

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL

PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Tuesday, 8th November, 2011

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

Also in attendance: David Trigwell (Divisional Director - Planning and Transport), Adrian Clarke (Transportation Planning Manager) and Peter Dawson (Group Manager, Planning Policy & Transport)

Cabinet Member for Homes & Planning: Councillor Tim Ball

Cabinet Member for Transport: Councillor Roger Symonds

29 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

30 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chairman drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

31 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

There were none.

32 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

There were none.

33 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There was none.

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

There were none.

35 MINUTES - 13TH SEPTEMBER 2011

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

36 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

Councillor Tim Ball, Cabinet Member for Homes and Planning was present and said that he was willing to answer questions from the Panel. Councillor Roger Symonds, Cabinet Member for Transport was also present and had provided the Panel with a brief report on some of his recent actions.

Councillor Neil Butters asked for clarification on the consultation of Parish Councils in the build up to the Core Strategy debate at Full Council on September 15th 2011. He asked that it be noted that the summary report considering the potential contingency locations presented at the meeting contained a number of inaccuracies and omissions, which may have given an unbalanced impression of the Officers' recommendations. He asked the Cabinet Member to set out the sequence of events relating to Parish Council consultation.

Councillor Malcolm Hanney asked that any response from the Cabinet Member be sent to all Councillors.

Councillor Tim Ball replied that he was happy to do this.

37 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY UPDATE

The Divisional Director for Planning & Transport introduced this item to the Panel. He informed them that a consultant had now been procured and that a developer workshop had been held. He added that the previously stated milestones remained in place.

February 2012 – Draft Charging Schedule to Full Council

March / April 2012 – Consultation to take place on the Draft Charging Schedule

March 2013 – Report to the Planning Inspector

September 2013 – Implementation

38 GYPSIES, TRAVELLERS AND TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE SITE ALLOCATIONS DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT (DPD): ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION PAPER AND 'CALL FOR SITES'

The Divisional Director for Planning & Transport introduced this item to the Panel.

Councillor Geoff Ward asked what were the Council's legal requirements with regard to accommodating the travelling community.

The Divisional Director for Planning & Transport replied that the Council has responsibilities under both housing and equalities legislation towards Gypsies & Travellers.

Councillor Geoff Ward commented that he believed the Council had legal requirement to identify sites but were under no obligation to provide them.

The Divisional Director for Planning & Transport replied that he believed that to be true and added that the private sector could be asked to play a part in the process.

Councillor Caroline Roberts commented that she was glad to see that the issue had finally been raised to this current level of discussion. She also asked if the sites were likely to be inside or outside of the Green Belt.

The Divisional Director for Planning & Transport replied that sites within the Green Belt would be considered, but that sites outside of it would have priority.

Councillor Caroline Roberts commented that she was pleased to see that the travelling community will be consulted as part of this process and hoped that a positive relationship could be established. She asked if the Council was looking at the work of any other Local Authorities with regard to this subject area.

The Divisional Director for Planning & Transport acknowledged that B&NES had been slow in bringing these proposals forward and that other LAs such as South Gloucestershire were currently ahead of us in the process, but added that each Local Authority must bring their own sites forward.

Councillor Malcolm Hanney asked that the legal context of site provision be made clear during the consultation process and spoke of the need for Parish Councils to be advised at the earliest possible opportunity.

The Divisional Director for Planning & Transport replied that the site requirements are now included within the Core Strategy and agreed that Parishes should be addressed at the earliest appropriate opportunity.

Councillor Douglas Nicol asked if the term 'Yard' was supposed to be used in the context of people or equipment.

The Divisional Director for Planning & Transport replied that the term was used for a site occupied by Travelling Showpeople and that Gypsies and Travellers used the term pitch for a small site or accommodation with land that can accommodate trailers.

Councillor David Martin asked for clarity on the difference between a pitch and a site.

The Divisional Director for Planning & Transport referred him to the Glossary of Terms within the report.

Councillor David Martin asked would there be a need to review the provision in 2016 if the adoption of the process had only concluded in December 2013.

The Divisional Director for Planning & Transport replied that an early review would be necessary to assess if the correct level of provision was in place.

The Chairman asked for clarification as to whether the Council was legally required to provide sites and if the general size of a pitch could be included in the glossary of terms.

The Divisional Director for Planning & Transport replied that he would seek advice on the Council's legal requirement and said that the size of a pitch could be included in the glossary of terms.

Councillor Geoff Ward commented that he believed there were currently six illegal sites with a total of 56 trailers on those sites.

The Divisional Director for Planning & Transport replied that unauthorised sites would be collated as part of this process.

Councillor Geoff Ward asked what was the basis of the Council reaching its decision of needing 42 pitches.

The Divisional Director for Planning & Transport replied that the site requirement was established through a rigorous study prepared for the West of England which analysed population trends and movements. The Divisional Director advised that this study is publically available.

The Chairman summarised the points the Panel wished to be highlighted to the Cabinet. She asked for the pitch size to be included in the consultation process, the Council's legal requirement to be formally set out and for the Parishes to be consulted at the earliest opportunity.

Councillor Geoff Ward asked if the consultation period could be extended to the end of January as many members of the public may not notice it over the Christmas period.

