

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL

PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Tuesday, 13th January, 2015

Present:- Councillors Marie Longstaff (Chair), Lisa Brett (Vice-Chair), David Martin, Douglas Nicol, Liz Richardson and Anthony Clarke (In place of Les Kew)

Also in attendance: Simon De Beer (Policy & Environment Manager), Richard Daone (Planning Policy Team Leader), Chris Major (Group Manager, Transport & Parking) and Andy Strong (Public Transport Team Leader)

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

Councillor Les Kew had sent his apologies to the Panel and Councillor Anthony Clarke was present as his substitute for the duration of the meeting.

61 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

62 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

The Chair announced that she had received a letter of thanks from the residents of Stowey following the introduction of the 7.5 tonne HGV weight restriction TRO. The residents wished to thank the Panel for the part they played in the process.

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

Councillor Brian Webber had submitted two questions to the Panel regarding residual waste collection and recycling. A copy of the questions and the responses can be found on the Panel's Minute Book and online as an appendix to these minutes.

He said that he was grateful for the answers and added that he recognised the practical difficulties of collections from flats and that he appreciated that officers would need to investigate what further work could be done. He said that he wished to encourage all residents to separate their recycling as much as possible.

Councillor Liz Richardson suggested that collection points could be set up locally for recycling.

Councillor Douglas Nicol agreed with this suggestion.

Councillor Lisa Brett informed the Panel that such a collection point was in place at Snow Hill.

The Chair said that the Panel would consider this as a future item for their workplan.

64 MINUTES - 11TH NOVEMBER 2014

Councillor Anthony Clarke said that he would like his comment relating to cycling provision on page 56 of the minutes to be quantified by stating that this would not provide a solution to pollution.

With that amendment 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 Caroline Roberts, Cabinet Member for Transport addressed the Panel. She informed them of the following points.

- The Kelston Road reopened ahead of schedule and within budget.
- Work is again underway on Widcombe Parade.
- Next Bike has been nominated for a Shared Travel Award
- Somerset County Council have been asked to reconsider their proposals over the 776 and 424 bus services.
- Work to commence shortly on cycle routes for Queens Square and Bath Spa University
- Government made a positive statement and have asked to see the business case to support the proposal of an East of Bath Park & Rail service.

Councillor Anthony Clarke asked when the works associated with London Road and Newbridge Park & Ride would be completed.

Councillor Caroline Roberts replied that the work at Newbridge Park & Ride would be complete by the end of February 2015. She added that she was unsure of the dates of the London Road project.

Councillor Lisa Brett commented that she believed that the work on the London Road would be complete by the end of March.

66 PLACEMAKING PLAN

The Group Manager for Policy & Environment introduced this item to the Panel. He explained that the purpose of the Placemaking Plan is to complement the strategic framework in the Core Strategy by setting out detailed development principles for identified development sites and other policies for managing development across Bath and North East Somerset.

He stated that the Placemaking Plan is at the options stage and therefore provides the opportunity for the Council to test different options with local communities, stakeholders and the development industry without a formal commitment to a policy. He said that the Options document therefore sets out policy approaches for consultation although in some cases a preferred option is expressed. This will enable the demonstration at examination that the alternatives options have been considered in the process of identifying the “most appropriate strategy”.

He said that the Council has been progressing the Enterprise Area Masterplan which includes a spatial vision and sets out development aspirations for various sites along the river corridor. He added that the Placemaking Plan Options consultation enables the opportunity to formally test this evidence through the statutory plan-making process, alongside reasonable alternatives.

He informed the Panel that preparation of the options document entailed the involvement of other Services, partnership working with Town and Parish councils, input from key stakeholders and advice from the LDF Steering Group. He said that sites could still be suggested to form part of the Plan.

He notified the Panel that this current consultation would conclude on 30th January 2015 and that officers would welcome their comments either individually or as a group.

The Chair suggested that the Panel sets up a small working group to collate their views.

Councillor Liz Richardson asked if new sites were now proposed how they would be consulted upon.

The Group Manager for Policy & Environment replied that formal consultation of the Plan still needs to take place and so any new sites would be picked up at this stage. He added that he would be surprised if any did, but that the Council needed to be prepared.

