

Bath and North East Somerset Council

SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Minutes of the Meeting held

Thursday, 18th November, 2010, 9.00 am

Councillors: Chair 2010-2011 Councillor Caroline Roberts

Councillor Brian Simmons, Councillor Roger Symonds, Councillor Shirley Steel and Councillor Gordon Wood

Cabinet members: Councillor Charles Gerrish

45 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

46 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Democratic Services Officer drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure as set out on the Agenda.

47 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apology for absence was received from Councillor Steve Hedges due to poor health. The Panel wished Councillor Hedges a quick recovery.

48 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

There were none.

49 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

There were none.

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

The Chair informed the meeting that public speakers would have the opportunity to address the Panel when those items of their interest are on the agenda.

51 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING - 23RD SEPTEMBER 2010

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd September 2010 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

52 MEDIUM TERM SERVICE & RESOURCE PLANNING - 2010 TO 2013 (1 HOUR AND 30 MINUTES)

The Chair invited Henry Brown (Federation of Bath Residents' Association – FOBRA) to address the Panel with his statement.

Henry Brown said that he welcomed what was proposed in the Medium Term Service & Resource Planning (MTSRP) but that he had few comments and suggestions to add to it. He had concerns that litter enforcement would require additional resources for its implementation. He was also concerned about the pricing of parking charges in Bath and expressed his concern, in terms of transport development, that bus subsidy would be reduced. Henry Brown suggested that the Highways and Transportation elements of Environmental Service and Planning Services should be managed as one service (due to many issues that could easily fit within remits of both services) and that there are similarities of function between Police Community Support Officers had similarities with the parking Civil Enforcement Officers, so they should be operating more as one service.

Glen Chipp responded that litter enforcement would require more resources but the service would keep ensure that costs incurred were marginal. The effect of the parking charges over last 2 years had been monitored and that there was little elasticity (i.e. demand had not fallen due to higher prices). Impacts of any increases would continue to be monitored, in particular whether the pricing policy made people use Park and Ride more. Glen Chipp also said that the service would not be looking at reducing bus subsidies but there would be a reduction in the cost of posts. In terms of Highways and Transportation being two separate services, he explained that policy development would be within Planning Services whilst implementation of those policies would be within the Environmental Services remit.

The Chair said that the subject of Litter Enforcement had been scheduled for discussion at the January 2011 meeting of the Panel.

Councillor Wood said that the parking enforcement issue, how the team operates, seems to be confusing to many people.

Matthew Smith replied that one member of the Enforcement staff was now based in Keynsham whilst other staff member were mobile. He also said that it would be helpful if Councillors report any issues that require parking enforcement services so that he could ensure that appropriate arrangements are made.

David Redgewell read out the statement in which he highlighted the following issues: buses – dismantling of essential public transport services; how do you get to work if

buses are cut; more traffic jams; bus wars; jobs affected by bus cuts; rail stations improvements; electrification; and regeneration.

A full copy of the statement from David Redgewell is available on the minute book in Democratic Services.

David Redgewell also said that festivals and events in Bath should be also paying for the carbon footprint. He added that the money should go to bus services instead to festival and events in Bath that were controlled by the Future Bath Plus.

Glen Chipp introduced the report.

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

The Chair said that the whole of Service Delivery took huge cuts and asked what other services across the Council generate income. She also said that the service would lose 36 posts for this coming year and asked if a similar reduction in staff would be made across the Council.

Glen Chipp responded that some other Council services had not had budget problems last year – this was why his service had to make cuts in staffing. He also said that he thought that the commercial estate generates most income for the Council. If all services hit 5% of savings for this year, the Council would reach its target.

The Chair said that there were 40.1 full time employed (FTE) in Transport Planning whilst there were 36 FTE in Transport Design and she queried the balance of it.

Glen Chipp and Matthew Smith replied that the number of people employed depends on the size of capital projects. There was also statutory obligation for the Council to carry out a number of Transport Planning functions.

