

## **BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL**

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

Wednesday, 20th November, 2013

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

**Also in attendance:** David Trigwell (Divisional Director - Planning and Transport), Louise Fradd (Strategic Director - Place), Kelvin Packer (Service Manager - Highways & Parking) and Liz Richardson (Policy Development & Scrutiny Lead Officer)

**Cabinet Member for Transport:** Councillor Caroline Roberts

#### **26 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### **27 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

The Chair drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

#### **28 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Councillor Roger Symonds and Councillor Liz Richardson had sent their apologies to the Panel. Councillor Charles Gerrish was present as a substitute for Councillor Richardson for the duration of the meeting.

#### **29 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Charles Gerrish declared a non-prejudicial interest in agenda item 11 (Flood & Drainage Management) as he is a member of the Wessex Regional Flood and Coastal Committee.

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

There was none.

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

Leonie Robertson made a statement to the Panel and presented a petition on the matter of funding a zebra crossing on Lansdown Road at the junction with Julian

Road and Guinea Lane. A copy of the statement can be found on the Panel's Minute Book.

Councillor Charles Gerrish asked if she had a precise location for where the crossing would be best placed.

Leonie Robertson replied that she felt it would make more sense if it was placed south of the junction, but would be happy to see it installed at either location.

## **32 MINUTES - 10TH SEPTEMBER 2013**

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

## **33 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE**

Councillor Caroline Roberts, Cabinet Member for Transport addressed the Panel. She informed them that some consultant surgeries were due to take place later in the week relating to the Transport Strategy and a public exhibition on the Rossiter Road scheme was planned for the coming weekend.

She stated that the trial of the new bus priority measures in Dorchester Street would begin after the Christmas period.

She said a positive meeting had been held with the Highways Authority regarding road surfacing and signage at the Hartley Bends.

She spoke of a good flood meeting that had been held in the Chew Valley and announced that a consultation meeting would be held soon regarding Saltford station.

Councillor David Martin asked for a timescale in relation to the Transport Strategy.

Councillor Roberts replied that the first draft would be available in January.

Councillor Douglas Nicol asked if it would fit in with the Core Strategy.

Councillor Roberts replied that ideally it would.

Councillor Charles Gerrish asked when Keynsham would become included in the strategy and would there be a programme of public engagement.

Councillor Roberts replied that Keynsham would not be part of this initial draft and that when work relating to Keynsham did commence a programme of public engagement would take place.

Councillor Les Kew commented that he felt the stop/start nature of the trial of bus priority measures in Dorchester Street and works associated with the Widcombe area could become rather confusing for the public.

Councillor Lisa Brett asked how the Panel could be assured that the numerous on-going strategies would all be joined up.

Councillor Roberts replied that as a Directorate (Place) they were aware of the need for integration.

The Chair asked what actions were planned for the Hartley Bends.

The Divisional Director for Planning & Transport replied that additional signage relating to speed and anti-skid surfacing would be introduced.

#### **34 URBAN GULLS - SCRUTINY INQUIRY DAY UPDATE**

The Policy Development & Scrutiny Lead Officer introduced this item to the Panel. She highlighted the plans for the day and the actions taken currently by the Council. She added that following the day recommendations would be formed and presented to the Panel in January.

Councillor Charles Gerrish commented that East Devon had already held a similar event and asked if the Council should be made aware of their experiences.

The Policy Development & Scrutiny Lead Officer replied that she was aware that their report was due to be published on November 29<sup>th</sup>.

Councillor Charles Gerrish asked for the Panel to seek recommendations that would encompass the whole of B&NES.

Councillor Patrick Anketell-Jones asked why no Central Government or recognised bird organisation representative was on the list of attendees for the day.

The Policy Development & Scrutiny Lead Officer replied that both the RSPB and DEFRA had been invited. She added that a representative from the RSPB did intend to attend the January meeting of the Panel and that DEFRA have offered to meet separately outside of the day.

The Chair thanked her for the update.

