

## **BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET**

### **PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

Tuesday, 17th January, 2012

**Present:-** Councillors Caroline Roberts (Vice-Chair), Malcolm Hanney, Geoff Ward, Neil Butters, David Martin and Douglas Nicol

**Also in attendance:** Matthew Smith (Divisional Director for Environmental Services), David Trigwell (Divisional Director for Planning and Transport), Adrian Clarke (Transportation Planning Manager), John Crowther (Service Manager - Neighbourhood Services), Sue Green (Service Manager - Public Protection), Chris Major (Head of Parking Services), Jane Wildblood (Corporate Sustainability Manager) and Mark Durnford (Democratic Services Officer)

#### **49 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### **50 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

The Chairman drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

#### **51 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Chairman, Councillor Marie Longstaff had sent her apologies to the Panel. In her absence the Vice-Chair, Councillor Caroline Roberts acted as Chairman for the duration of the meeting.

#### **52 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

There were none.

#### **53 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN**

There was none.

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

Jenny Raggett, made a statement to the Panel on behalf of David Redgewell, South West Transport Network who was unable to attend the meeting. A copy of the statement can be found on the Panel's Minute Book, a summary is set out below.

She addressed the Panel on the matter of the renewal of the Great Western Rail Franchise and called for no cuts to be made in the current services provided and that the level of rolling stock must be listed and maintained. She urged the Panel to contact TravelWatch South West should they wish to make a response to the consultation.

On the subject of proposed cuts to bus services in Somerset she said that this had the potential to isolate whole communities. She also suggested that the Council should consider bidding for a £5m bus grant to enable a larger fleet of low floor vehicles.

The Chairman on behalf of the Panel thanked her for her statement.

## **55 MINUTES: TUESDAY 8TH NOVEMBER 2011 & TUESDAY 6TH DECEMBER 2011**

Councillor Geoff Ward asked the Democratic Services Officer to review the notes he had taken on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2011 in relation to the debate on the Medium Term Service & Resource Plan. Councillor Ward wished to clarify the content of his comments in respect of the Mobile Library Service.

Following the meeting the Democratic Services Officer confirmed the comments he had recorded in his notes with Councillor Ward. Councillor Ward then stated that he was happy that this reflected his view on the matter

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

## **56 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE**

Councillor Roger Symonds, Cabinet Member for Transport issued the Panel a series of bullet points to show some of his latest portfolio work and was present to answer any questions from the Panel. The bullet points will be available to view on the Panel's Minute Book.

Councillor Neil Butters asked what procedure should the Council follow to respond to the consultation on the Great Western Rail franchise.

Councillor Symonds responded by saying that he felt that any response should be made through the West of England Partnership.

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

## **57 ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES - SERVICE ACTION PLAN**

The Divisional Director for Environmental Services introduced this item to the Panel. He informed them that the Plan was still a work in progress and that consultation on any of the proposals has and will continue to take place with staff and service users.

He highlighted from within the report the priorities, accomplishments and objectives of the Service. He stated that budget income is at a good level currently but that a

drop in the use of Parking Services has been witnessed, which on one hand can be seen as a positive because of less traffic but also has the effect of generating less income for the Council. He added that an Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) had been carried out in connection with the composition of the Service Action Plan.

Councillor Malcolm Hanney commented that on future plans he would like to see a section that shows what objectives have not been possible to achieve within the year. He added that he would like the comments from the Medium Term Plan debate in December on gulley cleaning, heritage and floral displays to reiterated as part of this process.

Councillor Neil Butters asked if the column detailing the impact on staff could be shown as a percentage.

The Divisional Director for Environmental Services replied that this would be possible.

Councillor Caroline Roberts commented that she wished to highlight the good record of the Waste Services team. She also asked if any further work to target local areas based on current recycling performance had been considered as part of a 'street pride initiative'.

The Divisional Director for Environmental Services replied by saying that currently there was no such 'initiative' at present but that low performing / problem areas were being targeted.

Councillor David Martin asked how had the reduction in black bag collections and the increase in recycling collections affected the service.

The Divisional Director for Environmental Services replied recycling collection costs have increased since food waste has been collected but that the resale values of materials are good and this, together with the reduction in costs of landfill, reduces the overall costs to the Council.

Councillor Caroline Roberts commented that she was still witnessing and hearing reports that street cleaning was taking place prior to refuse and recycling collections and called for these routes to be amended.

The Service Manager for Neighbourhood Services replied that attempts are being made to plan rotas and routes more strategically and to minimise spillages during collections.

Councillor Geoff Ward asked if there were any ideas as to how to generate further income given that the income from Parking may fall by £300,000.

The Divisional Director for Environmental Services replied that the figure in relation to Parking could be as much as £800,000 as fewer trips via car were being made to the City and the competition that the car park at Southgate now provides. He added that he believed there to be no easy options for increasing income, although there may be some further licensing and enforcement initiatives that could be pursued.

