

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL

PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Tuesday, 13th March, 2012

Present:- Councillors Marie Longstaff (Chair), Caroline Roberts (Vice-Chair), Malcolm Hanney, Neil Butters, David Martin, Douglas Nicol and Tim Warren (In place of Geoff Ward)

Also in attendance: David Trigwell (Divisional Director for Planning and Transport), Carol Maclellan (Waste Services Manager), Stephen George (Senior Planning Policy Officer), Cleo Newcombe-Jones (Planning Officer, Planning and Transport Development) and Richard Smith (Senior Public Transport Officer)

Councillor Tim Ball – Cabinet Member for Homes & Planning

62 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

63 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chairman drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

64 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Councillor Geoff Ward had sent his apologies to the Panel, Councillor Tim Warren acted as his substitute for the duration of the meeting.

65 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

There were none.

66 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There was none.

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

There were none.

68 MINUTES - 17TH JANUARY 2012

Councillor Neil Butters asked for it to be recorded that since the last meeting of the Panel had been held the Council's budget had been agreed and that the Mobile Library Service had been retained in its current form for the financial year 2012 / 2013. This relates to the italic text toward the end of Minute 57. He also asked for an amendment to the third paragraph on page six of the minutes. He clarified that a 20mph speed restriction had been introduced for the whole of Wellow and that for legality purposes derestriction signs had to be placed on the back to allow for enforcement.

The Divisional Director for Planning & Transport replied by saying he would contact the Divisional Director for Environmental Services and ask him to respond in writing.

The Chairman asked for the response to be sent to all Panel members.

She also asked with reference to paragraph seven on page four of the minutes if the Panel should see the plan for the Low Emission Zone prior to its submission to DEFRA.

The Panel agreed with this proposal.

Subject to the amendments as stated above, the Panel confirmed the minutes of the previous meeting as a true record and they were duly signed by the Chairman.

69 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

Councillor Tim Ball, Cabinet Member for Homes & Planning addressed the Panel. He informed them that the final day of the Core Strategy Public Examination would take place on Thursday March 15th. The Council has asked that the inspector informs us as soon as possible on how to achieve any shortcomings they may have identified.

He wished to apologise to the Panel for there not being enough time to allow for their input into the West of England Planning Toolkit report which was due to be discussed at Cabinet on Wednesday 14th March. He was pleased to report though that all parties had agreed that it should be adopted.

Finally, he briefly talked about the Council's Banners Policy and the possibility of needing to amend it in 2012 as there may be a need for more than usual in association with Olympic events. He added that a public consultation would take place prior to a decision being made at the Cabinet meeting in April.

The Divisional Director for Planning and Transport gave an update on behalf of Councillor Roger Symonds, Cabinet Member for Transport as he was attending a Civitas conference on behalf of the Council.

He informed them that the Department for Transport had consulted on the franchise for the Greater Bristol Rail Network and that a request had been made that the proposal for Saltford Station be included in the network.

Civitas Conference: Held in part to celebrate successful projects and understand any issues going forward into new ones.

He stated that the steering group that were looking into matters associated with the Rossiter Road were close to finding a solution.

The Chairman asked if there was any update available on the proposed HGV weight restrictions.

The Divisional Director for Planning and Transport replied that Members and officers had met recently with colleagues in Wiltshire in an attempt to hopefully avoid objection to the proposal.

Councillor David Martin wished to endorse the work carried by the Civitas project.

Councillor Neil Butters indicated that he had heard that the Westbury bypass would be reconsidered.

The Divisional Director for Planning and Transport that the bypass would be beneficial to the Council if it were to happen.

70 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY UPDATE

The Divisional Director for Planning and Transport introduced this item to the Panel. He explained that the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is being introduced by Government to enable local authorities to charge a levy on new developments and would largely replace the existing Section 106 agreement structure. He said that he was hopeful to have a preliminary schedule of charges available to view in either April or May. He made the Panel aware that two rounds of consultation were required before any submission could take place. He stated that a submission was planned for December 2012 which would then be followed by a mini examination in public. A report would then be submitted in the Summer of 2013 in the hope that the Council can adopt a CIL in September 2013.

Councillor David Martin asked if the development of the MOD sites would be before a CIL is adopted.

The Divisional Director for Planning and Transport replied that that would depend on the programme of site disposal. He added that he felt the developers associated with the MOD sites would like to make swift progress.

Councillor Rob Appleyard asked if there would be any sectoring of developments.

The Divisional Director for Planning and Transport replied that that would be for Members to decide. He added that he felt it likely for there to be a variation across the district.

