

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 Council's 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

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