

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

MINUTES OF COMMUNITIES, TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL MEETING

Monday, 16th November, 2015

Present:- **Councillors** John Bull, Brian Simmons, Mark Shelford, Peter Turner, Alan Hale, Neil Butters, Jonathan Carr, Dine Romero and David Veale (In place of Steve Jeffries)

30 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

31 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chairman drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

32 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Councillors Steve Jeffries sent his apologies and was substituted by Councillor David Veale.

33 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

34 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There was none.

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

Mr David Redgewell (South West Transport Network) made a statement on Regional Transport (*the statement is appended to these minutes and available on the Council's minute book held by Democratic Services*).

Mr Duncan Hounsell (Saltford Parish Councillor) made a statement regarding Saltford Railway Station (*the statement is appended to these minutes and available on the Council's minute book held by Democratic Services*).

In response to a question from Councillor Butters, Mr Hounsell explained that he had not had a response from the Council since May. The Strategic Director for Place stated that she will look into this and added that there are infrastructural issues.

Mr Chris Warren (Leader of the Independent Salford Station Campaign) made a statement regarding Salford Railway Station (*the statement is appended to these minutes and available on the Council's minute book held by Democratic Services*).

Councillor Butters congratulated the group on getting a National Award and asked if a car park is essential in delivering the station. It was explained that a 144 car park is deemed adequate by the Council and Halcrow until 2020 (considering projected demand).

Mr Richard Samuel (Chair Camden Residents Association) made a statement on Bath Low Emission Zone (*the statement is appended to these minutes and available on the Council's minute book held by Democratic Services*).

Councillor Romero asked if Mr Samuel would like the Council to take his points on board when considering transport issues for East of Bath, particularly the issue of traffic displacement. Mr Samuel agreed with this approach. He explained that questions should be asked about the whole of Bath becoming a low emission zone and this would address the issue of traffic displacement. Councillor Bull noted that this may be an item for a future meeting.

36 MINUTES

The Panel confirmed the minutes of the previous meeting as a true record while noting the points raised below. The minutes were duly signed by the Chairman.

- Councillor Carr asked that a response be sent to him regarding the questions he asked at the September Panel meeting – The Strategic Director for Place agreed to this;
- Councillor Romero asked that the resolution at minute number 26 be taken on board in the Panel's wider consideration of the East of Bath Transport issues, the relevant resolution is as follows: *'The Panel resolved that if the financial aspects of considering site H can be equated with the other sites then site H should be considered as a site for a Park and Ride to the East of Bath'*.
- Councillor Butters mentioned that the possibility of James White (West of England Transport Group) attending a meeting was discussed.
- Councillor Romero asked that actions suggested at Panel meetings be monitored.

37 DIRECTORATE PLAN FOR PLACE

Louise Fradd, Strategic Director for Place introduced the item. She explained that this month (November 2015) the PDS Panels will be looking at the initial plans. She further explained that Appendix 4 sets out the main financial implications and forms the beginning of a 4 year budget plan.

Panel members made the following points and asked the following questions:

Councillor Romero asked about the Waste Strategy and has concerns about an increase in landfill tax. The Director explained that the Waste Contract is coming to an end and there will be a review of Waste Services, she assured the Panel that recycling is a key target and will continue to have prominence.

Councillor Romero stated that this Panel is charged with looking at transport options so she suggests that the bullet on the East of Bath Park and Ride should be changed to an aspiration. The Director agreed that it should be reworded in line with the motion agreed at Council. Councillor Carr suggested the wording should not presume an outcome (eg. Park and Ride).

Councillor Bull asked about the reduction in 'Economy and Culture'. The Director explained that this is linked to changes in grants. She further explained that the Council is looking at bringing all grants together, this will be phased and events that will help the economy will be targeted. Councillor Carr commented that we should only cut grants to events that are capable of self-sustaining rather than just keeping the ones that make money. The Director assured the Panel that the Council does work with organisations in this way.

The Panel discussed Transport Services, the Director explained that part of the Strategic Review would be to identify bus routes that originally needed a subsidy but are now commercial so do not need this anymore. This will mean there is an overall saving for the authority. Councillor Jackson raised a concern about cutting rural bus routes, the Director explained that this is only about cutting subsidies to routes that are now viable.