The Chair expressed her concern about the quality and quantity of work done in highway maintenance and whether the work required had been done properly.

Matthew Smith replied that the Atkins Highway Maintenance and Operations (company contracted by the Council to do highway repairs) were generally working well. The Council had had a huge increase in demand on highway repairs last year. The quality of the work was still there in terms of its finish and it was good value for money. Matthew Smith also said that on one occasion the Council saved quite a lot of money and reduced environmental impact by recycling material in one resurfacing project. There were currently concerns about the quality and timeliness of white lining works but this was being actively addressed.

The Chair said that her concern was that if the work was not done with particular quality, it would have to be done again with the possibility of claims against the Council. She also said that complaints team had been doing a great work in handling complaints.

Matthew Smith confirmed that any remedial works required are not done at an extra cost to the council – they are met by the contractor.

Councillor Gerrish said that the Council was fixing the potholes and not rebuilding the roads. He also praised the work of the complaints team on this matter.

Councillor Symonds said that the surfacing of roads worked very well. He suggested that the co-ordination of putting notices up, doing the road work and putting notices down didn't work that well. Councillor Symonds also said that it would be good for the Panel to see what changes would be in terms of planning fees after the adoption of the Localism Bill.

Councillor Wood asked if there was a possibility to approach Tesco in Keynsham and ask them if they would want to financially contribute towards number plate recognition cameras on the nearby car park.

Matthew Smith said that this was a possibility although it may not be financially viable.

The Chair questioned the Bath Package costs and asked how those could be scrutinised without the figures in the report.

Glen Chipp explained that the Council had detailed figures but not yet the funds for this project. The point was to have the scheme in progress.

Councillor Wood asked if the money for the Bath Package would come from the pot of £600m allocated by the Central Government.

Glen Chipp replied that the money would come from the pot of £600m and there were 21 other authorities bidding on funding from this pot. He also said that the bid from the Council would be at risk if there were too many changes to the proposal.

Councillor Symonds said that the loss of the Government funding for Road Safety, Cycle and Pedestrian training was not acceptable to him and that he was against any cuts related to the Road Safety. He suggested that funding for this area should be obtained from somewhere else. He also said that nothing had been done on cycling improvements from Highways apart from couple of cycle stands. Councillor Symonds also questioned the reasons for having lean reviews across the Council.

Councillor Gerrish replied that lean reviews would enable services to distinguish if the delivery of services to the people could be done better and quicker. He disagreed with Councillor Symonds that nothing had been done for cycling improvements considering that Council funded some of the projects (Two Tunnels, etc).

Matthew Smith suggested that a report on the Cycling Infrastructure and Improvements could be presented to the Panel at the next meeting. The Panel agreed with the suggestion.

Councillor Symonds said that the Council should have better service from the First considering that the Council invested in many services, such as subsidised buses and concessionary fares. He also welcomed that Councillor Gerrish supported Panel's recommendation of the Public Transport Liaison Panel re-establishment. Councillor Symonds asked if Council officers get sent to other Councils or countries

to learn/monitor about their developments in order to improve performance for this area.

Glen Chipp replied that the deal about concessionary fares was a good deal with the First. Matthew Smith said that the staff did go to the other councils and countries to observe best practice there.

Councillor Gerrish added that, in terms of developing Oyster Card, the Council was well ahead of the other authorities in West of England area. He also said that the subsidised buses tendering process achieved savings this year.

The Chair asked about the closing of Old Welton Transfer Station and if that would make savings.

Matthew Smith replied that the closing of Old Welton Transfer Station would not only make savings but it would contribute towards the reduction of carbon emissions and traffic.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- 1) The officers take on board comments made by the Panel Members; and
- 2) The Panel requested to have a report/update on Cycling Infrastructure and Improvements for January 2011 meeting.

53 WINTER MAINTENANCE ARRANGEMENTS UPDATE (30 MINUTES)

Matthew Smith introduced the report.

