

## **BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET**

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

Monday, 19th September, 2016

Present:- **Councillors** John Bull, Brian Simmons, Peter Turner, Alan Hale, Neil Butters and Ian Gilchrist

Apologies for absence: Councillors: Bob Goodman

#### **94 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### **95 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

The Chairman drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

#### **96 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Councillor Jonathan Carr sent his apologies and was substituted by Councillor Lin Patterson.

Councillor Michael Norton sent his apologies and was substituted by Councillor Les Kew.

Councillor Bob Goodman sent his apologies.

#### **97 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

#### **98 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN**

There was none.

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

David Redgewell – South West Transport Network made a statement regarding public transport cuts, budgets and devolution. *A copy of the statement is appended to the agenda for this meeting and can be found on the Panel's Minute Book.*

Councillor Patterson asked if Mr Redgewell if he could ask First Bus a question, what would it be. Mr Redgewell said that he would ask if there are enough resources coming from Bath and North East Somerset Council to fund the bus service network.

Miss Amanda Wise made a statement about the recently withdrawn 379 service to Bristol. She stated that the reason given for withdrawing the service was underuse yet in her experience the bus was well used. She appealed for special consideration for the 379 service from Paulton. *A copy of the statement is appended to the agenda for this meeting and can be found on the Panel's Minute Book.*

Mr Cyril Mitchard made a statement about his concerns regarding the changes to the service and timetable in Paulton. He referred to the many closures of services in villages over the past few years (such as Post Offices) which makes the bus service all the more important. He stated that people are encouraged to use public transport but they cannot use what isn't there. He asked for the early morning, evening and Sunday bus to Bristol be restored.

Ms Terrie Stocker made a statement about the loss of the 379 service from Paulton to Bristol. She said she would like to see the facts and figures behind the decision to withdraw the service. She mentioned that the loss of service will have an effect on jobs for some people. *A copy of the statement is appended to the agenda for this meeting and can be found on the Panel's Minute Book.*

Mr Mike Roberts made a statement about the rerouting of the U1 service in Upper Oldfield Park. He added that he had asked to meet a First Bus representative on the site but had not heard back from them. *A copy of the statement is appended to the agenda for this meeting and can be found on the Panel's Minute Book.*

Ms Tracey Harding – FAVBUG (Frome and Villages Bus User Group) made a statement about the local 267 Frome to Bath bus service. She explained the effect of the loss of the evening service. *A copy of the statement is appended to the agenda for this meeting and can be found on the Panel's Minute Book.*

Mr Adam Boyden made a statement about the local 267 Frome to Bath bus service. He asked that the service be retained and that the possibility of match funding be explored. *A copy of the statement is appended to the agenda for this meeting and can be found on the Panel's Minute Book.*

Linda Oliver - made a statement about the local 267 Frome to Bath bus service. *A copy of the statement is appended to the agenda for this meeting and can be found on the Panel's Minute Book.*

Councillor Liz Hardman – made a statement regarding the changes to service in Paulton. She presented a petition to James Freeman – First Bus or 800 signatures

Susan Charles – Warm Water Inclusive Swimming and Exercise (WWISE) made a statement updating the Panel on the warm water pool at the Leisure Centre. She informed Panel members that GLL are looking at WWISE suggestions and a formal report will follow. Following a question from Councillor Patterson, Susan Charles reported that she did not have a date for this report and asked that the issue be moved on by the Cabinet member. *A copy of the statement is appended to the agenda for this meeting and can be found on the Panel's Minute Book*

Susan Charles – Access Bath Group – made a statement regarding the disabled parking bays at Keynsham Leisure Centre which she explained are not appropriate as they are either on a slope or on a busy road. She asked that the Panel look at the plans and make safer parking facility.

Councillor Hale explained that there has been public consultation on this and that the local members had been shown images. Councillor Simmons further explained that the application is going to Committee and most things mentioned here have been included. He mentioned that there is a consultation event in the Community Space in a few weeks.

## **Supplementary Information**

### **100 MINUTES**

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

### **101 DOMESTIC ABUSE UPDATE**

Samantha Jones, Inclusive Communities Manager introduced the report and gave an update on what has been happening since May and what is planned.

