

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

MINUTES OF CORPORATE POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL MEETING

Monday, 27th September, 2021

Present:- **Councillors** Karen Warrington, Winston Duguid, Mark Elliott, Andrew Furse, Lucy Hodge, Shaun Hughes, Hal MacFie, Alastair Singleton and Sally Davis

32 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

33 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

34 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

There were none.

35 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

36 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There was none.

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

There were none.

38 MINUTES

The Panel confirmed the minutes of the previous meeting as a correct record with the following addition to minute number 28 'Preparing for the Future':

'The officer explained that yes staff can come into the office'

39 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

The Panel received an update from Councillor Richard Samuel, Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Resources:

Finance –

- The Government have made some announcements on the future of funding in Adult Social Care, we are still awaiting the details on this.
- The National Insurance changes made by the Government will increase the Council's pay bill significantly. We are yet to hear if there will be any Government compensation.
- There have been changes in Government regarding the 'levelling up' agenda – no announcements have been made yet.
- Planning changes have been put on hold but will be looked at again by Michael Gove.
- There will be more information on finance at Item 11 on the agenda for this meeting.

Economic Development

- There has been a meeting, including local members, of the Somer Valley Forum regarding the Local Development Order for the Enterprise Zone. This is currently being considered.
- Regarding the Radstock Regeneration Company – there have been some legacy issues which will be reported at a later date.
- Bath Quays/Western Riverside – we are expecting a planning application shortly – this will represent the first stage of the North Quays development. Regarding Bath South Quays – tenants are currently being sought. This development has the largest array of solar panels in Bath. Argyle Works (Bath Quays South) – good progress is being made although some property conditions are poorer than expected.
- Stephen Bird steps down as Head of Heritage on 30th September 2021. He will be a hard act to follow. A successor has been appointed.

Property

- Members received a briefing on this earlier today. The Milsom Quarter work is close to fruition although there are a few issues to resolve such as transport movement in the area.

Bath Riverline Project

- Work is progressing well. We visited this recently (by boat). The team are working on the design of an outline route from Pulteney Bridge to Batheaston. There has been a public webinar.

40 PLANNING GAIN

Richard Stott, Team Manager – Planning and Enforcement, introduced the item.

Panel Members raised the following points and asked the following questions

Councillor Elliott asked how the Council monitors 106 agreements to check payments and that works are carried out as promised.

The officer explained that previously, case officers would check in on progress. There is now a database that monitors progress as soon as a planning application is granted – there are a series of flags alerting officers to carry out checks. Service areas report back to us on an annual basis and a report is published in December each year. Regarding a crossing referred to by Councillor Elliott, the officer explained that if this resulted from a 106 agreement and the money has been paid to the Council, it is up to the service area to update our department – the service area will have a programme of projects.

Councillor Elliott asked if the database was in use 7 years ago. The officer explained that projects were migrated over (the line was drawn at 1990). Most projects have a pay back clause of 5-10 years. Occasionally a 106 agreement slips the net, but this is rare and we would follow it up.

Councillor Furse thanked officers for enforcement work that is carried out. He asked about a development gain for Western Riverside – pedestrian access to Victoria Park. He asked why this has not been delivered when the money has been paid. The officer stated that he would double check on this but explained that project delivery is the responsibility of the service area. He also thought that the trigger may not have been reached.

Councillor Furse referred to Hope House, he explained that there was a planning gain for community benefit. He explained that land gets moved over from developer to developer, each take their profit and there is no money left for community benefit, they fail to deliver on their social responsibility. He stated that any enforcement that could be brought would be welcome. He added that sometimes planning gain can come out of change of use but local residents don't seem to benefit.

Councillor MacFie asked about the input Parish and Town Councils have in 106 and CIL matters. The officer explained that regarding CIL – local areas get a portion, 15% to Town Councils and 25% if they have a neighbourhood plan. Regarding 106, he explained that there is not so much scope for Parish and Town Councils to have a say. He explained that this issue could be further explained at a Parish Liaison meeting.

Councillor Warrington asked if there is any mechanism to report back to Parish and Town Councils on how much money is left in the pot and also, is there a crib sheet with examples of community projects. The officer explained that a head figure could be provided but it would be up to the PC and TC to keep a record and report back (hyperlink in the report). Regarding the crib sheet, the officer stated that this does not exist at the moment but FAQs are being produced and he would speak to his team about developing a crib sheet.

Councillor Samuel (Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Resources) informed the Panel the WECA had invited the Council to bid for the City Region Transport Settlement which has £500-£800million to invest in transport. The Government expect that the Council would contribute £42million over 5 years. Officers will be putting together a report on how the Council could fund that contribution. This will have implications on current CIL and 106 arrangements. This Panel should receive a report on this when we know more. The officer stated that he did not know the details of this yet but added that the Government have lifted the restriction on pooling money regarding CIL and 106.