In response to a query from Councillor Butters regarding the WIFI network, the Director explained that she is finalising the business case now and the first phase is to install receivers and obtain an income from advertising the second phase is to rent out the Councils own infrastructure/ducts to service providers.

Councillor Butters gave an example of a bus service currently subsidised by Wiltshire Council which is desirable for this Council to continue, he flagged up that this authority may need to step in if another Council withdraws a service. The Director stated that each decision is taken on its merits.

Councillor Bull mentioned the loss of Government Grant and asked if this may mean two weekly waste collections in the future. The Director referred to the planned Waste Review where many different options will be considered, she explained that a major issue is replacing the vehicles.

Councillor Romero asked if the Panel could see the detailed business plans. The Resources Director reminded the Panel that they could ask about specific issues.

The Chair summed up the areas of feedback that the Panel had highlighted:

The robustness of income generating prospects:

- Wifi;
- Energy; and

- Grants to events (income from other events)

38 DIRECTORATE PLAN FOR RESOURCES

Andrew Pate, Strategic Director for Resources introduced the item, reminding the Panel of the items within their remit contained within the Resources Directorate Plan (Community Safety; Libraries; Sustainability and Big Society/Communities). He explained that this month (November 2015) the PDS Panels will be looking at the initial plans. He further explained that Appendix 4 sets out the main financial implications and form the beginning of a 4 year budget plan. He concluded that there was considerable pressure on the Council finances and that there is an emphasis on growing income.

Panel members made the following points and asked the following questions:

Councillor Butters congratulated the Director on the work in the Plan and asked if any country wide research had been done. The Director explained that the Council is alive to what is happening elsewhere tries to learn from best practice. He further explained that the impact on frontline services here has been a lot less than on other authorities.

Councillor Hale asked for reassurance that everything will be done to protect jobs. He also queried the sentence on page 55 about prevention of 'customer demand' and asked if this meant a move towards low human contact in frontline services. The Director explained that the Council record on redundancies is good and there is a redeployment policy but that he could give no guarantees beyond 2016/17. Regarding the query on 'customer demand' the Director explained that a lot of people prefer to use online services that have 24 hour access and there had been investment in One Stop Shops for those who need support. He also explained that 'lean systems thinking' refers to simplifying processes and cutting red tape.

In response to a query from Councillor Romero on consultants, the Director explained that consultants are used only where the skills are needed at specific times and that this is discussed at the Resources PDS Panel. He further explained that there is a good procurement framework and external and internal references are taken. Councillor Hale asked if there is a breakdown of consultancy fees paid, the Director explained that consultants are used in exceptional circumstances and usually within one off projects so figures would be shown within the figures for each project.

In response to a query from Councillor Butters about Parish and Town Council precepts, the Director explained that this is an area where the authority is looking at working in partnership.

The Panel looked at Appendix 3 – Capital Programme. Councillor Romero asked when the business cases would be visible, the Director explained that there are two levels of approval and a business case is needed before it is taken to Cabinet. He further explained that refinancing details are within the 2016/17 proposals, there is a new approach to how Capital schemes are financed.

Councillor Bull asked about the creation of a new property company to provide market rate housing to rent. The Director explained that there is a strong demand for rented accommodation and that the Council has access to good finance rates so is in a good position. Councillor Charles Gerrish, Cabinet Member for Finance and Efficiency added that the Council is fortunate in having substantial commercial estate with vacant floors upstairs so can meet a need while making good use of assets. Councillor Carr asked if the property company is focusing on a particular target market and if there are policies in place to help us to be a good landlord. The Director explained that the details of the scheme and business plan will be brought to the December meeting of the Cabinet. The Cabinet Member added that he believed that the authority should be a good landlord and that the company will have elected Members on board to represent residents. Councillor Carr asked if there is consultation regarding housing over shops. The Cabinet Member reassured the Panel that there would be appropriate engagement if there is a perceived issue.