The officer explained that the Police and Crime Commissioner funds Community Safety but that she has now been asked to model a 10% reduction and 20% reduction in the grant. The Youth Offending Team have been asked to do the same. The officer explained that she will write to them and ask them not to make the reduction or the service may not be viable any longer.

Regarding Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) – there have been 4 referrals in 15 months and two are going to full DHRs and each costs £10,000 minimum. The officer asked that serious consideration be given to this as there is no budget for DHRs and there will be a knock on effect if funding is reduced on other services around Hate Crime, Night time Economy and Rape Crisis.

The officer updated the Panel on a new group Domestic Abuse Partnership which has had an injection of Council resource. She explained that on 2<sup>nd</sup> November there is a Safeguarding Review Day where they will map out how to stop the cycle of Domestic Abuse of all types.

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

Councillor Bull commented that this all seems a lot more co-ordinated than previously. Regarding domestic abuse funding, the officer confirmed that yes domestic abuse services would lose out if grants are reduced.

Councillor Butters asked about abusers being able to question victims in court. The officer explained that she could not give a professional opinion on legal aid but that

the statistic is that domestic abuse happens approximately 37 times before the case goes to court. She explained that 'buddies' are provided to victims when they attend court. She further explained that at Bath Courts, evidence cannot be given remotely.

Councillor Hale talked about anti-social behaviour and explained that the anti-social behaviour officer in Curo covers a very large area.

Councillor Simmons asked if housing officers have had training regarding DHRs. The officer explained that yes they have had training and they sit on the Panel – the objective of the Panel is to ask if a death could have been predicted or prevented.

The Chair thanked the officer for the update and asked for a report back in 6 months. It was mentioned that colleagues from Southside could be invited to help give a picture of the court system.

It was **RESOLVED** that a report be brought back to the Panel in 6 months.

## **102 'GETTING FROM A TO B' - STRATEGIC REVIEW OF TRANSPORT**

The Chair introduced James Freeman and Andrew Sherrington – Managing Director and General Manager (Bath) of First Bus. James Freeman explained that he is glad to be at the meeting and while he does not enjoy listening to all of the issues in the public statements, it is important to hear them. He gave a presentation to the Panel which covered the following:

- Introduction to First West of England
- The environment in which we trade
- Cranmore Estate
- Route 178 Chandag
- Route 379
- Route 38 Keynsham
- Route U1 Upper Oldfield Park
- Routes 6/7 Fairfield Park and Larkhall

He also made the following points:

- He stated that the strength of feeling and petition regarding the 379 service is noted and he has been looking at possible options with colleagues in B&NES. He stated that he hopes it might be possible to put on a couple of peak hour facilities.
- Regarding the 38 Keynsham – there was a meeting a few weeks ago and the result of the strength of feeling at the meeting is that an experiment is taking place for the Park Estate and use of this evening service has been encouraging. Mr Freeman explained that this shows that public feeling can be responded to.
- Regarding the U1 Upper Oldfield Park, Mr Freeman explained that he is happy to meet representatives on the site but for now the bus has to operate as per the registration.

- Regarding the 267, Mr Freeman explained that First have been consulted as operators and that it would be his intention to run an evening service on a commercial basis on Friday and Saturdays if revenue support were to be withdrawn.

In conclusion Mr Freeman explained that in his position, he has to adjust services to the circumstances which prevail. He added that he is happy to meet with people regarding bus services.

Andy Strong – Team Manager Public Transport gave a verbal update on the recent bus service changes. He explained that the Council has agreed a limited peak hour replacement for bus service 379 funded initially by developer contributions. For this to be sustainable in the longer term, the fares revenue would need to cover the operating costs. His team had received a substantial amount of correspondence about the recent changes to First's commercial bus services and an issue raised in virtually all of them was the lack of consultation by First with their customers and residents about their proposals. The officer reported that he is keen to work with First and other bus operators to improve the process of reviewing and changing the bus route network. On a positive note, there had been an increase in the total number of bus passenger journeys across all operators in B&NES in 2015-16 for the third successive year. The annual total was 13.4 million, up 3% from the previous year. Of that total, 28% of journeys were made by holders of concessionary passes – a slight decline probably attributable to the national increase in the eligible age.