Councillor Samuel explained that, in making up the £42million, there may be new areas of assumption that were not part of planning decision previously. He also informed the Panel that the WECA Mayor is keen to update key transport corridors in the WECA region.

Councillor Hughes asked about the affordable housing obligation and stated that a lot of medium/large developments are not complying with our policy. The officer explained that negotiation on affordable housing happens during the planning application phase, sometimes there is off site delivery. 106 is a legal agreement but it does not determine the percentage of affordable housing.

Councillor MacFie asked how the Planning Committee could affect the affordable housing agreement with developers. The officer explained that each case is different and the report recommendation will be based on many competing priorities. If the Committee are unhappy at the percentage of affordable housing, it is in their gift to refuse the application.

41 INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK MEASURES

Steve Harman, Head of Corporate Governance and Business Insight introduced the report. He explained that an ambition of the current administration is to be more open and transparent. He further explained that this is an in-house system, developed internally and based around interactive dashboards. The officer gave the Panel a live demonstration of the Integrated Reporting Framework (IRF) system.

Panel Members raised the following points and asked the following

Councillor Singleton thanked the officers for the huge amount of work in developing this system. He expressed concern that the Panel had asked for the opportunity to input/scrutinize the system at the time of development. The officer stated that this is the start of the journey and this item could be brought back to the Panel at a later date.

Following a request from Councillor Warrington that the Panel have input into KPI's, the officer agreed there would be input.

Councillor Elliott stated that he also had reservations around the Panel's input. He stated that the technical work was good but stated that it is hard to assess how useful KPIs are without knowing how they are used. He added that he is keen to hear the KPIs for directors as it shows how departments are driven. The officer stated that he could bring this back to the Panel for their input.

Councillor Warrington asked if the system is automatically updated. The officer explained that information is dragged in on a regular basis. Councillor Warrington stated that 22 KPIs have been chosen out of 200 and asked for a list of the 22, the criteria and also how they fit with Corporate Priorities.

Councillor Duguid asked about benchmarking with other authorities. Andy Rothery, Chief Finance Officer (151 officer), explained that, he has spoken to other 151 officers about local meaningful data in order to compare like with like. Councillor Samuel added that this system had moved on from quarterly performance reports and was a big step. He explained that Cabinet Members need to be accountable for figures published. He added that it would be useful to be able to publish a set of indicators alongside a budget papers which gives the Panel opportunity for involvement. He explained that it will take time to properly embed this system and that by February the system will be set up.

Councillor Duguid asked if other UA's of a similar size have similar systems. The officer explained that it is mixed. He explained that the Council has 800 services which are diverse and it is hard to capture everything.

The Panel **RESOLVED** that:

- Information on the 22 KPI's (criteria and how they fit with Corporate Priorities) be requested. Panel can see what Cabinet Member bring back in each of their areas in terms of KPIs.

- This item come back to Panel as the system develops.
- Information on who has access – ward members and PDS Panel members?

42 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

Andy Rothery, Chief Financial Officer (S151 Officer) and Councillor Richard Samuel, Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Resources, introduced the report.

Councillor Samuel stated that the information in the report has been adopted by the Cabinet. He stated that the following year would be tough as the safety net provided by the Government regarding Covid is taken away.

Panel Members raised the following points and asked the following

In response to a question from Councillor Duguid, the officer explained that Covid support from the Government ended after Quarter 1.

Councillor Duguid asked if the Covid restrictions around the Roman Baths were too robust considering that the Government has lifted restrictions. The officer explained that this is a fine line and restrictions must be frequently reviewed. Councillor Hughes asked if more visitors could be accommodated in the Roman Baths if restrictions were eased. The officer explained that this was difficult to answer as it depends on demand. We could look at the bookings system.

Councillor Samuel stated that there is an employment shortfall, wages are likely to drift up. There are heavy pressures on the economy.

43 PANEL WORKPLAN

The Panel noted their future workplan with the following notes and suggestions for items:

- Councillor Duguid to liaise with Councillor Samuel around the future item on Economic Development in order to tighten the brief and have an objective for the item.
- Corporate Risk Register (new item suggestion)
- Civic Centre (new item suggestion) – *ways of working/travel/journeys/expenses/does everyone get a desk in their preferred place if they request it.*
- KPIs update (new item arising from report on the Integrated Reporting Framework)
- Complaints (9th May) – to include how many from various streams and how it informs the policy.

The meeting ended at 5.52 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services