responsibility to the Trust.

The Chairman responded that it is not the intention that any Trust should supersede responsibilities in planning, for example. The Chairman understood the point about the democratic deficit but one of the problems is that BANES is one amongst many who has interest and influence in land and none of that gives us any right to supersede planning process.

Councillor Clarke added that this is not about the planning. The reason why Councillors are here is to represent, as elected Members with officers' support, the residents out there.

Councillor Stevens said that the Trust would not need any support from the Council anyway though, to some extent, if the body decide to establish themselves then the Council should offer some support. The Council, in his view, should not be involved in the establishment of the body at all. The Council, in case the Trust is established, can choose to be part of it or not. The overall Vision and Strategy is covered in the 1st recommendation.

Councillor Rigby said that she is in favour of the Trust because the Members proved not to be experts in the river before. The key would be that the Trust has the right people and expertise on board. The Council has absolutely part to play but we don't own the riverbanks. As a Council we could share our Vision with the Trust.

Councillor Anketell-Jones said that we are only part of what is catchment area. It would be useful to have a trust to put all expertise in one place to address not only what is required in the city of Bath but also to neighbouring authorities.

The Chairman confirmed the recommendations as they are printed in the report and that the report should also include comments made by the public at and out of the meeting and also to include comments made at the meeting today before it goes to the Cabinet.

Councillor Dave Laming commented that the Trust will have a range of right people and expertise on board. Councillor Laming welcomed the River Corridor report and also added the Strategy will be a Vision for the river and not the planning document.

Councillor Brett commented that at the moment it all feels a little bit intangible in the report and personally she would want to see something more cohesive in order to develop the Strategy and to know exactly what we want to achieve.

It was **RESOLVED** to:

- 1) Note the report
- 2) Support the recommendations
- 3) Include comments made by the Panel on 24th January, and also comments made by the public, in the final report and present it to the Cabinet.

65 WORKPLAN

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

- Further report on the Leisure Strategy – March 2013
- Youth Offending Service – March 2013
- An update on the draft Anti-Social Behaviour draft Bill – March 2013 tbc
- Connecting Families update - date to be confirmed
- Bath Tourism Plus funding - further update (date tbc)

The Panel also asked the Senior Democratic Services Officer to investigate when the 'Post-Midnight Economy and its contribution to overall economy' item will appear before the Panel.

The meeting ended at 3.15 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services

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Statement from Nicolette Boater to 24.1.13 meeting of the ECD PDS Panel

Thank you Chair for allowing me to comment on this path finding report .

As former adviser to other regions and cities seeking to make the most of their natural assets as well as a lifelong river valley resident, the first thing I want to say is thank you and well done to the large number of people whose hard work over the last 2 or so years has got this report to where it is today and especially

- the diverse experts and volunteers that comprise the River Corridor Group
- Members and officers of the Council
- senior representatives of partner organisations and the community

all of whom gave generously of their time and expertise to attend the SID and input into this report, and of course the Scrutiny team for pulling this altogether so splendidly.

Although I've been following the agendas of all the PDS panels since the current administration came to power, this is only the second time I've been moved to make a public statement. And on this occasion, as when I submitted a statement to the Resources PDS panel last July, it is because of the importance of decisions made and actions taken now to the long term interests of the communities the Council serves.

The work described in this report has been undertaken over a period of unprecedented financial challenge, uncertainty and structural change for the Council, but also one full of opportunity for those who want things to be done differently or better than before. In the middle of last year, the Council having updated and communicated its own vision, started looking out for other organisations who shared it and with whom it might work to deliver it – a very apt moment indeed to hold a public inquiry as to how best to unlock the potential inherent in our river corridor.

[refer to figure 1: "A new and more strategic way for the Council to deliver its vision..."]

Like many who attended and contributed to the SID last October, I was pleased how the vision and change agendas of many diverse organisations can combine and develop momentum in this way. For it is at moments like this that step changes are possible. However, as the report also recognises, a strong and widely owned vision is not enough alone. To drive the desired change a strategy dealing with reality as it is, warts and all, is needed.

[refer to figure 2: "Having examined the evidence, a strategy identifies the obstacles and works out how best and when to deal with them..."]

The RCG has provided us with a fantastic start to assembling the evidence. However it was apparent at the SID that there are some serious obstacles to realising the river Corridor vision. Although some good ideas as to how these might be surmounted, are reflected in the findings detailed in the report, there was also a feeling amongst river enthusiasts that some obstacles are just too difficult without decisive and dedicated leadership.

For all these reasons I hope the Panel will urge the Cabinet to grab the opportunity inherent in our River corridor by wholeheartedly supporting the two main recommendations suggested in this report, and be forthcoming with suggestions as to how the report might be made even more complete, persuasive, and authoritative.

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