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

71 WASTE STRATEGY REVIEW & ACTION PLAN

The Waste Services Manager introduced this item to the Panel. She informed them that since they had written a draft action plan the Government had announced a £250m support fund for weekly collections and they were therefore analysing how best to apply for some of the funding. She added that today she wished to tell the Panel about their plans for the next three years (2102 – 2015).

She stated that the main criteria for involvement in the fund was retaining weekly collections of residual waste and proposing improvements towards the Environment and in relation to Sustainability. The Council must also show value for money, performance improvement, reduction in littering, a customer focus and a reduction in bin blight.

She advised that if successful, the Council must commit to a further five years of weekly collections and with the current alignment of contracts due to expire in 2017 this decision must therefore be taken carefully.

She explained that they plan to introduce a new service that would collect small electrical appliances alongside the Green Box collections. She believed that in time this service could be accommodated through existing resources.

She then showed the Panel a large protective bag that would be used to store black sacks alongside smaller carrier bags to prevent scavenging from gulls or other similar animals.

The Chairman asked if they were water proof.

The Waste Services Manager replied that they were shower proof. She then continued by showing the Panel a mini recycling centre bag and explained that more of these would be sought under the fund.

She stated that some items can escape from a Green Box to cause a litter problem as lids are not currently routinely given out, so as well as seeking more lids a trial will be given to some flexible / mesh covers.

She spoke of how the campaign and educational work would increase through targeted door knocking and work in Secondary schools on recycling.

She explained that the use of real nappies was also to be encouraged and identified that the current main barrier on this issue was their cost.

She concluded by explaining that an expression of interest had to be registered by Friday 16th March and that if the Council were minded to, a bid would need to be submitted in August 2012 and a decision on those bids would then be given in October 2012.

Councillor Douglas Nicol asked if wormeries had been considered as part of the on-going educational work.

The Waste Services Manager replied that they had been offered to schools a number of years ago, but had proved to not be very successful.

Councillor Neil Butters asked how many of the protective sacks would be purchased.

The Waste Services Manager replied that they would be applying for around 5,000 sacks, this could then be increased if they were received positively.

Councillor Malcolm Hanney asked how much money was the Council applying for from the fund.

The Waste Services Manager replied that it would be applying for £300,000 of funding.

Councillor Caroline Roberts asked why they were choosing protective sacks over wheelie bins.

The Waste Services Manager replied that the use of wheelie bins would slow collections down and increase costs. She added that wheelie bins are also not suitable for all properties.

Councillor David Martin commented that he can normally fill his own recycling box within a week and therefore wondered if any thought had been given to providing households with bigger boxes.

The Waste Services Manager replied that bigger boxes could not be supplied on Health & Safety grounds, but that households could ask to have additional boxes.

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

72 THE LOCALISM ACT: A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING PROTOCOL FOR BATH & NORTH EAST SOMERSET

The Divisional Director for Planning & Transport introduced this report alongside one of the Council's Planning Officers.

The Planning Officer stated that she had been working with many groups on this matter and was now hoping to bring something forward quite rapidly. She added that all political parties had indicated that they were involved in on-going work in relation to this subject matter.

Councillor Malcolm Hanney asked that as the document will supersede the current Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) for Planning, adopted in 2007 that reference is made to it during the consultation so that Councillors and members of the public can see the history involved.

The Divisional Director for Planning & Transport agreed that it would be helpful to reference such documents during the consultation.

The Chairman commented that she felt that the language of the document appeared to change quite quickly towards the end and that it became very text heavy. She also asked for the definition of a large scale development and what was meant by the term ‘light touch’ examination’.

The Planning Officer replied by saying that the current document was quite detailed and that it would be modified for the final version. A large scale development would be referred to when a site had 200 or more properties within it. The term ‘light touch’ examination’ has been used as it is the intention that they will not be as onerous as a full examination in public.

Councillor Neil Butters commented that there were six different parishes within Midford and wondered if a neighbourhood forum could be established in the area. He also asked if the department had enough resources to cope with the additional workload.

The Planning Officer replied by saying yes parishes could cluster together and that currently Freshford and Limply Stoke were acting as a pilot and had recently been awarded £20,000.

The Divisional Director for Planning & Transport added that initiatives need to be led by neighbourhoods and that the Council should be seen as facilitators. He said that the extent of the additional work was somewhat unknown at this stage, but he fully acknowledged the restrictions in place on the department.

