

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

MINUTES OF COMMUNITIES, TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL MEETING

Monday, 14th September, 2015

Present:- **Councillors** John Bull, Brian Simmons, Peter Turner, Alan Hale, Neil Butters, Jonathan Carr, Dine Romero, David Veale (In place of Steve Jeffries) and Les Kew (In place of Mark Shelford)

16 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

17 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chairman drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Councillor Mark Shelford sent apologies (substituted by Councillor Les Kew) and Councillor Steve Jeffries sent apologies (substituted by Councillor David Veale).

Apologies from Cabinet Members Councillors Martin Veal and Anthony Clarke.

19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Brian Simmons declared an 'other' interest in Item 9 'Community Transport' as Chair of Keynsham and District Dial a Ride.

20 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There was none.

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

1. Mr Duncan Hounsell, Saltford Parish Councillor made a statement regarding Item 9 'Community Transport' regarding 'Fair funding for Community Transport Schemes in the BANES area' on behalf of Saltford Parish Council (*the statement is appended to these minutes and available on the Council's minute book held by Democratic Services*).

Councillor Romero asked that this be added to the future workplan for the Panel. Panel members agreed.

2. Mr David Redgewell – South West Transport Network made a statement regarding Metro West (*the statement is appended to these minutes and available on the Council's minute book held by Democratic Services*).

Councillor Butters asked that this authority keep in touch with the Joint West of England Group and maybe even have a representative visit the Panel. Councillor Bull explained that BANES do have three representatives on the West of England Group that Panel members could speak to.

3. Mr David Redgewell – South West Transport Network made some comments on Item 8 'Quality Contract Scheme for Buses'. He explained that he thought the time was right for a review but thinks it may be too restrictive and that it should also be looking into infrastructure for example Bath Bus Station is not owned by the Council, it has multi ownership. He went on to explain that he sits on Great Western working party and that there is not a joint unit of Local Authorities for information on buses.
4. Mr Van DuBose made a statement regarding Item 8 'Quality Contract Scheme for Buses' (QCS) (*the statement is appended to these minutes and available on the Council's minute book held by Democratic Services*).

Councillor Butters asked if any other parts of the country had pursued QCS successfully. Mr DuBose stated that only a few authorities have pursued it whereas in Europe the model is standard, he added that he hopes the Bus Bill will help. Councillor Carr asked if the Council has considered setting up its own bus company.

5. Mr D Baker made a statement regarding Item 11 'East of Bath Park and Ride'. (*the statement is appended to these minutes and available on the Council's minute book held by Democratic Services*).

Councillor Hale asked if Mr Baker's proposal should be consulted on. Peter Dawson – Group Manager Planning Policy and Transport explained that he is happy to receive Mr Baker's comments through the consultation which would be considered by the Cabinet in November 2015.

Councillor Romero asked if this option should be part of the consultation. The officer stated that if members of the public want the Cabinet to consider this scheme then they can respond to the consultation to communicate this.

22 MINUTES

The Panel confirmed the minutes of the previous meeting as a true record and they were duly signed by the Chairman.

23 QUALITY CONTRACT SCHEME FOR BUSES - TASK AND FINISH GROUP

The Chair invited Emma Bagley, Policy Development & Scrutiny Project Officer to introduce the report. The officer explained that this issue had come to the Panel as a result of a motion at a Council meeting in January 2015. The officer further explained that this report detailed the Terms of Reference for the Task and Finish Group which would report back to the Panel in January 2016.

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

Councillor Bull explained that the job of the Panel today is to approve the Terms of Reference for the Task and Finish Group, he suggested that the Steering Group looks at the points raised by Mr DuBose at its meeting in October where they can then also consider whether the Terms of Reference need to be altered at all.

Councillor Romero asked what the next stage would be. The officer explained that the Task and Finish Group recommendations would come back to the Cabinet Member and one such recommendation may be a larger review. Councillor Bull added that a Task and Finish (T&F) Group only does a small scale investigation into the information available.

