

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL

PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Tuesday 11th September, 2012

Present:- Councillors Marie Longstaff (Chair), Caroline Roberts (Vice-Chair), Geoff Ward, Ian Gilchrist, David Martin, Douglas Nicol and Brian Webber (In place of Malcolm Hanney)

Also in attendance: David Trigwell (Divisional Director for Planning and Transport), Simon De Beer (Policy & Environment Manager), Stephen George (Senior Planning Policy Officer), Andrew Sharland (Landscape Architect) and Nick Jeanes (Team Leader Traffic and Safety)

Cabinet Member for Transport: Councillor Roger Symonds

41 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

42 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chairman drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

43 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Councillors Malcolm Hanney and Tim Ball, Cabinet Member for Homes & Planning had sent their apologies to the Panel. Councillor Brian Webber was present as a substitute for Councillor Hanney for the duration of the meeting.

44 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor David Martin declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 10 (Concept Statements for MoD sites in Bath) as he is a Governor at Bathwick St Mary School.

Councillor Geoff Ward declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 10 (Concept Statements for MoD sites in Bath) as his home overlooks the site at Ensleigh.

45 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There was none.

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

Lin Patterson addressed the Panel on behalf of the Save our 6-7 Buses Campaign, a copy of the statement can be found on the Panel's Minute Book, a summary is set out below.

"We have heard there may be cuts to bus services. Here are a few reasons why you should maintain a decent 30 minute frequency in the 6 – 7 area, which is 10% of Bath."

"Elderly

- An NHS study predicted that by 2025, Bath's elderly over 85 will increase by 44%. Only good public transport can keep these people in their own homes, and out of care homes."

"Health

- The Fairfield Park Health Centre, served only by this bus route, is on a steep hill and treats the whole area and Snow Hill. It was built there because of the good bus service. There was an outcry from patients when the service was cut to 40 minutes, and our campaign has been solidly supported by the Health Centre itself."

"Essential Services

- Not only the Health Centre, but other essential services are accessed via the bus, and a 40 minute interval proves difficult to use and remember."

"The voters dependent on the 30 minute 6-7 buses are not responsible for the problems and rely on the Council to live up to their ideals by ensuring the frequency is maintained. They are doing their part by increasing bus use. We ask again as in July, where do you stand?"

The Chairman asked if she had received any response from the Cabinet Member for Transport, Councillor Roger Symonds.

Lin Patterson replied that she had met with Councillor Symonds and informed him of the ridership increase. She added that he had explained that a decision on bus services was not likely to be made until the budget meeting of the Council.

Colin Currie addressed the Panel on the subject of Norton Radstock Regeneration, a copy of the statement can be found on the Panel's Minute Book, a summary is set out below.

"I would like to make an appeal for the standing down of the Norton Radstock Regeneration Co. in its present form. It is a totally moribund organisation and has no public confidence in the area, in fact it is seen as actually blocking regeneration rather than assisting it. The NRR's only asset is the railway land, on which it has made a number of unsuccessful attempts to build housing which is a completely inappropriate use for the site. The proposal to re-instate the rail link to Frome, which will make a positive contribution to re-generation, will be blocked by the current intention to build on the existing rail track."

“If regeneration is to actually happen it needs an organisation that is accountable, with a balance of professional and political expertise elected on a democratic basis that will both ensure public confidence and deliver results for Radstock.”

The Chairman on behalf of the Panel thanked them both for making their statements.

47 MINUTES - 26TH JULY 2012

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

48 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE (20 MINUTES)

The Cabinet Member for Transport, Councillor Roger Symonds addressed the Panel.

He informed them that a Transport Conference was due to take place on September 18th. He added that sixty different organisations would be represented at the conference and that he hoped that this would aid in the development of a future strategy / vision.

He announced that the Bath Transport Package had received the backing of the Government and that as part of the package this would enable a series of new bus shelters to be put in place. He added that real time information should be available on nine routes within two years.

He stated that in July the Council had been awarded £3.1m from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund and that an initial scheme was planned to provide an off road route to and from Bath Spa University.

He informed them that a new search had begun for a Park & Ride to the east of Bath.

On the matter of Supported Bus Services he said that discussions would take place in the next month and that he would inform the earlier public speaker, Lin Patterson as soon as a decision had been made. He wished to also thank her for the survey comments she had sent him.

With regard to the other public speaker, Colin Currie, he said that he expected a report on the Radstock Railway to come to the Cabinet in due course.

