

BATH TRANSPORT PACKAGE

The Group Manager for Planning Policy & Transport introduced the item to the Panel. He explained that a number of elements had now been removed from the original BTP proposal and that the Bid as it currently stands is deliverable without the need to go through any further statutory processes.

He added that a segregated bus route was still planned to support Bath Western Riverside (BWR) and would likely run from the Windsor Bridge through to Green Park.

Councillor Neil Butters asked if the 9 showcase bus routes could be revealed.

The Group Manager for Planning Policy & Transport replied that a map of the routes was available and that he would send one to all Panel members.

Councillor Neil Butters asked what type of buses would be used on the bus route through BWR.

The Group Manager for Planning Policy & Transport replied that he felt it would be unlikely to use the 'bendy bus' model and that he expected the vehicles to be based on the existing pattern.

Councillor David Martin asked for the Cost Benefit ratio for the revised package as opposed to the previous one.

The Group Manager for Planning Policy & Transport replied that the ratio for the revised package was well above two and had been improved by the revisions. He added that the package was very deliverable and affordable.

Councillor Malcolm Hanney commented that he was disappointed in the lack of financial figures available within the report. He then asked the officers present a series of questions.

Councillor Malcolm Hanney asked them to confirm that the capital financing requirements in respect of Newbridge Park & Ride have been overstated and that any bid to DfT will be reduced to reflect only an additional 250 spaces.

The Group Manager for Planning Policy & Transport confirmed that the revised bid included costs for 500 additional spaces at the Newbridge Park & Ride but the final bid will be revised to 250 additional spaces.

Councillor Malcolm Hanney asked for an assurance relating to the viability of the £1.89m referenced as 'BWR Transport Scheme' contained within the revised package. His understanding was that this amount was payable by Crest under the BWR S106 Agreement but only towards the BRT.

He added that without and until Crest's agreement to an alternative, which

wasn't evident, shouldn't this element have been deleted from any bid to DfT or be made clearer that the Council would step in to fund this amount if Crest chose not to?

The Group Manager for Planning Policy & Transport replied that he believed that there was enough flexibility within the agreement to enable Crest to honour their commitment.

Councillor Malcolm Hanney asked if the amount of £1,616,500 for City Centre Works had been double-counted. Was it not already being funded under the Council's Public Realm budget?

The Group Manager for Planning Policy & Transport confirmed that this figure was already within the budget for the Public Realm and was part of the Council's local contribution.

Councillor Malcolm Hanney asked if it was the Administration's intention not to renew the planning consents for the BRT route and the Bathampton Meadows Park and Ride, to dispose of any properties acquired in relation to those elements of the Bath Transport Package, and not to protect the BRT route in any way for the future.

The Group Manager for Planning Policy & Transport replied that any decisions on those matters would be a matter for the Council in the future, not at this moment in time.

The Strategic Director for Service Delivery added that such decisions may be worked through as part of the overall Transportation Policy.

Councillor Malcolm Hanney asked for confirmation that the amounts included for Risk (£2,685,144) and Inflation (£1,094,509) will be fully justified as part of the final bid as he felt they currently look very high given the elimination of the BRT, the Eastern Park and Ride and the halving of the Newbridge Park and Ride extension.

The Strategic Director for Service Delivery replied that these figures may of course reduce as they are still being worked on and that he would be happy to make them available once the package has been finalised.

Councillor Malcolm Hanney commented that the amount for vehicles in the report was unchanged at £2,950,000. He asked why a Park & Ride operator would consider anywhere near this level of investment when there was no BRT, no Eastern Park and Ride (1400 spaces) and a halved Newbridge Park and Ride extension?

The Group Manager for Planning Policy & Transport replied that that was a valid point and would review that element of the bid.

The Strategic Director for Service Delivery added that the £2,950,000 appears as both a cost and a source of third party funding in the revised bid and so will not affect the Council's net contribution.

Councillor Malcolm Hanney asked how realistic it was (in the absence of any specific or detailed funding proposals) that the DfT and the Inspector for the

Core Strategy will take the Council seriously in terms of a bid to Government for funding and as evidence of a credible Transport Strategy / Core Strategy?

The Strategic Director for Service Delivery replied that section 3.3 of the current report highlighted the revenue reversion risk. He added that officers were evaluating sections 2.15 – 2.21 of the report which includes working on alternatives to Bathampton Meadows P&R, possibly involving rail, as part of our future Transport Strategy.

The Group Manager for Planning Policy & Transport added that he expected the Core Strategy Inspector to ask similar questions and during that inquiry we will show that the final bid is highly deliverable and that we will need to develop our transport strategy to show how it can support the Core Strategy over the next 20 years.

