

Economic and Community Development & Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel

THE RIVER CORRIDOR REPORT

SCRUTINY INQUIRY DAY

Date: 31st October

Room: The Guildhall, Banqueting room

This meeting is a public meeting, though members of the public must submit any statements in advance of the meeting – outcomes will be presented to the next public meetings of the Economic and Community Development on (date TBC)

Background

In late 2010 the Council, acting through the Cabinet member for Economic Development at the time, Councillor Terry Gazzard and the Strategic Director, Development & Major Projects John Betty invited several people with relevant skills and experience interested in the future role of the River Avon to advise the Council on how its potential as a force for regeneration might be achieved. The River Corridor Report was completed in June 2011 by the River Corridor Group (*comprising of people with related professional disciplines, such as ecology, sustainability, regeneration, transportation, or decades of experience in managing or using waterways, together with Council Member representation from the two main political parties.*) The report covers a whole range of issues relating to the river but is primarily focused on how a range of agencies can work together to improve the river and increase employment along the river corridor in B&NES

The report and findings were taken to the Economic & Community Development Panel meeting in May 2012 (*as the nominated lead PDS Panel for the report*) and asked to undertake its review in its Policy Development role to advise Cabinet on future decisions (if any) with regard to the River Corridor Group Reports recommendations. At the meeting it was agreed that the best approach would be to defer the response to Cabinet on the best ways to move the recommendation's forward until a special meeting (*Scrutiny Inquiry Day*) was arranged which could thematically condense the report so the Panel could give adequate scrutiny to each theme and invite all of the interested and key stakeholders to the meeting.

An informal meeting was then held at the beginning of July with key service officers and the Chair & Vice Chair of the ECD Panel and the Chair of the River Corridor Group to help shape the form of the Scrutiny Inquiry Day.

Purpose

The purpose of the scrutiny inquiry day will be to review the recommendations contained within the River Corridor Report which focus on the potential of the River Avon to unlock the economic activity and wealth compatible with elements of cultural, social and environmental value.

Outcome

The outcomes of the day will be to:-

1. identify the best sustainable and regenerative ways of taking forward the suggested options and ideas contained within the report
2. develop a joint and consistent approach that is shared and understood between key stakeholders.
3. inform the vision for a future Council River Strategy which places a higher social, environmental and cultural value to the river.
4. ensure the Council and key stakeholders are at the centre of the reshaping of the river corridor.

Key Objectives

To develop a shared approach which will take the river corridor report from a conceptual idea to a reality which would:-

1. highlight who needs to be involved and engaged with the process to help focus established interest and to understand the broader corporate implications / priorities in delivering the recommendations
2. to inform the Cabinet of the best options/ models available to achieve the RCG Reports recommendation's through building a body of evidence which demonstrates the current and future demands from the community/businesses/other local authorities/quangos etc. to move this forward.

Scope

The River Corridor Group will condense its recommendations down into 5 thematical groups which will be evaluated and discussed at the meeting. This will help focus the meeting and manage the large stakeholder engagement on the day.

The focus of the day will be to identify:-

1. What work has the River Corridor Group already done and what were the issues raised?
2. Identify the river stakeholders/ organisations (including the Council) and their roles
 - i. now and for the future. (Including key developments/ projects)
 - ii. What obligations/ interest do they each have to offer?
 - iii. Note: The Panels prior knowledge of recent issues of River safety will be considered
 - iv. Examine whether the report aligns with the Councils Corporate agenda and Service delivery plans?
3. The future/Strategy and how it can be delivered (in light of the Council and partners role)
 - i. Consideration will be given to each of the options/ models identified and are available such as establishing a River Corridor Trust or Community Enterprise body to take ownership of moving the recommendations forward.
 - ii. Examination of the funding options available for each

Approach

Final Version

The ECD Panel will take the lead in co-ordinating the Scrutiny Inquiry Day, however it has been recognised that the subject area under investigation overlaps within other Panel remits, particularly the Housing & Major Projects Policy Development Panel and Planning Transport & Environment Panel. The ECD Panel will therefore keep these Panels regularly informed of developments and will also be invited to attend the Scrutiny Inquiry Day.

The Panel will request for written submissions at least 5 days before the event to try to avoid duplication and to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to engage in the event.

Exclusions:

The primary purpose of the day, as stated, is to look at the economic regeneration of the river and therefore while the day will give consideration to many of the wider elements of the River Avon it will not be an opportunity to discuss detailed issues such as:-

- detailed environmental and climate change issues such as; water quality / catchment area issues, and flooding of Bath
- The SID will not be an opportunity to raise individual planning issues or rules and responsibilities of the river but about the Economic opportunities & benefits that it creates
- Those individuals who live on Boats and the rules and regulations surrounding this

Outline of the Day (draft)

- What work has already been done on this? Presentation by the River Corridor Group Report on key findings and issues (set the scene)
- Best Practice examples: Presentations/ Speakers and good practice/industry experts, with Q&A opportunity (confirm these)
- What work has already been developed since the production of the River Corridor Group Report was produced.
- What's the role of Key stakeholder's: Facilitated workshops to:-
 - A. Examine the roles/ interest/ obligations of the different stakeholders and organisations in relation to each of the recommendations (Can be broken down into 5 individual round table sessions)(Including: Brief on written submissions/ roaming mic)
- *Networking lunch*
- Round up of First Session Findings
- What future options are available and achievable?: Facilitated workshops to:-
- Identify the recommendations the council would like to take forward:-
 - A. Examining the different models and options available to achieve the above and
 - B. Formulate a joint approach to be delivered to Cabinet
- Round up and next steps

Attendees

(Please note a full communications plan will be developed therefore the below only provides a draft list of some of the key stakeholders that will be invited to engage at the Scrutiny Inquiry Day)

Members of the ECD /HMP/ PTE Panels

Cabinet Members, Cherry Beath (Sustainable Development), Paul Crossley (Leader of the Council), David Bellotti (Community Resources)

Service Directors Officers from relevant departments within Council (Developmental & Regeneration, Planning & Transport, Tourism Leisure & Culture, Environmental Services, Property Services) will also include an open invite to the Chief Executive and all Strategic and Divisional Directors to help to identify what each department are currently working on to link with the Councils Corporate objectives.

Relevant stakeholders include;-

The River Corridor Group

Final Version

West of England LEP

Statutory & Regulatory Bodies (Environment agency, Natural England, British Waterways, Inland Waterways, Wessex Water etc)

Regional & local Business Community (Buro Happold, Residents/ Residents Associations, Arts & Culture, local University's

Special Interest Groups (Bath Preservation Trust, World Heritage Site Consultation Committee, Bath renewables Group, Transition Bath, Bath & Britsol Initiative.

Best practice examples: Thames/ Kennet, Avon Canal Trust, Avon Valley Park/ Limpley Stoke Marina, Minerva and/or other examples to be identified.

Waste: Severn Waste Recycling Company Mead – Broadmead lane

Major landowners/ Developers (Town & Parish Councils, Neighbouring Local Authorities, Sainsbury's Green park (New Development Plans) Bath Western Riverside Developers, Bath Quays South

Draft Timescales

The planning and preparation for the Scrutiny Inquiry Day will take a minimum of 3 months looking at an event date to be agreed around the end of October or beginning of Nov. This would allow for a report of findings/ outcomes to be delivered to the ECD November Panel meeting and to Cabinet in December-January.

Enquiries

For further information, contact:

Chair of ECD Panel-

Vice Chair of ECD Panel

Policy Development & Scrutiny

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