

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL

PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Tuesday, 4th March, 2014

Present:- Councillors Marie Longstaff (Chair), Lisa Brett (Vice-Chair), David Martin, Douglas Nicol and Liz Richardson

Also in attendance: Emma Bagley (Policy Development & Scrutiny Project Officer) and Liz Richardson (Policy Development & Scrutiny Lead Officer)

Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods: Councillor David Dixon

Cabinet Member for Transport: Councillor Caroline Roberts

58 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

59 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

60 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

There were none.

61 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

62 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There was none.

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

The Panel were notified that a number of questions had been submitted by the Chew Valley Flood Forum. The Chair announced that a written response would be circulated to the Forum and members of the Panel within five working days of the meeting. A copy of the questions can be found on the Panel's Minute Book and online as an appendix to these minutes.

Mr David Redgewell had registered to address the Panel regarding Agenda Item 11 (Network Rail Electrification Briefing) and would do so directly before that item was discussed.

64 MINUTES - 14TH JANUARY 2014

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

65 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

Councillor David Dixon, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods addressed the Panel.

Food Waste Recycling – In May the Council will commence this service in flats and schools.

Solar Compactors – A further 30 of these receptacles will be distributed across Bath and Keynsham. He added that only 5% of what was inside the compactors now went to landfill.

Allotments – He informed them that the overall waiting list for plots was down and that within the south of Bath there were some empty plots that were vacant.

Bereavement Services – He explained that a figure of £100,000 had been allocated in the budget to provide a café at Haycombe Cemetery. He wished to now inform the Panel that due to the relocation of some members of staff, their former offices would now be used to provide this service at a much reduced cost.

River Safety – He said that he had been in discussions with the Canals & River Trust regarding the ladders that are in place along the river. He explained that they are not official safety ladders and that he has asked the Trust to report back on how many need to be put in place and how much this would cost. He also said that discussions were on-going with regard to placing safety messages on life buoys along the river.

Councillor Douglas Nicol suggested that some form of scramble netting might be a better idea to be put in place as finding a single ladder could prove to be quite difficult.

The Chair asked where the allocated funds for the café at Haycombe Cemetery would now be spent.

Councillor Dixon replied that any remaining funds would go back into the central budget.

Councillor Lisa Brett asked if he'd received any negative feedback relating to the solar compactors from the public with regard to touching their handles.

Councillor Dixon replied that he did not feel that the public saw this as a problem. He added that litter on the street had reduced greatly since their installation and

informed the Panel that every time a compactor was emptied the handle was cleaned thoroughly.

Councillor Liz Richardson asked if the Council had considered placing a message on the compactors to highlight the amount of recycling that they enable.

Councillor Dixon replied that messages and branding would be placed on them in the future following good discussions with the supplier.

Councillor Liz Richardson asked if they all needed to be that large.

Councillor Dixon replied that the current model needed to be that size to house the solar panel required to compact the refuse inside. He added that a slim-line version has been discussed with the supplier.

Councillor Douglas Nicol commented that he had noticed that a rather large amount of cigarette ends were being deposited in a particular area of the Bath Bus Station which he attributed to the bus drivers.

Councillor Dixon replied that he would pursue that matter with the appropriate officers.

Councillor Caroline Roberts, Cabinet Member for Transport addressed the Panel.

She reported that the consultants had completed their part of the work relating to the Bath Transport Strategy and that this would now be shared with the Transport Commission and presented to the Local Development Framework (LDF) Steering Group at a meeting on March 27th and the Bath City Conference on April 30th.

She added that she hoped the strategy would be in place in time to support the work of the Enterprise Area and the Placemaking Plan.

She commented on how well the public event relating to Saltford Station had been attended. She acknowledged that the proposal does have its challenges, citing cost and access as just two examples.

She stated that a new footway was to be put in place in Lower Borough Walls in association with the Business Improvement District (BID).

She said that the Council was working in partnership with other local authorities on the issue of flooding. She explained that the Bath – Bristol cycle path had now been drained and that the A431 Kelston Road would be closed for the next six months due to its current instability.

She added that the B3110 Midford Road was partially reopened during Saturday lunchtime (1.3.14) with one lane in operation and that a specialist was already designing the solution to stabilise the bank using soil nailing and mesh.

Councillor Liz Richardson asked if there was a programme in place with regard to bridge inspection following the recent bad weather.

Councillor Roberts replied that she would consult the Divisional Director for Environmental Services on the matter.

Councillor Lisa Brett asked what the budget consequences were for the Council regarding the recent flood and road problems.