Councillor Romero explained her concern that Bath may miss the opportunity to work with others in the region if it does not link up with the Joint West of England work. The officer pointed to paragraph 3.8 in the Terms of Reference which states that the outcomes of the Task and Finish Group will potentially feed into the Joint Local Transport Plan and Joint West of England transport studies. David Redgewell stated that some important work would be done in Bristol in November this year. Councillor Bull explained that the T&F group are meeting in October and November and would have something ready. It was also noted that BANES Joint West of England representative Councillor Rob Appleyard was present at the meeting and he agreed to feed the Panel's discussion back.

Councillor Carr asked why this Panel was hearing about devolution third hand. Peter Dawson – Group Manager Planning, Policy and Transport explained that the Government have asked for proposals from transport bodies on devolution on a short timescale (December) but until the Government explain what devolution might mean, such transport bodies cannot properly discuss and comment. Councillor Kew stated that is was the job of the T&F Group to come back to the Panel with some answers. Councillor Carr asked that the document that is submitted to the Government also be circulated to this Panel.

Councillor Bull concluded that the T&F group can take their recommendations to the West of England and to this Panel.

It was **Resolved** that the Panel:

1. Request the Task and Finish group look at the points raised by Mr DuBose at its meeting in October where they can consider whether the Terms of Reference need to be altered at all;
2. Agree to undertake the review within the timescales set out in the Terms of Reference; and

3. Formally agree to the nomination of the following Members (Councillors Bull; Simmons; Butters and Carr) to form the T&F Group who will lead on co-ordinating the group's activities.

24 COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

The Chair invited Andy Strong – Public Transport Manager to introduce the report (*a copy of the report which was tabled at the meeting is now attached to the agenda papers for this meeting or available from Democratic Services*). The report covered the following:

- Background on Community Transport
- Current Issues
- Strategic Review
- Total Transport Pilot Fund
- Paper by Councillor Brian Simmons
- Recommendation

The officer addressed the points made under Item 6 by Mr Hounsell, he explained that relative funding should be covered by internal audit. He also recommended that the Panel receive a more substantial report in early 2016.

There was some discussion around the nature of the consultation on this issue. The officer explained that he would expect a consultant to speak to representatives of users (village agents) and transport providers. He explained that it was not possible to conduct a public consultation.

Councillor Turner explained that some elderly people in Bath have difficulties in booking transport. The officer asked the Councillor to make him aware of these issues.

Councillor Butters suggested that the Wellow scheme be looked at in this review. The officer agreed that this scheme is a good model.

Councillor Romero asked that the report in 2016 will have identified all the needs of the users. She also asked about submitting tenders for home to school transport and whether areas other than Chew Valley were being looked at. It was agreed that Councillor Simmons paper will be circulated to all Panel members. The officer explained that any scheme would need a relevant permit to bid for home to school transport contracts. The officer agreed that it was hoped that a good model could be established and set up elsewhere.

There was a long discussion around the pilot scheme and the strategic review. There were concerns on the length of time the consultation would take and Members were also concerned that public consultation should be carried out.

It was **Resolved** that:

- The Panel consider a full report on the outcomes of the current work on community transport at a meeting in January 2015; and

- As part of the total transport Pilot Fund, consultants Mott McDonald undertake public consultation and visits in the area.

25 COMMUNITY USE OF LIBRARIES - UPDATE

The Chair invited Ian Savigar – Divisional Director Customer Services to give a presentation to the Panel (*slides of the presentation are attached to the agenda papers for this meeting and held with Democratic Services*). The presentation covered the following:

- Libraries and Archives
- Statistics on Libraries
- Bath Central Library – List of Facilities
- Keynsham – List of Facilities
- Midsomer Norton Library – List of Facilities
- Available Across the Service
- Activities and Services
- Opportunities and Issues

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

Councillor Hale asked how the figures on visitors are calculated. The officer explained that the figures include people using the library to borrow a book and using other facilities such as cafes. Councillor Hale has a concern that figures will be used to cut facilities in the future and sought assurance that we always compare like with like. Members discussed the raised visiting figures in Paulton library and the effect of having a café. The officer informed the Panel that visiting numbers had gone up when the opening hours of the library went up from 14 hours per week to 38 hours. Councillor Bull explained that the café subsidises the library. It was agreed that Paulton library is a good model.