39 CLIMATE CHANGE: PROGRESS, OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES

The Corporate and Community Sustainability Manager, Jane Wildblood gave a presentation on 'Climate Change: progress, opportunities, challenges' which covered the following points:

- Vision and Ambition
- The Strategic Approach: Partnership working; Community enablement; Leading by example
- Priorities driven from ESP: reducing our impact on the climate and our dependency on fossil fuels
- Progress in numbers
- Area carbon emissions
- Target and actual CO2 emissions in BaNES 2013
- % CO2 reduction from 2007/8 Baseline
- Next Steps
- Renewable energy generation
- Progress – some highlights
- External funding gained since 2006
- Keynsham Civic Centre
- Adopted: two delivery strategies, new planning policies and guidance
- Community Energy
- Chelwood – from coal to broadband
- Energy at Home Scheme up and running
- Community @67
- Policy and Market Context

(a copy of this presentation is attached to the agenda papers for this meeting or available from Democratic Services)

Panel members made the following points and asked the following questions:

Councillor Bull congratulated the officers.

Councillor Hale asked how the money for those in fuel poverty is administered and if there is a danger that the Chelwood model will encourage more solar farms. The officer explained that the fuel poverty money is administered through the housing department where there is a process in place through 'Energy at Home'. The officer did not think the Chelwood model would encourage too many more solar farms as the government subsidy is being substantially cut which may discourage community solar projects for the time being and advised that these farms should be seen as a temporary stepping stone to bring down the price of solar and make it easier to get it on to buildings which most people would prefer.

Councillor Carr congratulated the officers. He asked how CHP (Combined Heat and Power Plant) for the Leisure Centre would work and how will sustainability be ensured. He also asked about signs that the Government are moving the subsidies. The officer responded that a comparative study demonstrated that the best business case for reducing carbon emissions on this site was gas CHP and that gas CHP is classified as a low carbon technology. CHP will be built into the new contract with GLL Leisure. The officer responded on the subsidies question that the Council has submitted comments to the government review of the subsidies making the point about the need to support community energy projects, but the result of the consultation is as yet unknown. Councillor Romero asked if it would be possible to invite a representative from GLL Leisure to a future Panel meeting and share their plans. It was agreed that this would be added to the workplan.

Councillor Romero asked if the work with schools included Academies. The officer responded that the work with schools had overlapped with some schools becoming Academies so some have received advice. The officer explained that the Council scope for influence is reduced with Academies.

Councillor Veale asked about solar panels, the officer responded that she has looked at the Council's estate and sometimes the roofs are not strong enough and there are some other issues with some buildings. There is now solar on Lewis House. The officer explained that other organisations are also being encouraged to do this such as universities and businesses.

There was some discussion around the benefits of local food. Councillor Butters asked that more allotment space be made available by Parish Councils.

The Chair thanked the officers.

40 REPORT ON WEST OF ENGLAND PARTNERSHIP - TRANSPORT

The Strategic Director for Place, Louise Fradd gave a presentation covering the following points:

- Joint Transport Study

- Rail Electrification
- Transport Objectives
- Key Challenges
- Future Transport Concepts
- Joint Spatial Plan and Transport Study
- Timetable

(a copy of this presentation is attached to the agenda papers for this meeting or available from Democratic Services)

Panel members made the following points and asked the following questions:

Councillor Carr stated that the information given contained a lot of questions and the Panel are looking for answers. He added that proposals for devolution are being submitted. The Director responded that this will feed into the Devolution issue and she explained that this report and presentation are about 'issues and options' and is meant to offer options to the Council rather than be solution based. She stressed the need to get the best package.

Councillor Romero stated that she had concerns about the electrification process and whether it will be completed and the impact on the bigger plan. The Director explained that Council Officers are in frequent contact with Network Rail and the various implementation stages and that they have not been told that electrification will not go ahead. Councillor Romero commented that the WEP (West of England Partnership) contains 4 authorities but some work (for example getting HGVs off roads) involves other authorities. The Director responded that both LEPs (Local Enterprise Partnership) for Wiltshire and the West of England are included in talks regarding a link road. Councillor Romero asked if there is any progress on a non-road link with the airport. The Director responded that options are being considered as part of the West of England Joint Transport Study and that such comments should be fed back through the consultation process.

Councillor Butters stated that he understood that rail travel will double in the future and that Bristol has done well in terms of the proportion of people travelling by train. He explained that he considers electrification to be on course and that the trains are being built. He agreed that this Council should talk to Wiltshire wherever possible regarding Metro West, particularly Chippenham and Corsham.