The Chairman asked if the Transport Conference was a public event.

Councillor Roger Symonds replied that the event was by invitation only.

The Chairman asked if he had any comment to make on the 20mph report that was later to be discussed by the Panel.

Councillor Roger Symonds replied that the intention was to complete the scheme within two years. He added that he needed to emphasise that the restriction cannot be enforced, but he hoped that the signage would encourage people to drive slower

and more carefully. He also said that he was pleased that the Police had given their support to the scheme.

Councillor David Martin asked if any progress had been made on plans to implement a Low Emissions Zone on the London Road.

Councillor Roger Symonds replied that he had enquired about the implications of introducing one and was awaiting further information.

Councillor Geoff Ward asked if some of the £3.1m secured through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund could be used to maintain the 6 / 7 service referred to earlier.

Councillor Roger Symonds replied that most of that figure was a one off capital figure to which the Council has to specify to the Government the projects that it will be allocated to.

The Chairman on behalf of the Panel thanked him for the update.

49 GYPSIES, TRAVELLERS AND TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE SITE ALLOCATIONS DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT (DPD) (20 MINUTES)

The Policy & Environment Manager addressed the Panel to give them an update on this item in light of issues raised at the previous meeting.

He informed them of the breakdown of comments that had been received in the pre-consultation process, they were as follows:

General comments (on all sites) = 29

GT1 Whitchurch = 539

GT14 Keynsham = 113

GT2 Stanton Wick = 592

GT4 Radstock = 122

GT6 Newbridge = 15

GT8 Lower Bristol Road = 17

Total = 1398

He added that all the responses would soon be available to view online.

He explained that the petitions referred to in the Cabinet report & published online were in relation to Camerton, Stanton Wick and Radstock.

He informed them that the Whitchurch site does not lie near the gas main or its buffer (1/2 km away). The Development Control department do not refuse applications for other housing / extensions in principle this distance from the gas main.

A viability study of the Stanton Wick site has been undertaken and the results are to be published later this week.

The Core Strategy review requires a review of development sites re their capacity, deliverability, obstacles, timing, use etc. This will include assessing scope for accommodation of Gypsies & Travellers on non-Green Belt sites. This will be undertaken through the Placemaking Plan / SHLAA. Reports on the Core Strategy / Gypsies & Travellers / Placemaking Plan will be co-ordinated for early next year along with the public consultation.

Councillor Kris Mountford addressed the Panel on behalf of Stanton Drew Parish Council (a full copy of the statement is available on the Panel's Minute Book, a summary is set out below).

"In the 11th July, 2012 Cabinet papers, titled MoD Concept Statements, it stated 'The concept statements are not detailed site briefs or masterplans'. Instead, they set out the vision...' So surely the decision was not done and dusted? At that meeting it was stated that the final decision would be taken in September, not August."

"Does this mean that rather than taking up Peter Duppa-Miller's eminently sensible suggestion [made on 9th May 2012 to Cabinet] of using the MoD sites to provide a small number of pitches thus creating integrated communities, social cohesion and providing the gypsy & traveller communities with everything they require, the Cabinet puts maximising the New Homes Bonus over and above all else?"

The Chairman asked the Divisional Director for Planning and Transport for his view on this matter.

The Divisional Director for Planning and Transport replied that there were likely to be implications on all areas of the Council now that the Core Strategy is being reviewed. He added that MoD sites had neither been ruled in or out of the equation as far as Gypsies & Travellers were concerned.

Rosemary Collard addressed the Panel (a full copy of the statement is available on the Panel's Minute Book, a summary is set out below).

"Throughout this consultation, our main concerns about development of any sort on the adjacent site have been the shared access with the nursery and the loss of the woodland. We had previously expressed an interest in purchasing the woodland so that it could be used as a natural learning environment for the children."

"Recruiting qualified staff and apprentices and promoting the new nursery to prospective parents has been challenging because we have been unable to give answers to many of the questions asked of us. It is impossible for us to know how many prospective parents never even contacted us."

"I have pointed out why the site is undeliverable using words from the Council's own documentation. It was deemed not suitable for development and ranked 15th out of 23 yet somehow ended up as one of six preferred sites. I hope that over the past few months the Council has looked again at its findings and listened to what local people have to say. The reasons that originally made the site unsuitable are unchanged."

Karen Abolkheir, Stanton Wick Action Group addressed the Panel (a full copy of the statement is available on the Panel's Minute Book, a summary is set out below).