He explained that the Bus Services Bill is going through parliament and people should consider taking general issues to local MPs to raise in Parliament.

Regarding the 267 he explained that B&NES consulted Somerset County Council as the neighbouring transport authority and it was up to them to engage with parishes within their area.

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

Councillor Hale asked when timetables will be published. The officer replied that roadside information can be updated and operators are relied on to produce timetables for their commercial services. James Freeman added that First timetables will be published in September. He added that the 177 is registered now and the timetable can be published as soon as possible.

Councillor Gilchrist asked why First consulted Oldfield Park Councillors but not Widcombe Councillors. Mr Freeman apologised for the error.

Councillor Patterson spoke about the 6/7 service. She stated that she believes the survey was not conducted properly and asked that this be reviewed.

There was some discussion on the 177 (379 replacement). Councillor Bull suggested the time of 5.30pm. Mr Freeman explained that the current times are registered but that it is not impossible to change this over time. Councillor Bull agreed that they would meet to discuss this after an 8 week trial.

Councillor Moss referred to the decline in use of concessionary bus passes, he asked how this could be promoted. Mr Freeman explained that bus use in the area is on the increase.

Councillor Liz Hardman thanked First Bus for listening and for putting on the 177 in Paulton and added that new homes are being built in Paulton and the service may need to be expanded at some point. Mr Freeman acknowledged this point. He further explained that there is a big difference between peak and off peak services and that a new bus has to be bought for an extra peak time service.

Councillor Patterson stated that residents have also been signing a petition regarding the 6/7 service.

Councillor Butters stated that First Bus are in a difficult position. He thanked all of the speakers. He mentioned that there is a local bus forum. Regarding the U1 he stated that he is puzzled as to why the students do not use the Lower Bristol Road Bus Stop. He asked how the numbers of concessionary travellers could be raised. James Freeman explained that there are underlying reasons for the decline in numbers – principally, the move in the date for state pension age is moving. He added that when petrol prices go down, numbers of people using buses dropped. Regarding the U1 he explained that there is no easy answer as students will not travel at all if the service is not provided. There is also a competing operator, He stated that he is happy to meet with local people.

Regarding the suggestion of charging higher fares to fund the 267, Mr Freeman commented that this has been tried before and it generally drives people away. He added that First Bus do operate a passenger forum.

Councillor Hardman asked if there has been consideration of the school children regarding the U1. Mr Freeman responded that vehicles will have to proceed with the conditions that prevail as in all areas.

Councillor Hale thanked Mr Freeman for the resolution in Keynsham. He proposed and **it was RESOLVED that:**

The Cabinet be asked to review the ending of the subsidy on the 267 and that serious consideration be given to looking at funding from other authorities/Town and Parish Councils.

Following the above debate, Martin Shields Divisional Director - Environmental Services gave a presentation on 'Getting from A to B – Strategic Transport Review' which covered the following:

- Outline of briefing
- Overview
- Review – Community Transport
- Edge Solutions Review
- Review – Home to School travel
- Review of current position

- Review – Internal fleet
- Next Steps

The officer explained that this had been to Cabinet today and is a work in progress.

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

Councillor Simmons asked if he could have some input when vehicles are changed as he has many years' experience.

Councillor Hale spoke about the lack of traffic in school holidays and asked if we could look at an American style bus system. The officer explained that the Council transports a lot of children in taxis and that maybe there is an opportunity to merge journeys and that this is all part of the review.

The officer explained that the Council meets entitlements to transport services and personal travel plans for adults and children. He explained that sometimes, people do not use the bus pass provided to them.

The Chair thanked the officer and asked for an update in 6 months.

### **103 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE**

There were no Cabinet Members present.

### **104 PANEL WORKPLAN**

The Panel noted the workplan with the following additions:

- Update on Domestic Abuse – March 2017
- Update on Strategic Transport Review – March 2017

The meeting ended at 7.45 pm

Chair(person) .....

Date Confirmed and Signed .....

**Prepared by Democratic Services**