Councillor Butters stated that he is interested to hear about a partner with regard to the mobile library service when this information is available. The officer explained that talks with providers are ongoing and he would report back when appropriate.

Councillor Bull stated that it was good to have an update on the library service.

26 EAST OF BATH PARK AND RIDE CONSULTATION UPDATE

The Chair invited Peter Dawson – Group Manager Planning Policy and Transport to introduce the report. The officer stated that he has been asked to carry out public consultation on 3 schemes. He stated that this is in line with the Council's policy for the last 15 years. He will publish the Mott McDonald report as soon as possible and is also happy to circulate Mr Baker's work (Item 6). He concluded that all of this information would inform the Cabinet's decision in November 2015.

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

Councillor Appleyard (Lambridge Ward) stated that the meadows proposal has been met with huge resistance locally and people see a rail and ride scheme as a viable solution. He spoke about the scheme put forward by Mr Baker (Item 6) and stated that there should be a 4th consultation option.

Councillor Hale asked the officer about the timescales of the schemes. The officer replied that it is envisaged that each of the three schemes would take 3-4 years. Regarding the option put forward by Mr Baker, parliamentary powers would have to be sought to get consent to move the railway line and build a multi-story car park. He explained that this level of consent could take a long time.

Councillor Carr asked if the public are aware of other options. The officer explained that yes, alternative options are shown in the appendix to the report.

Councillor Kew stated that 2 of the 3 sites are in public ownership and asked if there had been any discussions with the owners. The officer explained that they are considering their position, there have been conversations.

Councillor Butters stated that the Council should go the extra mile and get the right solution and not just the fastest solution.

Councillor Appleyard stated that a car park should not be put on the meadows especially after the bypass had already been built in the area.

After some further discussion, it was **Resolved** that:

- The Panel note the progress made on this work; and
- 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.

27 TRANSPORT STRATEGY FOR CHEW VALLEY AND SOMER VALLEY

The Chair invited Peter Dawson – Group Manager Planning Policy and Transport to introduce the report.

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

In response to a question from Councillor Romero, the officer explained that there will be visits to the site.

Councillor Bull asked if the Radstock-Frome line is included, the officer explained that it was not as there were problems with opening that railway line. Councillor Bull also stated that partnerships should mention 'possible QCS schemes'.

Councillor Kew asked that Pensford and Temple Cloud be added.

The Panel noted that there would be a report in the new year.

28 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

There was no Cabinet Member Update at this meeting.

Councillor Carr asked the following questions and the Panel noted that a written response would be given from the Strategic Director Louise Fradd.

What communication was sent to students entering the 6th form and their parents or guardians to explain the need to reapply for the home to school transport scheme and the additional fees involved?

What efforts were made, along with Chew Valley school and other schools using the scheme, to identify the numbers of students expected to need continued home to school and to prepare sufficient capacity for them in advance?

Why was the closing date for applications set before places were confirmed (deadline 20th June, GCSE results 20th August) and was an extension not made?

What additional capacity is available or being prepared for 6th form students who still require home to school transport in 6th form?

What was the policy reasoning for limiting free transport to under 16, and was this reviewed in light of change to compulsory education or training until 18 which came into force in 2013?

What are the resource implications of extending the free transport to 18?

29 PANEL WORKPLAN

The Panel agreed some amendments to the published workplan. The Panel agreed to look at the following items at it's future meetings:

16th November 2015

- Directorate Plans for Place and Resources
- Climate Change – Update on Targets
- Report on West of England Partnership
- Transport Strategy Update

11th January 2016

- River Safety – Overview and Update
- QCS for Buses Task and Finish Group Report

- Community Safety General Update (possible inclusion of Police representative invitee to talk about police staffing – Councillor Alan Hale request)
- Community Transport – Update

Items to be scheduled

- Kerbside collections and recycling (request Cllr Romero)

The Panel noted the workplan and suggested amendments.

The meeting ended at 5.30 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services