Councillor Roberts replied that she believed the Council was doing the best it could and putting resources where they were needed most. She added that they would look to gather funds from the proposed £100m plan to combat flooding.

Councillor Lisa Brett asked for a report on this matter to be brought back to a future meeting of the Panel.

The Chair asked for the draft of the Bath Transport Strategy to be presented to Panel at its meeting on May 6th.

Councillor Roberts replied that a copy of the draft strategy would be sent to all political groups prior to this time and that she would attend all group meetings if requested to.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Members for their updates and attendance.

66 POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS - URBAN GULLS

The Chair introduced this item to the Panel and asked Councillor Dixon to go through the responses he had made to the recommendations.

REC 1.3 – Introduce night-time refuse collections to limit the length of time food waste is left on the streets.

Councillor Dixon said that the amount of disruption this would cause to residents, coupled with the steps required through gaining planning permission and a new license did not make sense to him. He added that there would be nowhere to deposit the waste even if it was collected.

Councillor Douglas Nicol commented that he felt the Council should be allowed to change the rules on when it collects rubbish.

The Chair suggested that this response be amended to defer and to ask for a report to be produced that states what steps would need to be taken to allow night time refuse collections.

REC 1.4 – Pilot red plastic refuse sacks to ascertain whether this discourages gulls from attempting to get waste and, if successful, roll out to all appropriate city residents.

Councillor Dixon commented that good progress was already being made with the gull proof sacks that had been issued to some residents. He also reminded the Panel of the intention to expand the food waste collections.

Councillor Lisa Brett acknowledged the current work but felt the introduction of red sacks should be pursued.

Councillor Dixon said that he would have a discussion with officers on the matter.

Councillor Liz Richardson suggested that red sacks could be issued for the collection of commercial waste.

Councillor Dixon replied that he would consider that suggestion.

REC 5.1 – Promote and lead a joined up approach to tackling the gull population through development of a cohesive gull strategy

Councillor Dixon commented that officers were already working with Property Services with regard to egg replacement and use of the bird free gel on Council buildings. He added that through some of the recent work gulls were being displaced to some extent with numbers increasing in the Windsor Bridge / Saltford area. He said that officers would take part in a door knocking exercise to emphasise the use of the food waste collections so that no food is placed in a regular black bag.

The Chair suggested that this recommendation be re-written in such a way that it shows that this is a piece of work to be carried out by the Council and not Natural England.

The Chair added that she thought the Council in some areas could supply the replacement eggs and ask communities to work together to put them in place.

Councillor Dixon replied that a Gull Champion may be in place soon.

The Policy Development & Scrutiny Lead Officer commented that the use of red sacks for normal refuse was also suggested in the recommendations.

Councillor Dixon said he would be happy to investigate that as a piece of work.

Councillor Lisa Brett asked for the rationale for recommendation 2.2 to be amended in two places to include the word 'will' as follows.

*Planning **will** include some advice and guidance on our web site to encourage developers to consider the campaign for gull-proofing of new buildings when developing their schemes. Officers **will** also refer to this advice when providing pre application advice.*

The Chair asked for Councillors Stevens and Ball to be made aware of this proposal and their response. She also summed up the item by saying that officers will be asked to produce a report for the Panel with regard to recommendation 1.3, that recommendation 1.4 would be amended to defer and that recommendation 5.1 would be re-written to make it clear who was responsible for that particular piece of work.

She thanked Councillor Dixon and the officers concerned for their work on the matter.

67 POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS - ALCOHOL HARM REDUCTION STRATEGY

The Policy Development & Scrutiny Project Officer introduced this item to the Panel. She explained that the Single Inquiry Day was the work of four Panels coming together in October 2013 to look at the matter.

She added that the draft report and recommendations came to the Wellbeing Panel before being put to Cabinet Members for comment. This Panel now had the opportunity to comment on those recommendations that fall within its remit.

REC 6.c. – Early Morning Restriction Orders in areas based on resident demand.

Councillor Lisa Brett called for this recommendation to not be rejected as she didn't feel that under the Social Responsibility Bill the Council would have a legal right to do so. She added that she did not believe one was necessary currently, but was worried about ruling it out completely.

The Chair asked that Councillor Dixon be informed of the view expressed by Councillor Brett.

68 NETWORK RAIL ELECTRIFICATION BRIEFING

The Chair introduced this item and explained that if Panel members had any questions they would be fed back to officers who would seek to get a response from Network Rail.

