

## **BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET**

### **MINUTES OF CORPORATE POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL MEETING**

Monday, 30th January, 2023

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

Apologies for absence: Councillors:

#### **44 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### **45 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

The Chair drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

#### **46 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Councillor Furse gave his apologies and was substituted by Councillor Hounsell.

Councillor MacFie gave his apologies and was substituted by Councillor Hirst.

#### **47 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

#### **48 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN**

There was none.

#### **49 ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS - TO RECEIVE STATEMENTS, PETITIONS OR QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THIS MEETING**

There were none.

#### **50 MINUTES**

There were suggested additions to the minutes. Amended minutes will be brought to the next meeting of the Panel for confirmation and signing.

The Chair explained that a summary of the comments/questions on the Budget item from the meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2023 had been circulated. Panel members indicated their approval of this summary which to be forwarded to the Cabinet for consideration as part of the budget discussions.

#### **51 BUSINESS CHANGE HUB PROGRAMME**

Amanda George, Director of Business Change & Customer, and Marc Higgins, Head of Service – Business Change Hub, gave a presentation which covered the following:

- Business Change Hub Update Introduction
- Role of the Business Change Hub
- Principle programmes of work
- Customer Experience programme
- Customer Experience workstreams
- Children and Education Transformation Programme
- Programmes
- Corporate Landlord model
- Integrated Corporate Landlord
- Development of a toolkit and processes

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

Councillor Singleton asked if the 'customer experience' referred to only external customers or did it include internal customers. The officer explained that customer service standards are being introduced at present. This does include internal customers as well, the work covers both.

Councillor Hirst asked how success will be measured and recommended that a balance be found around robust processes but not too much bureaucracy. The officer explained that it was not a large department and he did not want to create a bureaucratic system. He explained that it was a diverse organisation with some significant programmes of work and some small. Regarding measurement of success, the officer explained that measures regarding specific outcomes are being developed.

Councillor Hughes asked if the primary driver is to reduce costs. The officer explained that the critical driver is improvement of outcomes and how we operate.

Councillor Davis asked officers if they were confident that Parish and Town Councillors are kept in the loop. She also asked if feedback regarding Councillor Direct is followed up. The officer explained that Councillor Direct is a central email address and that the feedback has been good. Regarding Parish Councillors, this is on the radar. The service design team will be contacting them regarding 'Fix My Street'.

Councillor Hodge asked the following questions (*officer responses shown in italics*):

- Has there been investment in the unit? *There has been £330k per year initially and there will be core funding from April.*
- How will you report back? *We are working on governance at present, feedback will depend on the project.*
- How does the unit sit with internal audit? *There is not a duplication with internal audit, we act as an internal consultancy which may dovetail with audit.*
- How do you hope to get employee buy in? *This has come from the Senior Leadership Team. Work will be focused, we are not involved in business-as-*

*usual work. Employee buy in is important, we work a lot with a service at the start to build a relationship and engagement.*

Councillor Hounsell commented that it is useful to inform Parish clerks about works or surveys (eg. Surveys carried out regarding the Local Plan) as then there are less calls to local Councillors and officers.

Councillor Singleton asked if an in-house work team will be recommended. The officer stated that the Corporate Landlord Model would address this eventually. Value for money will be a consideration. Councillor Singleton asked how the Corporate Landlord Model is defined. The officer explained that there will be a strategy as to how assets are managed.

Councillor Duguid asked where we are on the journey regarding the Corporate Landlord Model in relation to other authorities. The officer explained that this is a widely used model which provides consistency. There is work to do towards a corporate approach to managing our assets.

Councillor Warrington commented on clarity of objectives – she noted that the overriding driver is customer experience and this will result in some efficiencies. The Corporate Landlord Model will mean it is easier to change the strategy. The officer stated that this is a reasonable summary – the primary driver is improved outcomes, there will be a digital-first approach where possible. Savings are also possible.

The Chair thanked the officers.