Henry Brown (Federation of Bath Residents' Association – FOBRA) addressed the Panel. He asked when the decision on grit bins would be taken. He also said that the Snow Code was a handy guide however the suggestion towards the end of the guide that states people should not help themselves from grit bins was a bit confusing. Henry Brown commented that there was no dedicated supply of salt for Bath city centre and asked if that could be arranged. He concluded his statement by suggesting that Council staff that would not have much to do during the severe weather conditions (i.e. Parks staff) and they should be issued with snow shovels to help clear pavements.

Matthew Smith responded that grit bins would be issued once agreement with the relevant Cabinet Member on any outstanding requests. There was, and still would be, a national shortage of salt. The perception that all salt stock goes to rural areas was wrong because most of it was, and would be, used for keeping the principal network clear and treating pedestrian areas in the city centre. Council staff that would not have much to do during the severe weather conditions would be sent to help where needed, as in the past. However, the public must understand that many of Council staff might also be affected by the severe weather conditions in terms of not being able to get to work.

George Bottin (Highway Maintenance Engineer) said that 388 existing grit bins had been filled up. The Council would soon produce a leaflet with the advice on winter maintenance and how people could use the grit from grit bins.

Councillor Gerrish commented that residents should not use the grit for their own purposes (i.e. gritting the back garden, driveways, etc). He added that locations of grit bins would always be subject of complaint from individuals.

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

Councillor Symonds asked about the criteria for gritting routes.

George Bottin said that key pedestrian areas had been identified for gritting, in particular footpath areas. Gritting around schools and maximising the transport had been also added to the criteria. All gritting routes would be available on Council's website.

Councillor Steel said that she was pleased with the improved communication. She suggested that some private roads that were also parts of the public footpaths should be also considered for gritting.

George Bottin agreed with this comment and added that private owners also have the responsibility to grit private roads.

Councillor Symonds asked if the bus routes had been included in the gritting routes.

George Bottin replied that vast majority of bus routes had been included.

The Chair suggested that the officers should involve associations like FOBRA, Parish Councils and Ward Councillors in consultation where to put grit bins.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the update and for the officers to take the comments made by the Panel on board.

54 FOOD WASTE RECYCLING COLLECTIONS (40 MINUTES)

Carol Maclellan (Waste Services Manager) introduced the report.

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

Councillor Steel said that some of the waste collection vehicles were too big for certain roads and caused traffic jams. She asked if there was any intention to employ smaller size vehicles for waste collection.

Carol Maclellan replied that some of the vehicles had access issues and the service would be looking to improve that.

Carol Maclellan said that the food waste collection had been operating in those areas served by 'green boxes' (which was 86% of the district) and not yet areas of

multiple flats,. In phase 2 of the project the service would investigate how to roll out waste collection service in multiple flats areas.

Councillor Symonds congratulated the service on the successful implementation of the food waste collection. He asked if the amount of the waste collected was as projected.

Carol Maclellan replied that the amount of the food waste collected was exactly as projected.

Councillor Simmons asked what savings had been and would be achieved.

Carol Maclellan responded that this year the service had to put some money into the food waste collection. However, the Council would avoid £1.8m of expenditure to waste disposal over 5 years period.

Councillor Steel asked if the timing of when the vehicles did their run during the day was evaluated.

Carol Maclellan said that routes have had to be changed and staff delivering the service has to get used to local conditions. She also said that the Council developed a policy specifying access and timing for busy and school roads. Carol Maclellan asked that anyone who sees that those vehicles used busy and school roads at inappropriate times should report this to the Waste Services so that route timings can be amended.

Councillor Symonds asked if schools had been included in food waste collection.

Carol Maclellan said that schools are on separate schedules. Schools were also part of the phase 2 project and the service would bring their proposals forward on that matter.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the report and to congratulate the Waste Services on successful implementation of the food waste collection.

55 COMMERCIAL WASTE COLLECTION REVIEW UPDATE (30 MINUTES)

Carol Maclellan introduced the report.