Mr David Redgewell, South West Transport Network addressed the Panel. A copy of his statement can be found on the Panel's Minute Book or as an appendix to these minutes online.

He informed the Panel that the project was on course and on budget and that the line between Swindon and London would be tested next year. He said that works were underway on bridges in Marksbury and areas within Bath, Saltford, Keynsham and Bathampton would be affected.

He called for the Council to act swiftly and positively while money was on the table for the project.

He also wished to highlight the importance of working under the Equalities Act and called for CCTV to be installed in all stations.

He said that the Council and the Police needed to be made aware of the potential increase of metal theft while the project was in progress due to the equipment and materials that would be involved.

He strongly suggested that the Council has a designated Rail Officer.

Councillor Douglas Nicol asked if the Central Devon line was to re-open.

Mr Redgewell replied that it has been considered and that the Council should be involved in any future discussions.

Councillor Lisa Brett commented that another objective for the Council should be that the project compliments its future strategies.

The Chair thanked Mr Redgewell for his statement.

69 PANEL WORKPLAN

The Chair introduced this item to the Panel. She proposed that the Bath Transport Strategy be added to the agenda for the meeting on 6th May.

The Panel agreed with this proposal.

The meeting ended at 11.05 am

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services

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Questions to the Planning, Transport & Environment Scrutiny Panel Tuesday 4th March 2014

The Chew Valley Flood Forum would appreciate responses to the following points:

1. Has the second meeting with UK Flood Barriers taken place? February was mentioned by the Service Manager (January Panel meeting minutes). The Flood Forum think it is imperative UK Flood Barriers rectify equipment/installation defects free of charge under the original contract - in no way does it feel that any of the £200,000 should be used for this purpose. UK Flood Barriers should revisit properties and rectify as appropriate, although, no doubt, in some cases they will argue the problems are householder inflicted.

Answer:

UK flood barriers have indicated that they are happy to hold a second meeting. Due to a number of emergency incidents it has not yet been possible to hold a follow up meeting.

It will be necessary for both UKFB and the CVFF to provide their complete record of remedial issues for consideration at the meeting.

2. Has the Council decided how the, very welcome, £200,000 will be disbursed? No doubt, JBA's recent house by house survey will be a critical input, but are there any initial thoughts re supplier/installer, division of funds by household, householder wishes etc?

Answer:

No decisions have been taken in respect of the way that the £200k should be spent. The survey will help provide the information required to ascertain what options are available for consideration by the Cabinet Member in due course.

3. Can the Council advise on the Strategic Flood Risk Management Group, which was to be set up post 2012 floods, in terms of composition and terms of reference? Has it met and is it open to the public? Also, some months ago, the Flood Forum agreed to join a B&NES Flood Working Group - is there any information on the setting up of this body?

Answer:

We have had meetings with EA to discuss the set up of the groups and have approached members to canvas support. The initiative will be from the top down and we anticipate the Flood working Groups will be set up under the governance of the Strategic Flood Risk Management Group and follow on from the formation of the strategic group. We still intend the Working groups to be based on the main river catchments Avon, Chew and Somer.

4. As a Lead Flood Authority, has B&NES any information on the criteria and application procedure for access to the Government's recently announced £130 million funding for flood resilience? The Flood

Forum suspects modelling output will be needed to identify projects that can then be subjected to cost/benefit analysis, but some idea of what will be needed and when would be very useful.

Answer:

£130 million allocation

The government has provided an additional £130 million over 2014/15 and 2015/16 for the purpose of restoring critical flood defences such as sea walls and river walls, defences that were damaged in the Winter 13/14 storms. As yet no information on how to apply for this funding or the criteria that will be used to assess applications has been disclosed.

5. The Panel's January meeting minutes regarding the impact of farming practices stated that the Service Manager had concluded they had a negligible impact on flooding at the moment, but that a meeting with NFU officers was planned in February. Has this occurred and what was the outcome? In any event, post modelling, and with the help of input from hydrologists etc, the Flood Forum feel this subject must be actively revisited. For the Flood Forum, this subject has a medium/long term dimension and will likely include not just ploughing and ditch issues, but also hedge maintenance/reinstatement, tree planting and hence will probably be part of a wider national programme of land management to combat weather pattern changes.

Answer:

Due to the considerable number of weather related incidents it has not been possible to hold the meeting. The Council is committed to holding this meeting and would want the CVFF to participate in the discussions and bring local knowledge to the debate.

Rachel Wilson
Mike Curtis
Co-chairs, Chew Valley Flood Forum.