Councillor Hale spoke about cycle super highways. He stated that he did not know how much the Twerton and Keynsham to Willmington routes are used. He stated that the Bristol-Bath route is dangerous to pedestrians. The Director agreed that there may need to be an element of segregation for cyclists to travel fast.

Councillor Carr stated that discussion was Bristol centric and that we should balance things to make sure this authority does not miss out. He also asked about ultra-low emission vehicles. The Director agreed on the point about Bristol and explained that electric vehicles are an important aspect such as the freight consolidation project.

Councillor Bull proposed that this Panel look at proposals and compile a list of suggestions and proposals from the Panel (January 2016) meeting. Panel members agreed.

41 TRANSPORT STRATEGY UPDATE (CHEW VALLEY, SOMER VALLEY AND KEYNSHAM)

Group Manager for Transport Policy, Peter Dawson gave a presentation which covered the following points:

- Somer Valley Transport Strategy (including information on: High car ownership; Road casualties and speed limits; Car parking; A367 to Bath, A362 to Frome; Review of A37; Bus options; Cycling and walking)
- Radstock – Travel to work data
- Midsomer Norton – Travel to work data
- Chew Valley (including information on: High car ownership; Low dispersed population; Heavy vehicles; Traffic management; Road accidents; Cycling and walking)
- Journey to work destinations of Chew Valley residents
- Chew Valley Total Transport
- Total Transport Fund
- Next Steps

(a copy of this presentation is attached to the agenda papers for this meeting or available from Democratic Services)

Panel members made the following points and asked the following questions:

Councillor Simmons drew attention to children travelling to Bath College from Chew Valley who have to travel an extra 30 miles per week. The officer said he would mention this to Mott (McDonald).

Councillor Romero referred to the slides and stated that people can only use what is available now and asked if what people would use is considered. She also mentioned that regarding the road collision incidents, some known hot spots are not mentioned. The officer explained that the data comes from the police.

Councillor Butters explained that there is a community led transport scheme in Wellow but that it takes a lot of effort and there should be an incentive. He asked the officer to provide figures at a later date.

The Chair thanked the officer.

42 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

Cabinet Member for Transport, Councillor Clarke took some questions from Panel members as shown below:

Councillor Carr asked what progress was being made regarding low emissions for Bath. The Cabinet Member explained that no costed work has been done since he requested it 10 days ago. He has asked officers the cost of an implementation zone for Bath and other areas. Councillor Carr asked what is being put in the next budget. The Cabinet Member replied that he is not at that stage yet but this work would be part of existing officers jobs. Councillor Carr asked if the possibility of combining a congestion charge and low emission zone has been considered. The Cabinet Member replied that it depends on the figures.

Councillor Romero asked for an update on work with Wiltshire on reducing HGVs. The Cabinet Member explained that he is working with Wiltshire and Dorset to seek possible options which would need to be funded and may take a significant time.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member.

43 PANEL WORKPLAN

The Panel noted the workplan and the following additions agreed at this meeting:

- West of England Transport – List of Panel proposals/suggestions
- Bath Low Emission Zone
- Waste Strategy
- Leisure Centre Plans (GLL visit)
- Transport Strategy
- East Bath Park and Ride (Council resolution)

Councillor Carr requested a Home to School Transport Review with some implementable proposals. It was explained that the process for requesting a review is that the Chair will take this to the Chair and Vice Chairs (PDS) meeting where potential reviews are discussed in the context of resources available.

The meeting ended at 8.45 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services

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Taking Control of the Future

With the Government's devolution settlement high on the political agenda, it is very important that Bath does not miss out on devolved powers to run its own bus and rail network jointly with the Bristol City Region along with the ability to take executive control over the planning and delivery of all local transport. The current discussions may allow us to make real improvements to the bus network around (and attached to) the proposed Bathampton Park and Ride facility, particularly in view of the enhanced transport options available with the planned rail platform.