Alix Boswell (Overview and Scrutiny Manager) informed the Panel about the structure around single day inquiry (as per the report).

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

Councillor Gerrish said that he welcomed this review because it would fit well with the Business Improvement District plan.

Councillor Symonds moved, with Councillor Wood seconded, that the panel should have a single day inquiry on this matter. The Panel unanimously agreed.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- 1) The Panel unanimously agreed to have a single day inquiry investigation on Commercial Waste Collection;
- 2) 2 Councillors that would act as key contacts for the co-ordination of the single day inquiry are Councillors Brian Simmons and Roger Symonds; and
- 3) The following contributors be invited:
 - a. Business Associations
 - b. Chamber of Commerce
 - c. Restaurants
 - d. Hotels
 - e. Current waste and recycling collection providers
 - f. Residents Associations
 - g. Both Universities
 - h. Federation of Bath Residents' Associations and
 - i. Anybody else with the interest in this matter.
- 4) The local MPs and neighbouring authorities be informed.

56 CABINET MEMBERS' UPDATES (30 MINUTES)

Councillor Charles Gerrish – Cabinet Member for Customer Services

Councillor Gerrish updated the Panel on the following:

- Report on the Victoria Bridge safety – following the tests carried out it was resolved that structural integrity of the bridge was compromised and the bridge was declared unsafe for use. Councillor Gerrish said that he would explain in detail the bridge issues with the Bath cycling community.
- Cabinet Member response to Panel's recommendations on Bus Services made at the last Panel meeting (attached as Appendix 1 to these minutes) – Councillor Gerrish said that he would be looking to set up the Public Transport Liaison Panel during this financial year.
- Joint Local Transport Plan (JLTP) 3 – level of the public response during the consultation was quite impressive (100% more than for the JLTP 2). Councillor Gerrish, together with the appropriate officers, sent the response on the draft report to the West of England Partnership. The aim was to have the JLTP 3 ready for the Full Council meeting in January 2011.

The Chair thanked Councillor Gerrish for the update.

The Chair also passed the apology from Councillor Vic Pritchard (Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services, Housing and Community Safety) as he was engaged in the Christmas Lights switch-on ceremony today.

57 PANEL FUTURE WORKPLAN

It was **RESOLVED** that the Panel noted their future workplan with following additions:

- Litter Enforcement – January 2011
- Cycling Infrastructure and Improvements – January 2011

Appendix 1

The meeting ended at 12.30 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services

This page is intentionally left blank

SSCO&S Panel resolution on 23 September 2010

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- 1 The Panel welcomed the creation of the Bath Bus User Group;
- 2 The Panel supported the re-establishment of the Public Transport Liaison Panel;
- 3 The Panel would ask the Cabinet, or designated Cabinet Member, to support their recommendation to re-establish the Public Transport Liaison Panel; and
- 4 The Panel would want to see a progress of their recommendations above before the next public meeting in November.

Response from Cabinet Member for Service Delivery

I broadly support the Panel's recommendation and I have asked officers to scope out the implications of re-establishing a bi-annual meeting on the following basis:

- It must be supported by public transport operators
- It must cover the whole of Bath & North East Somerset
- It must not duplicate the functions of any other meeting
- It must be adequately resourced

The former Public Transport Liaison Group met between September 1999 and October 2006, initially quarterly then bi-annually, although no meetings were held in 2003. Meetings ceased in 2007 when officers were no longer able to resource them.

The PTLG Terms of Reference were agreed by the former Transportation Sub-committee on 5 October 1999. The prime purpose was "to provide a focus for the interchange of views between the Council, public transport operators and users."

I believe that the co-operation of operators and willingness on their part to attend meetings and consult users on any proposals will be crucial to the success of any new or re-established meeting.

The issue of resourcing the meeting is one that will need to be considered in the context of the Service Plan for Transport & Planning Policy.

I will be update the Panel at its meeting in January 2011.

This page is intentionally left blank