Councillor Caroline Roberts asked if the members of a Neighbourhood Forum could be monitored to ensure that they are not acting in the interest of one particular industry. She also questioned the use of the word ‘break’ in 6.9 of the report.

The Planning Officer replied that indeed it was a typing error within 6.9 and it should be the word ‘brake’ instead. She added that there should be checks within the system for when appointing members of the Forum with regard to interests and bias. A local referendum at the end of the process is also required and a successful proposal must have 51% of the turnout to vote in their favour. The Localism Act criteria states that the Forum must act in the well-being of the area.

The Chairman asked how many people had to vote to make the referendum valid.

The Planning Officer replied that the full criteria would be released by the Government on April 1st.

Councillor Tim Warren commented that he had been approached by a number of concerned members of the public as the Localism Act was quite complex to understand. He suggested that some public events be held to provide them with further information.

The Planning Officer replied that a new website would be launched to give the public information and that two events would be held on April 19th and May 2nd.

The Divisional Director for Planning & Transport added that a good dialogue exists between the Council and the Parishes on this matter and that before approaching the public it would need to digest the forthcoming information from the Government.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to approve the draft Neighbourhood Planning Protocol subject to the language and the flow of the document becoming slightly more resident friendly.

73 MOD SITE CONCEPT STATEMENTS

The Divisional Director for Planning and Transport introduced this item to the Panel. He informed them that the Concept Statements are the first stage in the preparation of the Council's Placemaking Plan (Site Allocations DPD) and their preparation will be subject to the initial stages of a statutory Plan preparation, including public consultation. This would provide sufficient planning weight to provide a basis for on-going discussions with developers.

He explained that members need to understand the relevance of these proposals and that if these sites do not achieve their housing potential other sites will need to be pursued. He added that each site must be an appropriate development and perform its stated function.

The Senior Planning Policy Officer added that it was likely that officers would need to report back again to the Panel in May to show them the actual Concept Statements themselves. He informed the Panel that the sale of the sites was likely to start in the Summer of 2012, with completion anticipated in March 2013.

Councillor David Martin spoke of how the Warminster Road site was within his ward and that he had been pleased with his discussions so far with officers on the matter. He stated that the consultation process would be very important towards achieving the outcomes that the Council wishes. He then made some points that he felt should be included within the statements, they were as follows:

- Provision of school places
- Sustainability – District heating / CHP
- Development – Use sustainable designs (CO2 saving)
- Sustainable Transport

He asked to what extent the statements would have a weight on the planning process.

The Senior Planning Policy Officer replied that all of Councillor Martin's points were already part of the Concept Statements. Schools will either need to be provided on site or at a nearby location. He added that whilst the Concept Statements will not hold significant planning weight, they will inform the Placemaking Plan, which is intended to be adopted as part of the Council's statutory development plan. A stakeholder consultation will be carried out on the Concept Statements.

Councillor Neil Butters informed the Panel that he lived within a mile of the Foxhill site and that he welcomed the prospect of the development of the site. He asked

how much consideration had been given to the impact of current staff having to travel to Filton.

The Divisional Director for Planning and Transport replied that he was not actively engaged on that element of the process. He stated that the MoD had been considering site movement for some time. He suggested that Councillor Butters may wish to contact the MoD directly, but advised that they may not be in a position to share the information.

Councillor Douglas Nicol asked if the Green Housing element of the Core Strategy could be enforceable on the sites.

The Senior Planning Policy Officer replied yes, once adopted.

Councillor Malcolm Hanney asked if within the statements the figure of 20% as mentioned below could also be represented as an actual number of houses.

- the three sites generate circa 20% of Bath's housing requirement within the Draft Core Strategy in the period up to 2026.

He added that he would like to see any funds accrued through the New Homes Bonus to be used to enhance the community and not be placed into a central pot.

The Divisional Director for Planning and Transport stated that there were certain benefits that could be achieved from Government if authorities were willing to show their ability to grow. He added that the Core Strategy figures were challenging and that the New Homes Bonus was not ring fenced.

The Chairman asked what the chances were of the MoD changing their opinion on site development.

The Divisional Director for Planning and Transport replied that the Council's position is clear and that there should be no doubt within the public domain as to what you wish to achieve regarding these sites.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to note that;

- i) the Council's planning requirements for the MoD sites will be set out in Concept Statements for each site prior to their disposal in March 2013.
- ii) these Planning requirements must reflect the Council's corporate objectives
- iii) the timetable for preparation of the Concept Statements reflects the disposal programme and entails public consultation for a 6 week period during April and May and endorsement in July 2012.
- iv) the three sites generate circa 20% of Bath's housing requirement within the Draft Core Strategy in the period up to 2026.
- v) the Planning, Transport and Environment PDS Panel will have the opportunity to comment on the emerging Concept Statements at its meeting in May.