RailFuture, Bus Users UK (Sevenside), South West Transport Network, TfGBA and FOSBR and the public transport unions have been calling for a fully integrated MetroBus/MetroWest rail and bus network across Greater Bristol to be fully integrated into a public transport system for the City Region as the Green Capital of Europe 2015. All the listed groups are also pressing for the urgent establishment of a combined transport authority as soon as the enabling legislation allows us to set up a Western Powerhouse, with the support of North Somerset, BANES and South Gloucestershire. We also need to set up a Public Transport Forum for Bristol and the City Region as supported by the Mayor and Bristol Full Council.

The Direct Award from the DfT will allow the Secretary of State to devolve rail and public transport powers to Devon and Cornwall and the Bristol/Bath City Region travel to work area (extending into the counties of

South West Transport Network **Statement** for

BaNES Cabinet on 4 November 2015

BaNES Full Council on 11 November 2015

BaNES Transport Board 16 November 2015

Somerset, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Swindon including the Weymouth line into Dorset) so it is important to take up the Government's offer to create a combined authority for the Bristol/Bath City Region taking over the powers of the West of England LEP on transport, planning, strategic housing and waste management. This would give the Combined Authority specific responsibility for public transport delivery, which in the context means taking overall control of the MetroBus and MetroWest projects along with the Greater Bristol bus network.

The new Buses Bill, following consultation in Bristol and Exeter over the last few days, has revealed that the Government intends to press for Combined Authorities and Joint Transport Boards. These authorities will work in statutory partnership with the bus industry and public transport operating groups, local authorities and passenger groups, to take control of the bus network through quality contracts or quality partnerships including through-ticketing and smart-cards allowing modal interchange with rail and ferry services. This will also take full control over franchising and regulation of the bus network including working with, or optionally taking over the duties of, the traffic commissioner.

With the South West Trains franchise due for re-letting in 2017 and the Great Western franchise in 2019, one of the options is for Combined Authorities at regional level across the networks to be able to specify the details of train service, frequency, station improvements and access for all. (This would give us an equivalent body to Transport for the North — i.e. Transport for the South West).

South West Transport Network **Statement** for

BaNES Cabinet on 4 November 2015

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BaNES Transport Board 16 November 2015

The current problems with funding local bus and rail services and the impact this is having on the MetroWest project whose successful delivery is vital for the economic development of the whole city region, means that this is an issue which demands a proper devolution settlement. The Bristol and Bath City Region is in real danger of being left behind by more adventurous regions like the North, the Midlands, Devon and Cornwall and even Bournemouth and Poole! We would urge the Leaders Board to carry out full consultation on devolution across the city region. We would remind the board that devolution can also involve strengthening the roles of parish and town councils to deliver more public services as part of the settlement. For instance, this could involve giving greater powers to Weston-super-Mare town council or creating a new town council for Kingswood and Staple Hill (perhaps combined with the current Hanham town council).

Unless we go forward with some urgent proposals for devolution we will be in danger of being one of the last parts of the South West to be under direct Whitehall control for transport and local government.