#### **35 WEST OF ENGLAND JOINT SCRUTINY**

Councillor Martin Veal, Chairman of the West of England Joint Scrutiny Committee introduced this item to the Panel. He explained that the Joint Scrutiny Committee had been recently re-established to scrutinise the publically funded aspects of the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership.

He highlighted some of the topics recently discussed at a meeting of the Committee, these included;

- City Region Deal Growth Incentive Scheme
- Update on LEP, City Deal, Enterprise Zone and Enterprise Areas, Going for Growth, bidding for Regional Growth Fund and other LEP bids

- LEP Skills agenda
- Presentation on the key issues for the JTEC and Local Transport Body

He said the Committee was also seen as a successful vehicle for lobby groups to engage with.

Councillor Lisa Brett asked he felt the Committee was adequately supported and resourced.

Councillor Veal replied that he felt the Committee was under resourced, underfunded and underappreciated.

David Redgewell, South West Transport Network was invited to address the Panel. He stated that the existence of this Committee was vital, especially considering the huge cuts being proposed by the Mayor of Bristol which may shut down the local bus network at 9.00pm and have an impact on services to both Keynsham and Whitchurch.

He added that he believed the budget in relation to bus services for the four Local Authorities should be debated at the Committee. He said that Metro West needed to be scrutinised and that bodies such as First and DfT must be held to account. He also called for collective solutions to the transport problems of the Greater Bristol / Bath City region.

He wished to congratulate Councillor Veal in his role as Chairman, but was appalled at the level of resources afforded to the Committee.

The Chair asked that an item relating to a Regional Transport Strategy be added to the workplan of the Panel.

Councillor Lisa Brett suggested that a cost benefit analysis of the Committee be undertaken.

Councillor Charles Gerrish commented that this was a view shared by the Resources Panel. He proposed that the matter be raised at a meeting of the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs for them to decide which Panel should lead on it.

Councillor Les Kew asked what influence the Joint Scrutiny Committee had over the Local Enterprise Partnership.

Councillor Veal replied that he felt the depth of questioning from the Committee regarding the Local Enterprise Partnership had been essential and that it did influence their work.

The Chair thanked Councillor Veal for attending the Panel.

## 36 FLOOD AND DRAINAGE MANAGEMENT

Ed Lockington, Environment Agency and Kelvin Packer, Service Manager for Highways & Parking gave a presentation to the Panel regarding this item. A copy of which will be placed on the Panel's Minute Book, a summary is set out below.

### **Role of the Regional Flood & Coastal Committee:**

- To advise the Environment Agency (Local context)
- Environment Agency required to consult the RFCC on its exercise of flood and coastal risk functions
- Their consent will be required prior to implementation of the Environment Agency's regional programme of works
- They will retain their executive powers in respect of raising and spending the Local Levy
- Their remit is extended to cover coastal erosion as well as flooding

### **SUDS – Sustainable Urban Drainage System:**

- The Act has established a SUDS Approval Body (SAB)
- The SAB will have responsibility for the approval of any proposed drainage system for new developments and redevelopments. Approval must be given BEFORE a developer can commence construction.
- Part of the formal planning process
- The SAB will be responsible for adoption and maintenance of the SUDS that serve more than one property

### **How is the Local Authority responding to the Act?**

- Looking to establish the Flood Risk Management Board
- Planning regular meeting between the EA and Council Officers
- Appointing a Flood Manager as part of the Highways restructure and increased resources.
- Creating a single Drainage Team as the Lead Local Flood Authority. This team would co- ordinate all the drainage matters and Flood Risk Management issues.
- Review the relationship with Emergency Planning and set up new working arrangements to reflect our extra duties.

### **BENEFITS**

- Single point of contact – Members of the Public and other departments will be well informed who should be contacted regarding drainage and flood management issues
- The Team will ensure that all the new statutory duties will be fulfilled
- More effective way of working

### **Chew Magna:**

- Predominantly river flooding
- Flood event that has a 1% chance of happening in any given year.
- Public meeting with the Chew Valley Flood Forum (CVFF) and residents.
  