The Divisional Director for Planning & Transport replied that he would look into that possibility, but stressed his wish to get things moving as soon as possible

The Panel **RESOLVED** to ask the Cabinet to consider the concerns they have identified.

i) Can a visualisation of average pitch size be included in the consultation process?

ii) Is it possible for the consultation to clarify the Council's legal requirement to identify / provide sites?

iii) They ask that the Parishes be consulted at the earliest opportunity.

The Panel also notes that the Draft Consultation Document is scheduled for public consultation over an extended period of 8 weeks to run from late November and requested that consideration is given to extending the consultation.

39 LOCAL SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT FUND

The Group Manager for Planning Policy & Transport and the Transportation Planning 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.

What is the Local Sustainable Transport Fund?

- Announced January 2011
- To build strong local economies and address the urgent challenges of climate change
- £560m over four years to 14/15 - £350m revenue & £210m capital
- Aims to fund lots of Local Authorities and fund projects that work

Themes & Projects

Low Carbon Commuting

- Area Travel Plans
- Business Travel
- Key Commuter Routes

Active & Sustainable Communities

- Vibrant Streets
- Rural Hubs & Links
- Key Centres

Transitions to Low Carbon Lifestyles

- Moving to Secondary School
- Preparing for Adulthood
- University
- New Developments

Key Component

- Focused on distinct elements within Key Commuter Routes project
- Delivered largely in 2011/12 – 12/13
- £5m funding approved - £750,000 for B&NES

Major Bid

- Department for Transport (DfT) has shortlisted the West of England to submit a major bid
- Another £25m for the West of England ~ £3.5m for B&NES

The Transportation Planning Manager then led the Panel through some more detailed slides relating to the three themes.

Low Carbon Commuting

- 89% of West of England residents also work in the area.
- It is an opportunity to embed sustainable travel as a way of life.
- Investment has already been made in projects such as the Greater Bristol Bus Network (GBBN)
- The West of England Sustainable Transport (WEST) project will allow us to 'lock in' the benefits through stepping up the extent and pace of change towards sustainable travel.

Active & Sustainable Communities

- Rebalancing communities so they are healthier with stronger local economies
- Removing both physical and psychological barriers to movement.
- Increasing the sense of place, stimulate confidence in moving safely around local areas by sustainable means.

Transitions to Low Carbon Lifestyles

- When people have to consciously consider their travel options they are more amenable to change than when habit is entrenched.
- A focus on these transition events is consistent throughout WEST but additionally we have identified four 'life points' that we believe each merit a specific project of their own.

The Chairman asked if there was a timeline for the Major Bid.

The Group Manager for Planning Policy & Transport replied that the bid was due to be delivered in mid-December and that a decision was expected from the DfT in June 2012.

The Chairman asked if the Council had contacted any local employers in relation to 'Low Carbon Lifestyles'.

The Group Manager for Planning Policy & Transport replied that it had been proactive in the recent work of the Royal United Hospital and was in current discussions with Rotork to help them find some solutions.

Councillor Geoff Ward commented that he felt that some of the current highway restrictions in place meant that traffic was simply queueing to get in and out of the City. He also asked if any study had been carried out to assess if the restrictions were good for businesses.

The Transportation Planning Manager replied that he was not aware of any such study.

Councillor Douglas Nicol commented that he felt education was the key to any future successes. He asked if any consideration had been given to the night-time economy, i.e. late night buses.

The Transportation Planning Manager replied that they had not particularly considered that aspect yet.

Councillor Neil Butters asked if they had considered any rail based initiatives.

The Group Manager for Planning Policy & Transport replied that the Fund could not be used for rail initiatives, but could be used to enhance links to railway stations and aid accessibility.

Councillor Caroline Roberts asked if the Council still had a Business Travel / Public Transport Group that met.

The Transportation Planning Manager replied that yes the group meets quarterly.

Councillor Caroline Roberts asked for a little further information on the planned bus route improvements.

The Transportation Planning Manager replied that a real time information system was to be installed alongside extra shelters. He added that crossing facilities near to bus stops were to be introduced and there were to be further supported services to Peasedown St John.

Councillor David Martin asked what the current status of the Civitas programme was.

The Group Manager for Planning Policy & Transport replied that the programme was winding down and is due to be completed by September 2012. He added that he hoped to build on the success of the current programme and that an evaluation of it would commence in the very near future.

Councillor David Martin commented that the Council faces some very challenging CO2 figures in the future and welcomed any initiatives that would help in that respect.

Councillor Douglas Nicol asked if the Fund could be used to enhance the frequency and reduce the cost of bus travel between Bath and Midsomer Norton / Radstock.

The Group Manager for Planning Policy & Transport replied that officers could have a look at that proposal.

The Chairman thanked the officers for their presentation on behalf of the Panel.

40 PANEL WORKPLAN

The Chairman introduced this item to the Panel. She thanked them all for agreeing to attend the extra meeting in December to discuss the Medium Term Service and Resource Plan.

Councillor David Martin asked if the Panel should consider the issue of fracking at one of its future meetings.

The Chairman replied that she would raise the issue at her next agenda planning meeting with the Strategic Director.

Councillor Malcolm Hanney suggested the Panel should hold a Single Day Inquiry and proposed that the Chairman and Vice-Chair meet with Cabinet Member(s) to see if an appropriate subject can be brought forward.

The Chairman replied that she would be happy to carry out this proposal.

The meeting ended at 4.00 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services