"We are concerned with the officer's proposal to drop the use of the scoring matrix for future evaluation and to replace it with a subjective, non-comparative list of criteria. This is ill conceived and likely motivated by the eagerness not to have decisions and reasoning questioned by the public. This exercise at the end of the day is one of comparison and a well considered and accurately used scoring matrix is the accepted tool for this purpose."

"Contrary to your officer's assertion that the scoring matrix was confusing, it was not. The problem was that the scoring was badly conceived when considering the evaluation criteria, was incorrectly scored in a number of instances and was ignored in the final comparative analysis."

"The arguments put forward by officers to adjust this process and have what they call a "stock take" are entirely without merit. The proposals, far from correcting the errors of the past actually plan to further confuse, cause stress to both settled and travelling communities and continue this chaotic and knee-jerk policy making."

The Chairman asked if a scoring matrix would be used in the next stage of the process.

The Policy & Environment Manager replied that it would not and it would be replaced by a transparent assessment process so everyone could see the evidence used and the conclusions reached.

The Chairman on behalf of the Panel thanked him for the update.

50 CONCEPT STATEMENTS FOR MOD SITES IN BATH (40 MINUTES)

The Senior Planning Policy Officer introduced this item to the Panel and highlighted some key issues from within the report.

- All of the sites generate the need for educational places. However, there are also current and projected educational capacity pressures in the city and the Concept Statements provide the opportunity to identify the contribution of the MoD sites to this issue. The consultation events have identified opportunities to address these pressures and the potential to provide additional school places to meet need.
- Additional land adjoining MoD Ensleigh – The draft Concept Statement for this site highlighted the potential opportunity for development on the sports pitches adjoining the MoD site on land that is outside both the Green Belt and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This is only an opportunity and no allocation is made, the rationale being to enable a more sustainable and self-contained housing led scheme that can better support local facilities and public transport. This would need to be pursued through the Placemaking Plan.

Whilst the site is not included as part of the Concept Statement for redevelopment, it is recommended that the broad position of the Concept Statement on this issue is retained, although reworded to reinforce the issues raised during the consultation phase, and identifying that further work is undertaken to test the option of development on this adjacent land through the Placemaking Plan. The outcome of this proactive work would provide the Council with robust evidence that could inform its position when it comes to either allocating this additional area in the Placemaking Plan, or seeking to protect it from development. It would also need to ascertain the likelihood of the site being released for development.

- Sustainable Construction – A viability assessment is underway to better understand the implications of increasing the proportion of homes to be constructed at higher levels of the Code for Sustainable Homes. The Planning Policy team is working with Transition Bath on this issue and the output of this work will be included as part of the Evidence Base for the Concept Statements.

In response to the rapidly changing economics of delivering housing built to higher levels of the Code and to the Council's corporate ambitions, it is recommended that the Council's aspiration should be for all housing to be built to Code Level 5 or above. Whilst this means that the Council's aspirations for the MoD sites goes beyond the Council's Draft Core Strategy which requires all development from 2013 to be Code 4, it is considered to be justified due to the Council's ambitious carbon reduction targets and the national and local imperative of mitigating climate change. The sites have the capability to deliver a greater contribution to national and local Carbon Reduction aspirations, and act as a benchmark to the kind of development that can be achieved.

It is however essential to recognise that it is currently not possible through the planning process to require this proportion of homes to be built at higher levels above Code 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes. However it is the intention of the Council to bring forward these site specific targets in the Placemaking DPD and give greater policy weight to this issue.

- Housing Numbers – Given the suspension of the Core Strategy process due to housing delivery questions and the concerns made by the Inspector over the flexibility and deliverability assumptions on housing sites, all development sites will need to be reviewed as part of a SHLAA review, including the assumptions made about the housing capacity on the MoD sites.

This issue regarding housing numbers was raised consistently throughout the consultation phase and whilst the Council should seek to optimise the use and development of land, it is recommended that the wording of the Concept Statements is modified with regard to the development capacities of the MoD sites to take account of concerns raised by the Core Strategy examination Inspector. This will help to ensure that other issues of acknowledged importance are given due attention, this also responds to a large proportion of

the comments made during the public consultation period into the Draft Concept Statements.

The Chairman asked if during the consultation anybody had suggested the sites should be used to accommodate Gypsies & Travellers.

