

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

PLANNING, HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Tuesday, 2nd May, 2017

Present:- Councillors Barry Macrae (Chairman), Colin Blackburn, Christopher Pearce (in place of Lisa O'Brien), Fiona Darey, Richard Samuel (in place of Cherry Beath) and David Veale

Also in attendance: Tony Crouch (World Heritage Manager) and Benjamin Woods (Group Manager - Economy and Culture)

Cabinet Member for Economic Development: Councillor Patrick Anketell-Jones

Cabinet Member for Homes & Planning: Councillor Liz Richardson

58 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

In the absence of Councillor Will Sandry (Chairman), Councillor Barry Macrae (Vice-Chair) acted as Chairman and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

59 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chairman drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

60 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Councillors Will Sandry, Lisa O'Brien and Cherry Beath had sent their apologies to the Panel. Councillors Christopher Pearce and Richard Samuel were present as substitutes for Lisa O'Brien and Cherry Beath for the duration of the meeting.

61 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

62 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There was none.

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

There were none.

64 MINUTES - 7TH MARCH 2017

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

65 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Councillor Patrick Anketell-Jones addressed the Panel, a summary is set out below.

Arts Funding: He said that he had had a good meeting recently with the Bath Cultural Forum and that they understood that the Council could not supply funding in the form of direct grants, but still have intentions to fund arts activity.

He added that none of the 90 members of the Forum pay a subscription fee and that at their meeting he had suggested that they consider such a proposal.

Councillor Colin Blackburn asked how the Forum had responded to that proposal.

Councillor Anketell-Jones said it had been quite positive.

Councillor Christopher Pearce asked how were funding requests made and allocated.

Councillor Anketell-Jones explained that applications are made through the Arts Development Team in accordance with the policies set by the administration and added that he wished to see this area of work promoted across B&NES.

The Chairman asked if grant applications were directly approved by the Cabinet Member.

Councillor Anketell-Jones replied that they were not.

Bath Quays South: The Cabinet Member for Economic Development explained to the Panel that BMT had made a strategic decision not to proceed with a substantial base within Bath. He added that considerable interest had been shown in the site since their decision for either a sole tenant or multiple ones.

The Chairman asked if the Council had been cited as a reason for BMT withdrawing from the project.

Councillor Anketell-Jones reassured him that they were not.

Councillor Colin Blackburn asked if in any discussion BMT had commented on their long term approach for the City.

Councillor Anketell-Jones confirmed that they intend to remain and keep a presence in Bath.

Councillor Barry Macrae asked what the timescale was for the project.

Councillor Anketell-Jones replied that planning consent is in place and that preparation / ground work could commence this month.

York Street: The Cabinet Member for Economic Development informed the Panel that the road support beneath York Street was eroding and that a survey of the surrounding area was likely to be required. He said that depending on the results of the survey it may cause a delay to the Archway project. He stated that he would update the Panel as soon as he had any further information.

Destination Management: The Cabinet Member for Economic Development said that this work should look to promote all areas of B&NES. He explained that he would like to see Welcoming Ambassadors in place to meet visitors to the area. He added that positive visitor experiences were important to the engagement of other visitors.

Employment Space: The Cabinet Member for Economic Development said that Bath was running out of industrial employment space and that if the current Pickfords site was lost to student accommodation it could put further pressure on the city.

The Chairman said that he hoped that the Council would defend the non-loss of commercial space and asked that the Cabinet Member be as firm as he can in any future discussions.

Councillor Colin Blackburn asked if any proactive work was taking place with regard to small commercial units as there were so few available.

Councillor Anketell-Jones replied that this was difficult to progress within Bath, but might be more achievable within Keynsham. He said that he would come back with some information at a future meeting.

The Cabinet Member for Homes & Planning, Councillor Liz Richardson addressed the Panel, a summary is set out below.

Placemaking Plan: She stated that the Council was still awaiting the Inspector's report and that this meant that it had now been rescheduled for debate at the Council meeting in July.

Planning Fees: She said there was a possibility that the Government may not be ready to implement the planned increase in fees from July.

The Chairman asked if the delay would have any budget implications.

Councillor Richardson reassured that it would not.

Housing Services: She wished to thank the officers involved in hosting a recent Government Women's Equalities Group and that the group had been impressed with our work.

Temporary Accommodation: She informed the Panel in Q4 of 2016/17 there had been a slight increase in the number of households that had been placed in temporary accommodation and that the current figure was 32.

Houses in Multiple Occupation: She explained that the Council is currently reviewing the Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and had appointed ARUP Consultants to undertake a review of the existing HMO SPD to investigate various policy options. She added that as part of the Review, the Council would seek the views of the public on various options suggested by the ARUP review report. She asked for comments to be received by 15th May 2017.

Article 4 Directive: She informed the Panel that the Council were in the initial stages of considering whether to implement an Article 4 Directive in respect of changing the use of premises from business to residential.

Councillor Richard Samuel asked if there had been a net change with regard to social housing availability.

Councillor Richardson replied that the stock was increasing.

The Chairman thanked both of the Cabinet Members on behalf of the Panel for their updates.

66 DRAFT DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Group Manager for Economy & Culture introduced this item to the Panel. He said that the Council and Bath Tourism Plus Limited (BTP) have now commenced work on an update of the Destination Management Plan (DMP) for B&NES. He added that the update provides an opportunity to broaden the scope of the old plan from tourism to encompass the wider visitor economy.

He said that in addition to BTP, the Council also works closely with Bath Business Improvement District, BID, which was established in 2011, to produce and maintain high quality public realm in the city.

