

Public Questions for Council 16th May 2013

(NOTE: The following questions and answers will be published on the Council's website as soon as possible after the meeting and linked to the published draft minutes of this meeting.)

1. Question from George Bailey

The Halcrow Report was completed July 2012, the Cabinet Member looked at the list of faults in August but it was not considered by B&NES. I finally presented my statement regarding the Halcrow Report to Cabinet on 16th January, with a reminder on 11th February. Responses seemed to be favourable but no action has been taken. Since the branch could be included with Metro West, can we be assured that the report will be re-worked within this financial year?"?

Answer from Cabinet Member/Leader

The Cabinet considered a report on the Radstock to Frome Feasibility Study at its meeting in January. The meeting agreed that:

- (1) To NOTE the conclusions of the study as outlined in paragraph 5.11 of the report;
- (2) To NOTE that the majority of the disused railway line remains protected within the Local Plan Policy D9 for 'sustainable transport purposes' which at the moment is represented by a cycle path, NCN 24;
- (3) To ASK Halcrow to review their conclusions in the light of the results of the 2011 Census and the likely growth in housing in the area promoted in the Core Strategy to ascertain if their conclusions remain valid in the light of this more up to date information; and
- (4) To ASK Halcrow to consider the merits of a simple shuttle between Radstock and Westbury to allow access to the wider rail network including intercity services both to London and the South West and the implications of the potential expansion of the Greater Bristol Metro Scheme.

We are awaiting the results of the 2011 census (10% journey to work data) to see if there is indeed a significant demand for trips from Radstock to Westbury to see if this changes the conclusions of the report that it is unlikely that there is sufficient demand to re-open this railway line. It should be noted that there were not "faults" in the report by Halcrow.

2. Question from Ian Barclay

The Combe Down Stone Mines Stabilisation Project (a Council Major Project) which affects some 700 Combe Down properties, is now in it's final stages. As part of the Project Completion Procedures will the Council, the Cabinet, a Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel or any other Body be reviewing the performance of this c£160m Government and Council-funded Project, assessing the many

Project Aspects including those listed below, many of which appear to remain unsettled at this late stage:

- Area of Stabilisation Project and Aims of the Project
- Project Timeline, with principal dates from January 1994 to end of 100 year Design Life
- Council's role as Project Developer and Landowner, and as Mine Owner and Operator, including the abandonment of the Mines by the Council
- Private Landowners, Stabilisation Works and Documentation provided by the Council
- Legal, Insurance and Contract issues for the Council and for owners of Stabilised Properties
- Planning Applications, Planning Conditions and Permitted Development works
- Combe Down Stone Mines Community Association formed by the Council in 2000, wound up by the Board in 2010
- Project Archaeology Report and Report on Bat Mitigation Works
- Restoration of Project Worksites at Firs Field, Combe Down, a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI)
- Takeover of Scott Wilson Consultants by URS and any implications for the Project
- Long Term access to Project Information and Pre-Project Information including web site and archives?

Answer from the Leader of the Council

A good practice review of the project was carried out by team members and Prof. David Adamson, an expert in sustainable construction. This review was published in book form in 2011, it is also available electronically via the Combe Down page on the Council's website (www.bathnes.gov.uk/cdsm).

It is not intended that there will be any further review of the project.