The Senior Planning Policy Officer replied that he had received some feedback of that nature, but could not recall it exactly at his point in time.

The Chairman asked if the Panel could be sent any written evidence in connection with this particular matter.

The Senior Planning Policy Officer replied that he would send them the information that he had.

Councillor David Martin stated that he welcomed the Draft Concept Statements and appreciated the comments made in relation to education and sustainable construction. He asked if there had been any feedback from the MOD so far on the process.

The Senior Planning Policy Officer replied that they were concerned over the construction of a new school on the Warminster Road site, but that the relationship in general was very good.

Councillor Douglas Nicol commented that alongside the proposed 700 new homes on the Foxhill site Somer (Curo) were planning to do some renovation works in the area. He asked if the subject of district heating had been raised.

The Senior Planning Policy Officer replied that he had been aware of such talks in the past and encouraged them to continue.

Councillor Geoff Ward commented that he was not sure that the documents were strong enough. He added that he was concerned of their effect on the World Heritage Status of the City and he believed the public wanted more of a community feel to the sites with amenities. He called for the appropriate density, mix and height of properties and asked for a reassurance on this matter.

The Divisional Director for Planning and Transport replied that the Council's development strategy is Brownfield first, if the Council accepts a lower density on these sites it will obviously have repercussions.

The Senior Planning Policy Officer added that the statements set out the challenges ahead and that this will become more of an issue when the planning process is reached.

51 CITY OF BATH WORLD HERITAGE SITE SETTING SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (30 MINUTES)

The Landscape Architect introduced this item to the Panel. He explained that the proposed changes to the consultation draft would be reported to Cabinet on 14th November 2012 for consideration in order to enable preparation of the final version of the document for adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document.

He informed them that the key purpose of the document was to provide information and guidance for the effective protection and appropriate management of the setting. To do this it

- o Shows where the setting is
- o Defines what is important about the setting and
- o Outlines how to assess impacts on the setting

He stated that it was intended for use by developers, agents and development management planners when considering development proposals in the setting. It is also intended for use by landowners and managers of land when considering proposals for change and when considering management operations. It is also hoped it will be of interest to residents and visitors in appreciating the relationship of the surroundings of Bath to the city.

He informed the Panel that consultation on the Draft Supplementary Planning Document was carried out over the period 28th May to 6th July 2012 and a lot of support for it had been received.

Councillor David Martin asked if this would in any way help the planners with their work on the Enterprise Area.

The Divisional Director for Planning and Transport replied that the Placemaking Plan would deal with the Enterprise Area.

Councillor Geoff Ward asked if the document could address the issues surrounding Wooley Valley, MOD sites and the skyline of the City.

The Divisional Director for Planning and Transport replied that it would.

52 20MPH SPEED LIMITS IN RESIDENTIAL ROADS - UPDATE (30 MINUTES)

The Team Leader for Traffic and Safety introduced this item to the Panel. He informed them that on 11th April 2012 the Cabinet approved a 2 year programme to implement 20mph limits in residential roads throughout Bath & North East Somerset. A funding item of £500,000 was allocated for this work, and a nominal timescale indicated, which showed the project being rolled out progressively through 14 defined areas within the urban areas and larger villages, and a 15th phase to cover residential roads in all the smaller villages, to be completed by the end of 2013. A period of approximately 7 months has been allowed, from the start of consultation to

implementation, for each phase. No detailed costing of the proposal had been carried out at this stage.

He added that 76,000 households have been informed about our plans for 20 mph zones across the district in the summer edition of Connect Magazine. The next stage of our communications plan is to raise awareness through the media and our own communication channels about when and where the plans are being rolled out. A media launch is planned to coincide with implementation of the Twerton/Southdown 20 limit, which signals the beginning of the 20mph roll-out.

The first 20mph limit area (Twerton/Southdown) is due to be implemented on 24th September. Consultation has now finished for the second area, Peasedown St John, with 615 leaflets returned by the end of August (out of 2800 distributed). 61.4% of returns supported the proposal, 4.3% had no opinion, and 32.1% were against. Consultation is currently being carried out in Newbridge/Weston and Keynsham, with leaflets due to be returned by 17th and 26th September respectively.

Mr Gerald Chown addressed the Panel. He said that he wished to make 2 points, one Specific and the other General.