David Redgewell

Martin Cinnamon

Ian Beckey

South West Transport Network – Tel 07814 794953

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My name is Duncan Hounsell. I am speaking on behalf of Saltford Parish Council on the subject of the re-opening of Saltford Railway Station. I would like to highlight some of the information sent to you in the briefing paper. B&NES Council has been acting as “promoter” of a re-opened station at Saltford. A station at Saltford was included in the vision for the Metro West Rail project in 2011 and soon after B&NES Council commissioned a small desk-based study on Saltford Station from Halcrow which reported in March 2012. The encouraging data in that report prompted B&NES Council to commission a Higher Level Output Assessment from consultants CH2MHill which was received by B&NES Council in October 2014. This report concluded that, unless there were unforeseen problems, a station at the existing site at Saltford would have a benefit/cost ratio of 2 to 1 and that even before monetised environmental benefits are factored in. A benefit/cost ratio of 2:1 meets a necessary hurdle set by the Department for Transport for funding. A re-opened station at Saltford is projected to bring in annual net revenue of £770,000 and have car-parking space for up to 144 vehicles. Saltford Station project is now about at stage 2 of Network Rail’s 8 stage GRIP process for railway development. The first 4 stages are about planning, the final 4 about implementation. £250,000 was set aside in the B&NES Council budget for this year and next to take the project forward to GRIP stages 3 and possibly 4. As far as I am aware, this work has not yet been commissioned by the new B&NES Conservative administration. I understand that the present administration on B&NES Council is waiting to learn from GWR’s timetable work on behalf of the Local Transport Body that Saltford can fit into the half-hourly Metro West service timetable. However, it is the responsibility of B&NES Council to ask for Saltford Station to be included in these timetable studies in the first place. Saltford Parish Council asks that there is no unnecessary delay or insufficient pressure from B&NES Council on this timetable question and that consultants are commissioned to take the project forward to GRIP stages 3 and even 4. It is important that your panel is fully informed so that you can fulfil your scrutiny role on this project. This is not only about providing Saltford’s commuters a gateway to the half-hourly Metro West services, but also playing a part in reducing road traffic into Bath and contributing to the economic development of this area. Re-opening Saltford Station on the existing site is a straightforward project for which Network Rail is already providing “passive provision” in its electrification programme and does not require any new railway infrastructure. A Saltford Station “subject to the business case” is referred to in Network Rail’s “Western Route Study” for Control Period 6 (2019-2024) which sets out anticipated developments on the railway network in that period. Saltford Parish Council asks that your panel monitors the progress and tempo of this project by B&NES Cabinet. Once Saltford Station reaches GRIP stage 3, it may be able to access ad hoc capital funding released by the Department of Transport for new stations amongst other potential sources of funds. That would be an opportunity not to be missed. Finally, further project development at Saltford appears explicitly as a budget line in appendix 3 of the Draft Capital Programme under the section “Existing programme items” for 2016/17 which form part of your papers for this meeting. Your scrutiny role is very important. Thank you.

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Good Afternoon, My name is Chris Warren,

I am the leader of the INDEPENDENT Saltford Station Campaign. I hope you have read or will read the briefing paper that was emailed to you all last week explaining the latest situation with the progress of this project.

Back in May, a unanimous democratic mandate was given to the re opening of the station, at Parliamentary level, local authority level, and at Parish Council level all candidates were elected on a pro station ticket. Indeed, all 11 Saltford Parish Councillors were voted in on a pro station stance by a wide margin over those who opposed it.

Bath Spa University is keen to see the station operational as it will greatly assist with their acute parking problems at their Newton Park Campus.

The campaign envisages the station as a local transport hub, where public buses including a local mini bus serving Bath Spa and surrounding villages can call, a taxi rank can be included as well as a river link. Add to this cycling provision as well as the existing comprehensive network of footpaths that serve the site, Saltford station can really help in achieving the modal shift from car dependency.

You will have been at the 6 hour full council meeting last Thursday evening where the Bathampton Park and Ride was discussed. It is clear B&NES urgently needs solutions to it's chronic transport problems, what with Bath having a new Enterprise Zone and the riverside development nearing completion. Good transport links go hand in hand with economic growth. It is clear that, without alternatives to the private car, Bath is close to becoming stifled by traffic and it's detrimental effect on air quality leading to public health issues.

The Station Campaign has demonstrated strong public support for it's cause. The site is on a previously developed site which is not in the greenbelt. This could be an easy success for the council with the station part of MetroWest giving half-hourly cross-regional services. This is a west of Bath Park and Ride that has dropped into the laps of the council.

There is a clear and proven pattern of where new rail investment goes in, the local economy flourishes. Saltford Business Network supports the re-opening of Saltford Station.

We are at a crucial stage as timetabling work is being carried out now with input from The West of England Partnership Local Transport Body and GWR, the train operator. We need a 'Clear Ahead' signal from this B&NES administration as the official promoter of the station asap in order for this council to fully engage with Network Rail and take the project through to the GRIP 4 stage of project development where it will be "shovel ready" should capital funding materialise sooner than expected.

Finally, last weekend, I was delighted to receive from Railfuture on behalf of the campaign a national award recognising all our efforts so far. Railfuture is a national lobbying group that has been at the forefront of railway development. Indeed we were rubbing shoulders with representatives of The Campaign for Borders Rail, who after many years of diligent work, finally saw the northern section of the 'Waverley Route' reopen giving the people of the Scottish Borders rail access into Edinburgh. Rail industry leaders were also present as were councillors and officers from JTEC.