Councillor Geoff Ward commented that the Council must show that it is open for business especially in the Olympic / Diamond Jubilee year.

The Service Manager for Neighbourhood Services replied that they were seeking opportunities in revenue this year and attempting to work more efficiently.

Councillor Roger Symonds, Cabinet Member for Transport commented that one possible revenue stream could be gained from enforcing the weight limit restriction on HGVs. This however requires the power to be devolved from Government.

Councillor Malcolm Hanney asked if a reduction in parking charges had been considered in order to improve revenue by attracting more visitors.

The Divisional Director for Environmental Services replied that a reduction in charges had not been ruled out but was unclear as to what degree might be appropriate at this stage. He added that footfall in the city overall had increased.

Councillor David Martin asked if any plans for the Low Emission Zone had been drawn up yet.

The Service Manager for Public Protection replied that funding had been secured from DEFRA and that a brief for the Zone is being devised. She added that the Council had one year in which to submit a plan.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to ask for the comments below, from the December Medium Term Plan discussion to be passed to the relevant Cabinet Member.

*Mobile Libraries – Whilst establishing during the discussion that the Mobile Library Service in its current form would be discontinued it became apparent that options were being considered as to how to provide a service to rural areas in the future. The Panel felt it would be very worthwhile to express this somehow within the plan.*

*Highways (Footway Maintenance / Drainage & Gully Cleansing) – The Panel expressed their concern over this proposal as they were worried about the potential impact and cost implications this may have in future years.*

*Heritage Services / Museums / Tourism – The majority of the Panel felt that these services should have minimal reductions made to their budget as they are at the heart of what brings visitors to the area. Some members also called for more to be done within the Olympic year to attract visitors.*

## **58 PLANNING AND TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENT - SERVICE ACTION PLAN**

The Divisional Director for Planning and Transport introduced this item to the Panel. He informed them of some changes to the service in the coming year.

- Develop new registration system for organisations seeking approval of Sustainable Drainage schemes under the Flood & Water Management Act 2010

- Localism Act – Need to respond to Neighbourhood Planning requests, duty to cooperate with other Local Authorities.
- Establish a team to implement planning obligation delivery and CIL.

He added that in recent years resources in the Planning department had been reduced due to a decline in planning applications. The level of applications had now risen and it was hoped that the current staff levels could be maintained.

Councillor David Martin asked if the service had enough resources to cope with the amount of incoming new activities, such as Localism, CIL, Article 4 Direction and Flood & Water Management Act.

The Divisional Director for Planning and Transport replied that yes, he believed it did. He added that the work associated with brining forward an Article 4 Direction was financed and the activities associated with the Flood and Water Management Act were ahead of schedule and that the growth item associated with CIL could be seen as pump priming the process.

Councillor Neil Butters commented that some Parish Councils were concerned with the amount of enforcement work undertaken by the service.

The Divisional Director for Planning and Transport replied that the number of outstanding planning enforcement inquiries was reducing.

Councillor Geoff Ward asked if an area based approach would work better regarding enforcement.

The Divisional Director for Planning and Transport replied that currently officers were deployed on a case specific basis with the relative experience in mind. He added that it might be possible to consider having area based officers in some form, but there were no actual hot spot areas within the District.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to approve the Planning and Transport Development Service Action Plan as printed.

## 59 INTRODUCING 20MPH SPEED LIMITS

The Transportation Planning Manager introduced this item to the Panel. He informed them that since 1999, the Road Traffic Regulation Act had given traffic authorities the powers to introduce both 20 mph zones and 20mph speed limits without obtaining the consent of the Secretary of State.

He added that the value of adequate consultation being undertaken cannot be over-emphasised. Without such consultation, schemes are likely to be subject to considerable opposition, both during and after implementation. The police need to be consulted about a scheme. If sufficient measures to reduce and control speeds are not installed, then the limits will not be self-enforcing and the police could be faced with calls upon their time to enforce the 20 mph speed limit. Residents within the limit would need to be consulted together with consultation with the fire and ambulance services and any bus operators will be necessary.

The Panel were also advised as to the proposed next steps of the scheme which included the implementation of the first 20mph speed limit pilot in Southdown and developing a 3 year delivery programme for Cabinet approval in March 2012.

Councillor Ian Gilchrist addressed the Panel to give his support to the scheme. He spoke of how Widcombe residents had already presented two petitions to Council in respect of lowering road speeds in their area. He suggested that officers should consider whether the scheme could be applied to any rural routes.

Councillor Neil Butters commented that a number of villages including Freshford and Hinton Charterhouse would be interested in taking part in the trial. He added that an area of Wellow had introduced a 20 mph limit last year, the signage however was not adequate enough and therefore had resulted in no charges being levied.

Councillor Malcolm Hanney asked for the cost and nature of the proposed scheme in Southdown.

The Transportation Planning Manager replied that a figure of £25,000 had been allocated. He added that a rural pilot was planned within Peasedown St John.