## **52 SOMER VALLEY ENTERPRISE ZONE**

Richard Holden, Operations Manager - Bath & Somer Valley Enterprise Zones (SVEZ), introduced the item. He gave a presentation which covered the following:

- SVEZ – Redline boundary including highways network improvements
- Reasons for intervention
- Engagement Process
- Illustrative Masterplan
- Structural landscaping
- Maximum Heights
- Next Steps
- Highways Interventions Along A362
- SVEZ Roundabout
- Sunnyside Road Widening
- Thicket Mead Roundabout
- Bat Survey/species and West Cycle Track update from WECA
- Noise and Air Quality Assessments
- 4m Fence at Plot 12
- 2m Acoustic Fencing

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

Councillor Hirst asked about traffic infrastructure, in particular the A37 link and how the traffic impact will be managed. The officer explained that he is working with a traffic management modelling team and there is a raft of data on traffic and an extensive modelling exercise. 4 key areas of mitigation have been identified.

Councillor Hirst asked if there was an update regarding 'noise TBC' (page 44). The officer explained that there are no disbenefits in terms of noise but a couple of mitigations have been proposed, an example being an acoustic fence.

Councillor Warrington asked if the modelling included the A37. The officer stated that this has been included, there are no physical changes proposed.

Councillor Hughes stated that he was on the key stakeholders group. He stated that the team have reached a good point and he is happy overall with where things are. The main concerns have been the employee numbers on site and avoiding retail on the site. He also explained that residents have had concerns around the delivery plan, especially in light of the business centre in the area which is closing and the gap until the new facility opens. He asked how confident officers are that this development will happen. The officer stated that he is alert to residents' concerns regarding the closure of the business centre and is hopeful that the location can be repurposed. In terms of the delivery of the SVEZ, he explained that plot P6 and P8 have the potential for flexible working space and support for small businesses. There is a delivery strategy but there will still be a couple of years before enabling activities.

Councillor Hughes asked about the timeline. The officer stated that the highways works have to come first.

Councillor Hodge asked the following questions (*Officer responses shown in italics*)

- Are there any other examples of a similar development? *This is the first LDO for the authority and they are limited in the country.*
- How are the conditions enforced – who decides on this? *There are a set of conditions in advance of the LDO, as it is adopted, the conditions are locked in.*
- What happens if there is non-compliance? *The design codes set the parameters for the entirety of the site. Parameters are set such as the nature of the finish, colours, and materials. A compliance application would be submitted and compliance would have to be proved. It is strict – the Enterprise Zone is an exemplar regarding Climate and Ecological Emergency and the development sets a high bar to be future proof.*

Councillor Duguid asked about the triple bottom line – social, environmental and economic. *The officer explained that the SVEZ is looking at zero net carbon and will set a precedent for future developments.*

Councillor Hughes asked about viability reports in terms of a developer taking a plot but not able to meet all of the conditions. He asked if it would be the same as the planning process. The officer explained that viability remains a challenge. He explained that the private sector has not brought forward an Enterprise Zone.

Councillor Warrington asked about public transport and broadband in terms of the project. The officer explained that the scheme does introduce some bus stops

(working with WECA and CRSTS). He confirmed that there would be provision for superfast broadband.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to ask Cabinet to consider the following:

1. Clarity on the highways impact of the road between the A37 to the double mini roundabout in Radstock.
2. Clarity in the design codes/guides and to make sure that the conditions are enforced.
3. Future proofing is considered (Economic, Social and Environmental)

**53 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE**

The Cabinet Member for Resources, Councillor Richard Samuel, informed the Panel that the budget papers had been published.

**54 PANEL WORKPLAN**

The Chair updated the Panel on a potential future item regarding Council Tax surcharge. She stated that there was nothing that the Panel could do on this at present and that statutory instruments were in place.

The Panel noted the future workplan

The meeting ended at 5.57 pm

Chair(person) .....

Date Confirmed and Signed .....

**Prepared by Democratic Services**