Councillor Douglas Nicol commented that he felt that housing density should be as high as possible so as to lessen the impact on the Green Belt. He added that any

new developments within the City of Bath should not come with a car parking facility and that residents parking should be minimised.

The Group Manager for Policy & Environment replied that site requirements are being defined and that he would welcome any views on this process. Councillor Lisa Brett asked if the division of housing and retail in certain areas was flexible. She also asked if Georgian windows could be replaced by more environmentally friendly ones and if shop frontages on the London Road could be addressed following a change of use.

He replied that amongst the various plans there was some flexibility in the mix of housing and retail. He added that the matter of windows came under a separate Retrofitting SPD that the Council adopted around two years ago and was now due to be reviewed.

The Planning Policy Team Leader added that the current B&NES Local Plan policy generally protects ground floor retail uses and that the Placemaking Plan offers the opportunity to review the policy approach in relation to London Road, having regard to recent changes in permitted development rights made by the government.

The Chair suggested that the Retrofitting SPD be placed on the Panel's workplan.

Councillor Douglas Nicol commented that he believed that high street retail was shrinking and asked if this had been taken into account as part of this process.

The Planning Policy Team Leader replied that consultants had looked at these figures and that they would be continued to be monitored. He added that the assessment suggests a growth of comparison retail floorspace of around 20,000sqm by 2029 in Bath and that this assessment took account of increased use of internet shopping. Whilst the latest assessment shows a growth in retail floorspace this is at a reduced rate compared to the previous assessment which showed growth of around 25,000sqm to 2026.

The Chair asked if a briefing note on retail growth and housing density could be supplied to the working group for their meeting.

Councillor Anthony Clarke said that he was against a draconian clamp down on City parking and that a degree of fairness must be used. He added that many visitors come to Bath because of the diverse retail opportunities.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to agree to set up a cross party working group that would meet before 30th January to give their views on the Placemaking Plan.

67 WEST OF ENGLAND JOINT PLANNING STRATEGY

The Group Manager for Policy & Environment introduced this item to the Panel. He informed them that the Duty to Co-operate in the Localism Act 2012 places a legal duty on local planning authorities and public bodies to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to maximise the effectiveness of Local Plan preparation in the context of strategic cross boundary matters.

He added that Bristol were undertaking a Strategic Housing Assessment.

He explained that a Memorandum of Understanding had been drawn up that showed the broad remit of work required and quoted a paragraph from it.

The West of England joint planning strategy will identify: the overall quantum of housing and jobs within the West of England and their distribution across the sub-region; the overall spatial strategy; strategic priorities; and strategic infrastructure necessary to deliver the spatial strategy for the West of England. Joint studies will be procured to support this process such as spatial options.

Councillor Lisa Brett asked if the Council were prepared to defend its case should pressure relating to housing come from Bristol.

The Group Manager for Policy & Environment replied that a working group had been set up to monitor this area.

The Chair asked if a more detailed timetable for the strategy was available.

The Group Manager for Policy & Environment replied that there was one and that he would send it to the Democratic Services Officer for circulation.

Councillor David Martin asked how this work would affect a review of the Core Strategy.

The Group Manager for Policy & Environment replied that a partial review will take place as agreed with the Inspector.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to note the proposals for the preparation of the West of England Joint Strategic Planning Strategy.

68 BUS CONTRACTS (EQUALITIES)

David Redgewell, South West Transport Network addressed the Panel. He stated that there was a current blockade on signage at the Bath Bus Station and that First would prefer a permanent solution to be found. He added that he felt that the reason for non-occupancy of the café was the proposed high rental charge.

He called for the removal of the 'Gull Bins' from the Bath Bus Station as he said they were a security risk as they were not transparent.

He thanked officers for their report which responded to a number of his queries raised in November and that he was keen for progressed to be made on CCTV at railway stations.

He said that he had recently noticed that a bus supplying a service from Wiltshire into Bath did not have appropriate accessibility. He also wished to voice his concerns over the proposed cuts to bus services in Somerset that would affect residents in

Radstock & Midsomer Norton. He added that access to Shepton Mallet Hospital by bus would prove to be difficult.