The Divisional Director for Planning and Transport added that the scheme should be seen as a district wide initiative as Radstock had already benefited from such a scheme. He also spoke of the need to learn from the work that had taken place in Portsmouth.

Councillor Geoff Ward questioned whether officers should prioritise further pilot schemes to areas that have a higher number of incidents.

The Transportation Planning Manager replied that the Council does always work with the Police following any incident that occurs.

Councillor Caroline Roberts commented that she had been part of the group that visited Portsmouth and that they had some good messages there that the Council could adopt. She recalled also that the community that safer after the introduction of the scheme. She added that a good relationship with the Police must be established on the matter and that public engagement would also be key.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to thank the officer for his attendance and said that they would welcome being updated on the scheme as it progresses.

## 60 CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY

The Corporate Sustainability Manager gave a presentation to the Panel regarding this item. A full copy of the presentation can be found on the Panel's Minute Book, a summary is set out below.

### **Timeline:**

- 2006-9 – Our Big Energy Challenge
- 2007 – Climate Change prioritised
- 2009-14 – Carbon Management Programme
- 2009 – Sustainable Community Strategy – 45% CO2 ambition
- 2010 - Environmental Sustainability Partnership established

### **Initial Strategy:**

- Internal focus from 2006 to 2010 – getting our own house in order in order to lead in community
- Carbon Management Programme lead to better analysis and understanding of carbon emissions
- Expanded to community wide carbon and leadership role from 2010

### **Highlights:**

- Various in-house carbon reduction projects: lighting upgrades; voltage optimisation
- Eco-schools programme (most schools engaged – 3 Green Flags)
- Local Energy Champions scheme (8 new community energy projects 2011)
- Bath & West Community Energy cooperation agreement
- BWCE – 7 solar roofs at maximum Feed-in Tariff - £1million investment by SSE
- BWCE Community Fund, community share-holding (£700K Dec 2011)
- New public advice web pages

### **Strategic Approach:**

- Partnership Working:  
Bringing together the right people to make things happen
- Community Enablement:  
Enabling residents and community groups achieve their sustainability aims
- Taking Action:  
Council & partners taking bold action to make things happen

### **Key Workstreams (2012-2015):**

- Domestic Sector (inc fuel poverty & Green Deal)
- Clean Energy (inc Core Strategy targets)
- Transport Sector
- Low Carbon Economy

### **Domestic Sector development:**

- Existing action plan (raft of projects under HECA in housing, public health departments, PCT, Somer)
- **Key Development:** How to ensure fair and effective delivery of the **Green Deal**; core team formed with key partners; research into community based delivery to meet our fuel poverty; local economy & carbon ambitions

### **Green Deal in brief...:**

- Addresses upfront cost of energy measures
- Get energy efficiency measures installed at no upfront cost
- A charge on electricity bill pays back the cost over up to 25 years
- This charge should be no more than the measure will save you on each bill- the "Golden Rule"
- The charge stays with the house

### **Total Place Green Deal research:**

How can the Green Deal be delivered through a community-based partnership in order to:

- Maximise carbon reductions
- Ensure maximum benefits for those in fuel poverty
- Create local business opportunities and local jobs
- Develop a role for community enterprise and other community interests

Project timeline: February to September 2012

Councillor Geoff Ward asked if the hot water springs within the City could be used more.

The Corporate Sustainability Manager explained that a study had been undertaken and that this showed that it is not easy or may not be cost-effective to use hot springs directly. She added that parts of the Pump Rooms are heated by the water from the springs and that in the future it may be used to heat the under floor of the Abbey.

Councillor Neil Butters commented that the reality of the difficulty in harnessing the heat from the hot springs should be made clear to the public. He also asked how the Council will make the public aware of the available services on energy efficiency in the home, especially some of the harder to treat homes in the district.

The Corporate Sustainability Manager replied that the new sustainability web pages direct the public to the groups who can help with these enquiries and all aspects of living sustainably.

Councillor Malcolm Hanney commented that the Green Deal (new government energy efficiency scheme) would be helpful and agreed that the Council acting as introducer to the public was very important. He also commented that the Climate Change strategy presented was reassuring and this it was good to see such a holistic approach.

The Corporate Sustainability Manager replied that in one of the Green Deal pilot schemes in the London Borough of Haringey saw an increase in participation from 2.6% to 11%, once the Council had endorsed the scheme.



The Chairman on behalf of the Panel thanked her for the presentation and felt that this was a subject they would like hear more about in the future.

## **61 PANEL WORKPLAN**

The Chairman introduced this item to the Panel.

Councillor Malcolm Hanney reiterated his suggestion from a previous meeting that the Panel should look to hold a Single Day Inquiry that would engage the public.

The Chairman replied that she had met with Councillor Longstaff to discuss the matter and would seek an update on how this was being progressed.

The meeting ended at 5.20 pm

Chair(person) .....

Date Confirmed and Signed .....

**Prepared by Democratic Services**