The Panel also gave their approval to the process as set out above.

74 TRAVEL SMART CARDS

The Senior Public Transport Officer gave a presentation to the Panel on this item, a full copy of which can be found on the Panel's Minute Book. A summary is set out below.

The Smart Platform:

Integrated Transport Smartcard Organisation (ITSO) Compatible English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS)
Age, Disability and Companion

9 million nationally
39,000 Passes in B&NES

Regional ITSO HOPS:

Host Office Processing System
Funded by DfT in 2009/10
Contracted by S. Gloucestershire
Free to use by WEP Authorities for 5 years
Facility for other LTAs and operators

The Smart Platform – On Bus:

First:
Fitted Almex ITSO systems on entire First Bristol, Somerset & Avon fleet.
Due live on 8th March in Bath

Wessex:
Converting proprietary Parkeon system to ITSO
Supported by WEP DfT grant
Due live before end of March in Bath

Small operators supported by WEP DfT grant
Lease systems (Ticketer) from Bristol CC
Live on 41 buses run by small operators
- Abus, Somerbus, CT Coaches in B&NES
- Further 28 buses in WEP area contracted
- Faresaver, Libra Travel by June

Concession Management:

B&NES Concessionary Travel Spend = £3.7m in 2011/12

Reducing Concessionary Travel Card Risks

Accurate trip data - avoiding human error
Lost or stolen cards
False claims for lost or stolen cards
Expired cards
Homemade cards

From May

WEP hotlists sent out to buses to cancel lost/stolen cards

Receive hotlists from other LTAs HOPS to initiate hot listing if the card is used in the WEP area

LTA & Operator Joint Venture Company – Launched Oct 2010

£1.85m Capital Grant from SWIEP

1500 Buses & 12 smart ticketing schemes

Operators in Cornwall, Swindon & Dorset

B&NES, Gloucs & far SW

A Smartcard for B&NES:

Uses a third party FSA regulated host – sQuid

Stored value card

Pilot scheme at Bath University

Usable on First & Wessex buses

Buy on bus

- single or return tickets

- weekly or multi-trip tickets

Smartcard Steps:

Soft Launch April/May – testing the networks

More extensive May/June – aiming for 3,000 cards

Full scale September – aiming for 10,000 cards

10 Journey tickets for P&R Services

BathRider - multi-operator tickets

Operator products (week/month annual)

Councillor Caroline Roberts asked if it could be clarified if whether the people of B&NES would be issued with just one type of smartcard.

The Senior Public Transport Officer replied that yes an authority we can issue just one type of smartcard. He added though what the Council can't do is compel First to accept a Wessex ticket. Individuals must choose to purchase a multi-operative ticket.

Councillor Neil Butters commented that he had recently lost his Diamond Travelcard and then subsequently found it. He asked if his original card under the new scheme would be made redundant.

The Senior Public Transport Officer replied that yes all reported lost or stolen cards would not be re-activated.

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

75 PANEL WORKPLAN

The Chairman introduced this item to the Panel. She handed out a draft of her proposal for a Single Day Inquiry on Travel to Work initiatives and asked for them to feedback any comments prior to the next Policy Development & Scrutiny Chair’s meeting on 29th March. She added that if the Panel did not agree with this proposal maybe they could think about having on pursuing a Taxi Strategy.

Councillor Douglas Nicol wished to raise a point that he had made at a previous meeting of the Panel on the matter of Victoria Bridge. He asked on December 6th if the Council could approach Crest Nicholson for a further contribution to the Section 106 agreement.

At that meeting the Strategic Director for Service Delivery replied that this would be very unlikely, but that he would discuss it with the Development & Major Projects Director.

Councillor Nicol asked therefore to be informed of the outcome of their conversation. He added that he would also like to be provided with proof as to whether the bridge should be seen as an asset or a pressure.

The Chairman asked that the responses to those questions be shared with the whole of the Panel.

Councillor David Martin reminded the Panel that they had agreed to receive the MoD Sites Concept Statements at their May meeting.

Councillor Malcolm Hanney asked for the Panel to be updated in May on the outcome of the Core Strategy examination in public.

Councillor David Martin proposed that the Panel has an item on the Green Deal at possibly its November meeting.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to approve these proposals.

The meeting ended at 4.45 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services