He stated that feeder routes for the Metro Bus should take Keynsham, Whitchurch & South Bristol into account and that modern vehicles must be used on any of these routes.

The Public Transport Manager commented that he would take on board his comments about the bus station and wished to assure the Panel and Mr Redgewell that a new vehicle was now in place for the Freshford service.

He added that the proposed cuts to bus services by Somerset Council have been addressed by officers and the Cabinet Member for Transport and that they were awaiting their final decision.

On the matter of feeder routes he said that he was hopeful soon of a service to be introduced from Somerdale.

Councillor Lisa Brett commented that she felt the matter of CCTV at railway stations should be addressed directly to Councillor Roberts.

The Chair asked Councillor Roberts to pursue this matter and update the Panel at the next meeting.

Councillor David Martin asked if any further information was available on the bids to the Office for Low Emission Vehicles.

The Public Transport Manager replied this was still at an early stage and that the best results would be obtained through bidding as a sub-region.

Councillor Lisa Brett asked how much funding was available.

The Public Transport Manager replied that there was £30m available across the country.

69 PANEL WORKPLAN

The Chair introduced this item and asked for volunteers to take part in the Placemaking Plan Working Group.

Councillor Liz Richardson, Councillor Douglas Nicol and Councillor Lisa Brett all agreed to join the Chair as members of the Working Group and that they would meet before the end of January.

She reminded them that during the course of the meeting they had also agreed to add the following items to the workplan.

- Local Recycling Collection Points
- Review of the Retrofitting SPD

Councillor Lisa Brett commented that she was aware that a survey was due to be carried out on Upstream Flooding Risks and questioned if in light of that whether a report would be ready in time for the March meeting of the Panel.

The meeting ended at 11.10 am

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services

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Questions from Councillor Brian Webber for the Planning, Transport & Environment Panel – January 2015

1. Approximately how many residential properties have been provided with the re-usable bags for presenting residual waste for collection? Are they limited to houses sub-divided into flats and HMOs, or is it planned to extend their availability more generally in streets where gulls and other scavenging animals are a problem? Have any penalty notices been issued for not using the re-usable bags?

To date, 6,800 properties have been given a free reusable rubbish sack to help improve the street scene on collection day. This has been done via an initial trial area and five subsequent roll-out phases of the bags. The focus has always been on roads where split refuse and animal scavenging is a known problem, regardless of property type. The bags have been distributed to streets within the City Centre, Kingsmead, Bathwick, Lyncombe, Walcot, Lansdown, Westmoreland and Oldfield Park wards. No penalty notices have been issued to date and significant improvements have been seen in the majority of streets. It is not planned to extend their availability more generally at the moment as they do have operational implications and are not universally popular. The Council will be consulting on changes to waste service specifications throughout 2015. This consultation will look at issues such as the containment of waste and the provision of bins, sacks and containers throughout the district.

2. Many homeowners (particularly those in small flats) are unwilling or unable to find space to keep green boxes for recyclables, and instead put them out in plastic bags. These bags often contain a mixture of different types of item. I personally admire the crews of the 'green' lorries who do a hard job in unpleasant weather conditions, and who do their best to rip open these plastic bags and sort the contents into the various hoppers. Almost inevitably some bags are overlooked or ignored because they include non-recyclable material; and they are ignored by the residual waste lorry because they are not in black bags. The detritus is therefore left (unless picked up by a considerate resident) to disfigure the neighbourhood and attract vermin. There seems to be no easy answer to this, except for more litter bins and litter patrols. Is there any hope of ameliorating the problem?

We are aware that this is an on-going problem with no easy solution. It's difficult to deter residents who want to recycle but have limited space. We try and encourage residents who want to use carrier bags to leave them untied if they contain recycling so that it is more obvious to the collection crews. Our campaigns team are available to visit areas where this is a known problem and to discuss storage and presentation of waste with residents, so please feel free to highlight any specific areas of concern. We will address this issue in the future design of the service which will look in detail at how we collect recyclables, and the impact the method of collection has on the street scene and on the quantities and quality of the recycle collected.

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