

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

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

Monday, 11th January, 2016

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

44 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

45 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chairman drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

46 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Councillor Steve Jeffries sent his apologies and was substituted by Councillor Les Kew.

Councillor Peter Turner sent his apologies and was substituted by Councillor Mark Shelford.

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 DEPUTATIONS, STATEMENTS, PETITIONS OR QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THIS MEETING

Mr David Redgewell (South West Transport Network) presented a petition regarding the 37 bus service and spoke in support of the petition. The petition was referred to the Cabinet Member for Transport. *A copy of the petition can be found on the Panel's Minute Book.*

Mr David Redgewell (South West Transport Network) made a statement to the Panel on Devolution and Transport Planning. Councillor Butters stated that the issue of the shelter mentioned by Mr Redgewell should be fed in to the West of England Joint Transport Study.

The Panel noted the statement. *A copy of the statement can be found on the Panel's Minute Book.*

The Panel noted that a question, submitted by Nicolette Boater, and answer had been circulated. The Panel noted this, a copy will be appended to these minutes.

50 MINUTES

Following suggested amendments, the Panel confirmed the minutes of the previous meeting as a true record and they were duly signed by the Chairman:

51 COMMUNITY SAFETY - GENERAL UPDATE

The Chair welcomed Chief Superintendent Ian Smith and Chief Inspector Kevin Thatcher from Avon and Somerset Police to the meeting and thanked them for attending for this item.

Samantha Jones – Inclusive Communities Manager gave a presentation which covered the following points:

- Background
- PCC Priorities
- B&NES area focus
- Crime and disorder
- Example programmes
- New and emerging issues
- Cross cutting issues

Chief Superintendent Ian Smith spoke to the Panel on the following:

Finances – Savings have been made, the forecast is to stand still by 2020 which is good news. There are some changes to funding for example an increase in firearms officers due to the ongoing terrorist threat. Savings should be found through partnership working.

Operating Model – There has been a huge change to how the force is operated. There are five superintendents and three core areas – Somerset; Bath and North East Somerset and South Gloucestershire and Bristol (each with an area commander). Also there are two distinct units; Specialist Operations (pro-active units) and Protect, Prevent and Prosecute. Services from these units must be bid for based on threat, harm and risk. This is a much leaner model than previously operated.

Local perspective – The station has moved from Manvers Street to Redbridge House on Lower Bristol Road. The exact numbers of officers and vehicles in the city

remains the same. City Centre officers now work out of the One Stop Shop in Lewis House – this will be reviewed so that the city has visible officers and reassurance.

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

Councillor Shelford asked about the threat profile for Bath especially considering the number of international visitors. The Chief Superintendent agreed that areas of large footfall can be a target but explained that through the use of intelligence he could report that numbers are reassuring. The officer stated that Panel members could receive 'Prevent' information outside the meeting.

Councillor Hale asked about the issue of road safety and suggested that, with the road safety officer, this could be added to the Council's areas of focus. He also asked about 'Lighthouse' and asked if it is sufficiently staffed. The officer explained that the organisation works with victims and particularly victims of domestic violence and there are some budget considerations so that mainly people at high risk rather than medium risk are worked with. The Chief Superintendent explained that Lighthouse is a success, it identifies cohorts of victims and provides a wraparound service.

Councillor Hale asked the Chief Superintendent to respond to the following comments:

- Why is road safety a priority for the police? The Chief Superintendent explained that police offers are now very much 'response' rather than 'prevent'. He explained that there are many initiatives but resources are limited.
- Are the firearms units adequate? The Chief Superintendent explained that the force is not an armed service and that any area would struggle to deal with a Paris style attack. He explained that any country is vulnerable to terrorism and that intelligence is important.
- Can you give a commitment to address the concerns of the community in Keynsham and other areas as well as in the city regarding anti-social behaviour and police presence? The Chief Superintendent explained that the force must consider priorities based on things such as demand and footfall. He explained that Keynsham does not always have an officer and no guarantees could be given but the pledge is visibility and availability.

Councillor Romero asked the Chief Superintendent to respond to the following comments:

- Can you give reassurance to the communities on the outskirts of the city centre? The Chief Superintendent explained that officers respond to demand much of which is outside the city centre and that his concern was that the availability is still maintained within the city.
- Regarding the Domestic Homicide Reviews – are the PCC asked to contribute? The officer explained that the PCC have no more funding and other authorities split the cost of reviews with other agencies but the responsibility is with the Local Authority.

- Do we have any information regarding migrants losing housing provision that was linked to employment? The Officer stated that she would find out and report back.

Councillor Butters asked the Chief Superintendent to respond to the following comments:

- There are a surprising number of traffic problems in Midford and one issue is speeding and a lack of police enforcement. Is it possible that Midford could be covered by a motorbike speed patrol? The Chief Superintendent explained that there is speeding enforcement in this area but he will look into this.
- Have you factored in extra resources for the new legislation regarding psychological abuse? The Chief Superintendent explained that the legislation created an offence that officers can now prosecute, there is no uplift in resources, it is reported in the same way
- Radio communications do not seem to be linked in different areas. The Chief Inspector explained that there can only be so many people on a radio communications channel, officers can swap channels if needed.

Councillor Carr asked about the potential BID funding for night time management in the city; what area it would cover and who would oversee this arrangement. The officer explained that the authority is in discussion with the BID but no contract has yet been agreed and that she could report back at a later stage.

In response to a query from Councillor Bull, the officer stated that the authority had recently gained purple flag status for safer streets and that night time economy crimes are going down, she stated that she would circulate data to the Panel.