Councillor Malcolm Hanney asked if, in considering alternatives to the Bathampton Meadows Park and Ride which had now been ruled out, it could be confirmed for the record that Lambridge was not an option given the proposals regarding the Recreation Ground with Bath Rugby?

The Strategic Director for Service Delivery confirmed that Lambridge was not an option as an alternative site to the proposed Bathampton Meadows Park and Ride.

Councillor Malcolm Hanney asked that given the deletion of key elements of the Bath Transport Package which were integral to the Draft Core Strategy, will the Council not be subject to increased challenge as to the deliverability of the Core Strategy with consequential risk of planning applications (that would otherwise have been contrary to the Core Strategy) being approved at Appeal, urban extensions, and serious difficulties in terms of credibility for the Examination by the Inspector including at the public hearings.

The Strategic Director for Service Delivery replied that it will be our job as officers to convince the Inspector that our Transport Strategy can support our Core Strategy. The bid for DfT funding for a revised Bath Transport Package is only part of that Transport Strategy.

Councillor Malcolm Hanney asked why was there no mention of the potential impact on the Council's Parking Strategy in the Council Agenda Paper.

The Strategic Director for Service Delivery replied that the Parking Strategy was being amended in light of the revised bid for the Bath Transport Package and that the Cabinet had asked officers to look at alternative Park & Ride sites as part of the Transport Strategy.

Councillor Malcolm Hanney asked what the prospects for the development of Avon Street Car Park and Coach Park and other key sites were in the absence of a viable Transport Strategy, a viable Parking Strategy and a viable Core Strategy.

The Strategic Director for Service Delivery replied that the Transport Strategy will need to be viable before work on any of these sites takes place. The additional Park & Rides are key to this.

Councillor Malcolm Hanney asked when will the views of the Urban Regeneration Panel (URP) and the Transport Commission be sought on the revised 'Package'.

The Group Manager for Planning Policy & Transport replied that they would both be contacted before the bid was submitted and that he was aware that the Transport Commission was due to meet next month.

Councillor Geoff Ward asked how the revised bid can be seen as value for money when despite the reduction of the overall cost the Council contribution remains the same.

The Strategic Director for Service Delivery replied that the improved cost benefit ratio indicated that the revised scheme was better value for money.

There is no reduction in the Council contribution because the Department for Transport (DfT) have advised that the local contribution is expected to be maintained.

Councillor Geoff Ward asked what the difference in projected traffic reductions between the two bids was.

The Strategic Director for Service Delivery replied that the bid should not simply be seen as a scheme to reduce traffic flow. He added that it should also be noted for the contribution it will make to Economic Growth and Development. He said he would be happy to send to the Panel the corresponding figures in relation to CO2 and noxious emissions.

Councillor Caroline Roberts asked for clarification on which bus companies will be used for the service to BWR and the new Park & Ride service.

The Group Manager for Planning Policy & Transport replied that the Park & Ride contract will be re-tendered and that we might want to serve BWR using one of the existing bus routes from the west not necessarily the P&R buses.

The Chairman asked if a timeline had been set for sections 2.15 – 2.21 of the report.

The Strategic Director for Service Delivery replied that there was not as these are intended to form part of the development of the Transport Strategy.

Councillor Malcolm Hanney commented that he found it odd that the DfT would approve a bid without an approved Transport Strategy.

The Strategic Director for Service Delivery replied that elements of the revised bid are still within the current strategy.

Councillor David Martin expressed his view that the Council should use Low Carbon Emission buses where possible within the new package.

The Group Manager for Planning Policy & Transport replied that the Council can express exactly what form the vehicles should take for the P&R service.

The Chairman commented that she also felt a lack of confidence relating to the financial figures within the report.

Councillor Malcolm Hanney asked that the revised financial figures of the bid be referred back to an open session of the Cabinet prior to the bid being submitted.

Councillor Caroline Roberts disagreed with this proposal and felt the views of the Panel could be passed to the Cabinet Member.

The Strategic Director for Service Delivery commented that the final bid itself will be open to the public.

The Chairman asked the Panel to vote on the proposal from Councillor Hanney to refer the revised financial figures of the bid back to an open session of the Cabinet prior to the bid being submitted.

3 members of the Panel voted in favour of the proposal, 3 voted against and there were no abstentions. The Chairman of the Panel has the discretion to use a second vote in this situation which resulted in the proposal being carried.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to ask that the revised financial figures of the bid be referred back to an open session of the Cabinet prior to the bid being submitted.