He explained that a Steering Group of key partners and stakeholders in the development and expansion of the visitor economy had been formed who's views and opinions are being taken into account to feed into and inform any developing DMP.

Chris Evans, Director, The Tourism Company said that it was useful to have this opportunity as part of the process to address the Panel. He said that work had begun in February and was scheduled to complete in June / July.

He explained that alongside the Steering Group meetings were also taking place with Sector Groups, including Bath Independent Guest House Association/ Bath Self-catering Association, Cultural Group, Independent Traders Group, Hotel Managers Group and Attractions Group.

He shared some emerging issues with the Panel which included:

- Overall aim/ appropriate level of growth
- Loss of distinctiveness/independent businesses
- Perceived poor value for money
- Promotion of rural hinterland
- Arrival by road (gateways, congestion)

The Chairman said that he had previously been involved in the tourism development of the City and that to have a 'direction of travel' of future aspirations was essential. He said that he welcomed the work being undertaken.

Councillor Colin Blackburn asked what impact has Airbnb had within B&NES.

Chris Evans replied that he believed that the use of Airbnb had escalated within the last two years and that 20% of rooms would have been booked in previous private accommodation. He added that Airbnb could attract Hen / Stag parties to residential areas and that this could have an impact.

Councillor Christopher Pearce asked what the main reasons were for people visiting the area. He suggested that promotion of the Theatre and restaurants be encouraged.

Chris Evans replied that it was the heritage and the setting of the City, the beauty of its architecture, that the retail offer is good and is recognised globally.

The Group Manager for Economy & Culture informed the Panel that the 19th – 21st May would be very busy in the City as the Tour Series arrives in Bath for events on Saturday 20th May and the Party in the City takes place on Friday 19th May to signify the start of The Bath Festival. In addition the iconic Royal Crescent celebrates its 250th anniversary on Sunday 21st May. He said that race spectators will be encouraged to make a weekend of it in Bath, take a walk around the city, take in the heritage, browse the independent and well known high street shops or visit the spa or some of the many cafes, restaurants and bars.

Councillor Richard Samuel said that any issues raised should be evidenced and then time should be taken to form a plan that will address them.

Councillor Fiona Darey asked how businesses are reacting to the increase in Hen / Stag activity.

Chris Evans replied that he was not aware that any hotel had introduced any restrictions. He added that it had been a fairly recent observation and that no extensive evidence had yet been gathered.

The Chairman stated that as Councillors this Panel has a duty to represent the residents and traders who pay taxes and rates alongside acknowledging the positive value of visitors to the area.

Councillor Richard Samuel said that he would like the environmental impact of this work to be taken on board and for it to be mitigated where possible.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to note the work being undertaken on the Destination Management Plan and asked to be kept informed of its progress.

67 REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF THE CITY OF BATH WORLD HERITAGE SITE STEERING GROUP

The World Heritage Manager introduced this report to the Panel. He explained that the Bath World Heritage Site (WHS) is managed through a well-established steering group with an independent chairperson. He said that the Council acts as the 'chief steward' of the WHS but operates in partnership with other steering group members. He stated that Peter Metcalfe had completed his term of office as chairperson and wished to deliver his end of term report containing key observations from his time in post.

Peter Metcalfe addressed the Panel. He stated that this current WHS Management Plan for 2016-2022 had received unanimous endorsement at the September 2016 Full Council meeting.

He said that the updating of the 2016-2022 Plan had been founded upon UNESCO's 5 C's drivers:

- **Credibility**
- **Conservation**
- **Capacity Building**
- **Communication**
- **Communities**

He added that two public participation events were also held - a review workshop in 2015 and an eight-week public consultation on the final draft plan in May to July 2016.

He explained that three of the UNESCO 'C's' **Credibility, Conservation and Capacity Building**, show that the WHS is in good hands with few examples of derelict or abandoned buildings, well supported by a track record of caring for heritage with management systems in place locally and nationally.

He said that the fourth UNESCO 'C' **Communication** does capture transportation. He explained that the 2008 UNESCO Mission Report, paragraph 5.2, expressed concern at the omission of what it called an 'Integrated Traffic Control Plan'. The Council adopted the 'Getting Around Bath Strategy' in 2014 and it is now factored into the 2016-2022 plan.

The fifth UNESCO 'C' **Communities** – He said that he knew from past experience that the city and hinterland wards that overlook the WHS are richly endowed with people, individuals, voluntary groups or historical societies who take a keen interest in the attributes of the Bath WHS.

He stated that within the life of the current plan that careful attention would be required on the following areas:

- The poor physical condition and use of the public realm in many parts of the WHS.
- An absence of positive ownership of the WHS by businesses, institutions and others in the WHS
- Ward Councillors to identify attributes/groups in their ward contributing to the WHS.
- Through research & education raise public awareness and pride in the WHS.
- Review UNESCO's Sustainable Use criteria and their relevance within the WHS

He said that he had enjoyed the role immensely and thanked the Panel for the vote of confidence in the World Heritage Site Steering Group, the WHS Manager and all who had contributed to the completion of the third WHS Management Plan.

The Chairman on behalf of the Panel thanked him and the World Heritage Manager for the work they have done.

The World Heritage Manager said that sustainability was key to this work area and that the Destination Management Plan would specifically seek to address this.

Councillor Christopher Pearce asked if the implementation of a cable car within the City would affect its status.

The World Heritage Manager replied that only two sites had ever lost their overall status and that they would assess any such plans if they come forward.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to note the report.

68 PANEL WORKPLAN

The Panel **RESOLVED** to approve their workplan as printed.

The meeting ended at 4.25 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services