Councillor Bull asked about the effects of the service to the public of the move from Manvers Street and asked about the future for the buildings of other stations eg. Radstock. The Chief Superintendent explained that the police are available in the One Stop Shop from 8am-8pm 7days a week which is the same as before, he acknowledged that more awareness of the police presence in the One Stop Shop is needed. He explained that there are no plans to sell the building in Radstock in the near future but that the building is costly and too big so he could not give any guarantee.

Councillor Hale asked what resilience there is when Bath Rugby play in the city which can draw 16,000 people. The Chief Superintendent explained that he is a season ticket holder and also that he can bid for resources on busy days. The officer added that there is an emergency planning scheme with a crowded place strategy.

The Chair thanked the officer and the police representatives for coming to the Panel meeting and answering questions.

52 QUALITY CONTRACT SCHEME FOR BUSES - INTERIM SCRUTINY REVIEW

The Chair explained that the task and finish group's work had been suspended until after the buses bill is published. The Chair explained what the group had looked into so far and explained that Mr Van DeBose had made detailed comments which had been circulated to the group.

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

Councillor Carr asked if franchising is likely for future devolution deals. Andy Strong – Team Manager Public Transport stated that it is his understanding that franchising powers would be offered as part of a devolution deal, he added that devolution deals so far have involved a Metro Mayor. He further explained that transport officers have recommended that bus franchising powers be part of a devolution deal.

Councillor Romero asked how long the buses bill would take. The officer responded that it is aimed that the bill will get Royal Assent on 17th March 2017.

Councillor Carr stated that the group should continue its work to finish the report so it is ready to refer back to in the future.

Policy Development and Scrutiny Project Officer, Emma Bagley stated that the draft had been submitted to the West of England Transport Study.

The Chair explained that this issue will need ongoing monitoring and will be on the Panel workplan.

53 COMMUNITY TRANSPORT - UPDATE

Team Manager Public Transport – Andy Strong introduced the report which provides an overview of Community Transport. He explained that while this is not a statutory function for the Council, volunteer groups have always been supported where there is a need.

Councillor Simmons added that he would like to see the use of electric or hybrid buses. He also stated that it is a better use of money to buy second hand buses rather than new ones and that Keynsham already does this. The officer stated that he will be talking to other schemes and discussing issues like this.

The Chair thanked the officer for the update.

54 RIVER SAFETY

Team Manager for Licensing and Environmental Protection – Cath Humphries introduced the report and gave a presentation which covered the following:

- Our reports and evidence
- River Safety Group
- Our Strategy for reducing risks
- Our improvements (fencing, signage, inspection ladders, grablines)
- Got Ya Back! Campaign
- River Rescue Cabinets

- Communications
- For the Future

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

Councillor Kew asked how much the rescue cabinets are used. The officer explained that they had not been used yet, there have been 10 rescues of which 2 involved the police who used floatation devices.

The Chair asked that the Panels congratulations be passed to the River Safety Group.

55 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

Cabinet Member for Transport – Councillor Clarke

The Cabinet Member updated the Panel on the following:

- The Capital Budget for transport is facing severe budget constraints and hopefully this can be balanced in the budget;
- There is a strategy in place for flooding not related to rivers;
- Chew Valley and Somer Valley Transport Reviews are going on. Somer Valley is now an enterprise zone;
- Pollution and congestion are continuing problems. Officers have been instructed to continue looking at a low emission zone in the city and in Keynsham and part of Saltford;
- Discussions are happening with Dorset about upgrading the A350 and with Wiltshire about A36/46 traffic;
- A comprehensive parking review has been started.

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

Councillor Butters stated that if the A350 is beefed up, there should be a push for an HGV ban on the A36. The Cabinet Member noted this concern.

Councillor Butters asked about the B3108 at Limply Stoke and stated that there had been a violation of the Parish Charter. The Cabinet Member stated that he would like make a public apology about the arrangements around the scheme at Limply Stoke which he stated were unsatisfactory.

Councillor Carr asked if a low emission zone could be written in to the Air Quality Action Plan. The Cabinet member stated that he had no problem with this suggestion. Responding to a query regarding a low emission zone on the Lower Bristol Road, the Cabinet Member explained that it is a strategic road so this would be difficult. He added that if permission is given for a new spur on the M4, there would be no need for South Bristol HGVs to enter the city.

Councillor Carr asked if an ultra-low emission zone had been considered. The Cabinet Member stated he would not go beyond current thinking at this stage.

Councillor Shelford asked about Council activity on Taxi emission enforcement. The Cabinet Member handed over to the Team Manager for Licensing and Environmental Protection who explained that emissions tests do take place.

Cabinet Member for Communities – Councillor Veal

The Cabinet Member updated the Panel on the following:

- GLC contract is still ongoing;
- Bath sports centre has new equipment;
- Kier are dealing with industrial action and the Council are bringing in crews to help with recycling collections;
- Waste Services Review;
- Allotment management plan has been agreed;
- Draft gull strategy is being assembled;
- River moorings being looked at.

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

Councillor Butters asked if the issue of compensation has been raised regarding Kier. Martin Shields – Divisional Director Environmental Services, explained that Kier will cover the costs of collecting the backlog of recycling. The main priority at this time is to clearing this backlog.

Councillor Bull asked if it is an overtime ban or a strike. The officer explained that it is strike action for specific days of the week and also work to rule and an overtime ban.

56 PANEL WORKPLAN

The Panel noted the workplan and the following additions agreed at this meeting:

- Parish Charter (in general as it comes under ‘Community’)
- QCS Scheme for buses – revisit in 18 months or when relevant

The meeting ended at 6.45 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services