- EA have improved flood warning system.
- River maintenance work completed including de-silting at Tun Bridge and vegetation management work.
- Working with the CVFF to promote risk awareness and help people to protect their properties.

### **Chew Magna PLP scheme (Property Level Protection):**

- A pilot scheme, limited to certain properties and a financial limit on the amount per property
- 31 properties experienced flood inundation (approximately half of the PLP properties)
- Ownership and maintenance PLP not clear
- Action plan to address the lessons
- EA producing a new model for the river
- Survey of properties affected
- Funding bid for enhanced PLP

### **Chew Stoke:**

- River and surface water flooding
- Intense rainfall caused rapid rise in river levels and saturated ground unable to absorb any more rain.
- Planning a public meeting to review findings
- Council have improved flood warning signs at the Ford
- Flood warning system improved by the EA
- Package of measures to mitigate the risk of surface water flooding.
- Parish Council keen to develop their Community Flood plan

Mike Curtis and Rachel Wilson representing the Chew Valley Flood Forum were present and had prior to the meeting submitted a number of questions to the Panel. Responses to the questions were handed out at the meeting and a copy of them will be placed on the Panel's Minute Book.

The Chair asked if they would like to make an additional statement.

Mike Curtis commented that he believed that there were two other organisations that needed to be approached regarding this matter, Bristol Water and the NFU (National Farmers Union).

The Service Manager for Highways & Parking replied that he was happy to address the NFU and local land owners.

Ed Lockington added that the model work will try out different scenarios based upon residents feedback. He said that the model will include possible changes in the way the reservoir operates.

Rachel Wilson asked for a review of the PLP scheme as a 30% failure rate was not acceptable given the significant investment that was made.

The Chair commented that she was concerned over the timing of this review and that one had not already taken place given the close proximity of the winter months.

The Service Manager for Highways & Parking replied that a review was carried out in the summer and that a number of discussions have taken place with the contractors.

The Chair asked would it be too late to implement any findings for this year.

The Service Manager for Highways & Parking replied that it would depend on the outcomes of the review.

Councillor Charles Gerrish asked if £200,000 had been allocated in the budget for work relating to this matter.

The Service Manager for Highways & Parking replied that he could confirm that.

Councillor Caroline Roberts added that no direct actions had yet been planned.

Councillor Douglas Nicol commented that any work to protect public property must be carried out immediately.

The Service Manager for Highways & Parking replied that it was important to understand the reasons for failure amid allegations that residents had fitted the barriers incorrectly.

Councillor Charles Gerrish commented that a report on the last round of flooding incidents was published in September and he felt concerned that no progress was being made.

He added that the Council was praised for its actions last year and can recall meeting with residents of Chew Stoke and Chew Magna last December, but the dilemma for the public remains and they need to see evidence of action.

The Chair asked for that report to be circulated to the Panel.

Councillor Charles Gerrish said that the department had to work within its resources and that he had passed his concerns to them. He added that he felt they would need to be strong with the NFU.

Councillor Les Kew commented that the delay in direct action was a big concern as the fear to the public was very relevant. He added that he felt that any question relating to who is responsible for the PLP should be addressed after the identified

problems had been fixed. He asked if residents with a river frontage to their property were contacted directly about the responsibility for keeping it clear.

Ed Lockington replied that the responsibility of these properties was made very clear at a recent public meeting – it is riparian responsibility.

Rachel Wilson commented that it was acknowledged by residents of their responsibility. She added that any help regarding base clearance would be appreciated.

Ed Lockington replied that the Environment Agency can provide advice on base clearance but have limited funds available for the actual work.

Councillor Charles Gerrish commented that dredging will not always provide a solution, that misconceptions were given by the provider on what PLP can / can't do and that the property surveys missed certain risk areas.

Councillor Lisa Brett commented that she was concerned over the lack of any printed timescale for these projects.