He firstly wanted to make a special plea for the inclusion of Widcombe Hill as a 20mph zone. He explained that it is a steep, narrow, residential access road to the City centre and that he has lived in Macaulay Buildings for over 40 years. In that time he said that there had been a huge increase in traffic volumes and an increasing number of car and cycle accidents, caused by drivers and cyclists taking the road bend at Macaulay Buildings too quickly. He added that the Council had installed signs and road surface treatments to slow cyclists, but suggested that the introduction of a 20mph limit at an appropriate point above the road bend would reduce the risk of more accidents and help to ensure that drivers take the rest of the Hill more slowly.

His second and more general point was to suggest that it would be less confusing for drivers if 20mph limits were in place on all residential access roads to the City. He stated that this would make it clear that the whole City is a 20mph zone and it would be simpler and more effective than a piecemeal approach. He said it would also save cost by reducing the multiplicity of signs and road markings, which are involved in the piecemeal approach.

He also asked which roads were individually affected by the introduction of the scheme.

The Team Leader for Traffic and Safety replied that all of the information relating to the individual roads was available on the Council's website and said that Mr Chown could contact him personally if he required any further information. He added that the current plan was to only include the lower half of Widcombe Hill within the scheme.

The Chairman asked if the list of wards within Appendix 1 was in order of priority and what was likely to happen to the wards at the end of the list given that a shortfall of £100,000 currently existed.

The Team Leader for Traffic and Safety replied that the wards listed within Appendix 1 were in order of priority and that indeed it might not be possible to complete the planned work for Lyncombe, Widcombe and Bathwick given the current shortfall.

The Chairman asked if he could explain a little more how the figure of £60,000 was reached to embark on 'soft measures' / social marketing methods.

The Team Leader for Traffic and Safety replied that a University of the West of England study done on Bristol's behalf had suggested that the social marketing element of widespread 20mph limits should attract around 10% of the total scheme cost, therefore if the Council were to do something similar, a funding element of up to £60,000 in total would need to be found.

Councillor Caroline Roberts commented that road safety was the biggest mailbag topic that she receives. She asked if the scheme could be introduced on major roads near to schools.

The Team Leader for Traffic and Safety replied that the Council could think about having a lower speed limit in these areas and offered to take some readings if required. He added that he would welcome any residents who wished to bring forward initiatives.

Councillor Caroline Roberts questioned whether the proposed stage eight of the scheme in Abbey / Kingsmead needed to be carried out.

The Team Leader for Traffic and Safety replied that he would look into that.

Councillor Brian Webber commented that it was policy decision made by the ruling party to introduce the scheme and one that he did not agree with. He added that he was obviously in favour of road safety and believed himself to be a cautious driver but said there was no evidence to support the decision made. He stated that he felt the conclusions reached were merely provisional and had not reduced the number of accidents.

He suggested that further flashing speed warning signs and road reconfiguration is installed and that an assessment of the schemes should be carried out once they have been introduced.

The Team Leader for Traffic and Safety replied that some of the evidence could be conceived as tenuous, but he was well aware of the huge concern over traffic speed / flow from the public. He added that he felt that the Government / Department for Transport had not led strongly enough on this matter.

Councillor Geoff Ward commented that more rural areas needed to be part of the scheme and highlighted the Hartley Bends as a particular problem area.

The Team Leader for Traffic and Safety replied that as this was an A road it came under the jurisdiction of the Highways Agency.

Councillor Geoff Ward asked if he was able to liaise with the Highways Agency on behalf of the Council.

The Team Leader for Traffic and Safety replied that he had actually met with them in the previous week and did discuss the Hartley Bends. He said that the Highways Agency do not see that area of the road as a big problem.

Councillor Ian Gilchrist commented that he hoped he could save the Council some money by informing them that Greenway Lane already had a 20mph restriction in place. He added that he understood why the focus was currently on Bath and asked that members of the Panel be involved when addressing the maps relating to 20mph roads.

Councillor David Martin commented that he was in favour of Widcombe Hill becoming 20mph from top to bottom. He also hoped that areas of Bathwick could be included within the scheme.

The Chairman on behalf of the Panel thanked the officer for the update.

53 PANEL WORKPLAN

The Chairman introduced this item to the Panel. She announced that a date for the additional October meeting had been set for 10.00am on Monday October 8th.

She proposed that the Panel added the following items to their workplan:

Core Strategy Update – November

Highways Agency – Council involvement on speed limits – January

20mph Speed Limit Update – January

Urban Gulls - January

The Panel **RESOLVED** to approve all of the above proposals.

The meeting ended at 4.35 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services