The judges commented that 'the Saltford Station campaign shows a sound knowledge of the rail industry and grasp of technical detail, good engagement with stakeholders, cross party support, a strong environmental message and a good chance of success....'

Your scrutiny role on this project is crucial. Thank you

Communities, Transport and Environment Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel

Monday, 16th November 2015

Possible Bath Low Emission Zone (LEZ)

Background

The Council received funding during 2013/4, along with many other English local authorities, to investigate and produce reports on ways to tackle poor air quality within their areas. The Council received £46500 of which £40000 was spent on a Low Emission Zone Feasibility Study.

The findings from the study were presented to a meeting of the Planning, Transport and Environment Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel on 16th September 2014. The Panel noted the report and the Chair asked for a further report to the Panel as part of the consultation process.

The Cabinet then received a report on 12th November 2014 on the Bath Transport Strategy within which there was a recommendation that feasibility work continue on exploring an LEZ. The Cabinet has not to date received a formal public presentation of the LEZ report although Officers have said that the report was presented informally to its members. Formal decisions have not therefore been taken on the options described in the consultant's report including those on possible boundaries.

On 8th July 2015 the Cabinet received a report entitled "Update on the Getting around Bath Transport Strategy" within which the reference to a feasibility study for an LEZ was repeated.

Finally the Cabinet on 4th November 2015 received a report on a new Corporate Strategy for the Council which repeated the aim of improving air quality within Bath but was silent on how this might be achieved.

On 5th November 2015 Bath's MP Ben Howlett raised in Parliament the question of air quality within Bath with the DEFRA minister Liz Truss. The exchange reported in Hansard is repeated below:

T10. [902006] **Ben Howlett (Bath) (Con):** *Bath residents will welcome the consultations in the Department on air quality, given the high levels of air pollution in the city, as the Secretary of State will know from her visit earlier this year. Will she confirm that this will help cities such as Bath to introduce low-emission zones?*

Elizabeth Truss: *I remember standing with my hon. Friend by the roadside in Bath and breathing in the fumes. The clean air zones that we are introducing provide, for the first time, a national framework that local authorities can adopt*

and put in place in their area to address air quality issues, so I hope that Bath is looking at that.

Council Officers have also reported as follows:

Bath & North East Somerset Council undertook a Low Emission Zone feasibility study for Bath (completed 2014), using the government's local air quality grant. Most of the major road network in Bath falls within an Air Quality Management Area. In the areas covered by the study, the national objective annual mean of 40 micrograms per cubic metre for nitrogen dioxide is exceeded by up to 20 micrograms per cubic metre (National Air Quality Regulations [Environment Act 1995]). Bath and North East Somerset Council (2014) LEZ Study, Low Emission Zone Feasibility Study for Bath

Finally the Health and Well Being Board stated in its annual report in 2014:

*Getting Around Bath is a soon to be published Transport Strategy through which the council aims to support economic growth, promote sustainable transport and **improve air quality***

Current position

The Council has received a number of reports over the past 2 years that specifically relate to the possibility of creating an LEZ for Bath. The 2014 report received by a predecessor to this panel set out a series of options for implementing the creation of an LEZ. Statements about the intention to advance the proposition have been regularly repeated yet it appears that the Council does not intend to progress this important initiative until 2016 at the earliest. Officers have also stated that at the present time no resources have been allocated to progress the matter. Regrettably it is hard to escape the conclusion that little tangible progress has been made by the Council on this issue as there is no published implementation plan nor have any statements been made on what public consultation might take place.

DEFRA has recently consulted on changes to the regulatory regime in relation to air quality management following on from a Supreme Court ruling earlier this year which held that the UK government was in breach of certain air quality targets, in particular for NO₂ which is a problem in parts of central Bath. DEFRA expects to publish its proposals by the end of the year. To enable the UK government to meet its legal obligations it may be expected that local authorities will be asked to actively promote pollution-limiting measures particularly where these involve road traffic. It seems likely however that BANES will still need to follow through on the work undertaken so far and achieve tangible measureable improvements in air quality in the City of Bath.

The Panel is requested to investigate the apparent lack of progress by the Council in progressing an LEZ for Bath and make recommendations to the Council on how the initiative can be expedited, resources allocated, and a clear timetable published to include public consultation on boundaries.

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