The Service Manager for Highways & Parking replied that actions relating to Chew Stoke were already taking place.

The Chair asked for the Panel to be made aware as soon as possible of the following points:

- Current preventative measures
- An Action Plan, written in conjunction with the Cabinet Member(s)
- Funding options
- Resources
- Discussions with the NFU
- Relevant maps available to the Panel

Councillor Les Kew requested a progress report also be submitted to the January meeting of the Panel.

Councillor Charles Gerrish commented that he would ask the Democratic Services Officer to circulate his report on flooding to the other members of the Panel.

The Chair agreed that a progress report should be added to the workplan of the Panel for January and thanked everybody for their contributions to the debate.



## 37 PLACE - MEDIUM TERM PLAN AND 2014/15 BUDGET UPDATE

The Strategic Director for Place introduced this item to the Panel. She wished to highlight certain points from within Appendix 1.

Place Directorate – Key policy context changes:

- To progress the Core Strategy through the further stages of the Examination in Public to Adoption so that the National Planning Policy Framework no longer takes precedence over the Council's own policies.
- Developing the Enterprise Area Master Plan which will focus where future mixed use development opportunities exist that takes into account the Core Strategy requirements and where future expenditure will be targeted, linking in the West of England (WoE) City Deal and other funding opportunities, whilst also ensuring the effective and efficient disposal of land and property.
- Developing the Bath and Keynsham Transport Strategies to support the significant growth in homes and employment that is being promoted through the Core Strategy and further developed in its Placemaking Plan.
- Ensuring the Place Directorate is compliant with the new Council Procurement strategy with a "Think Local" theme.
- Developing the Leisure Strategy to provide direction for the procurement of a leisure provider during 2014, thus ensuring they meet our local needs and priorities.
- Developing an Economic Strategy that will also encompass tourism, arts and cultural activities including key events, as these functions also have a major impact on the local economy.
- Further reducing waste sent to landfill sites by recycling and recovering residual waste.
- Seeking further opportunities to share services including the procurement of shared contracts with other local authorities.

Councillor Lisa Brett commented that she welcomed the approach to integrate strategies. She asked if the Council could afford the new capital projects.

The Strategic Director for Place replied that funding for a lot of them was provided through external grants, with the Enterprise Area being just one example.

Councillor Les Kew commented that he believed the investment made in Heritage Services was key to its recent success.

The Strategic Director for Place replied that the intention was to continue to grow the heritage attraction of the City.

Councillor Charles Gerrish asked for further information on the £1.2m allocated to the Midsomer Norton Business Centre in 2015 / 16.

The Strategic Director for Place replied that income associated with the Business Centre would pay for that figure.

Councillor Charles Gerrish asked why Rossiter Road was absent from the Plan and is the current budget associated with the scheme sufficient.

The Strategic Director for Place replied that the budget is in this year's allocation and the scheme was being prepared in the knowledge of the funds available. The tender process would confirm the final cost.

Councillor David Martin asked how the Council would be achieving its corporate objectives in terms of sustainability.

The Strategic Director for Place replied that it is a key component and for example we are investigating the use of District Heating and potential grant opportunities through the Department of Energy & Climate Change (DECC).

Councillor David Martin commented that the European Union was about to launch a project named Horizon 2020 and suggested that the Council looks at how it can become involved in it.

The Strategic Director for Place thanked him for the information and said involvement in the project would need to be assessed around the priorities of the Council.

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

### **38 PANEL WORKPLAN**

The Chair introduced this item to the Panel. She recapped that earlier in the meeting they had agreed to add items to the workplan relating to a Regional Transport Strategy under future items and a further Flood & Drainage Management Update in January 2013.

Councillor Charles Gerrish proposed that the report on Cross Boundary Bus Services be delivered to the January 2013 meeting.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to agree with these proposals.

The meeting ended at 1.00 pm

Chair(person) .....

Date Confirmed and Signed .....

**Prepared by Democratic Services**