

## **BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET**

### **PLANNING, HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

Tuesday, 6th September, 2016

**Present:-** Councillors Rob Appleyard (Chair), Colin Blackburn, Lisa O'Brien, Fiona Darey, Cherry Beath and Deirdre Horstmann (in place of Barry Macrae)

**Also in attendance:** Lisa Bartlett (Divisional Director, Development), Simon De Beer (Policy & Environment Manager), Tony Crouch. (World Heritage Manager) and Stephen Bird (Head of Heritage Services)

#### **13 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### **14 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

The Chairman drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

#### **15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies were received from Councillors Barry Macrae and David Veale. Councillor Deirdre Horstmann substituted for Councillor Macrae.

#### **16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Beath declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to agenda item 10 as a member of the Board of Future Bath Plus.

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

The Chair made a personal statement as follows:

At the last meeting of this Panel in July an item to note regarding an agreement between B&NES Council and Curo Group about development at Mulberry Park and the Foxhill Estate was on the agenda. I discussed this with the Vice-Chair, and it was agreed that he would take this item, as I had a disclosable interest as a non-executive director of Curo. After the public speakers and all members had spoken and after I had resumed the chair, I indicated that I thought that this was a good chance for both organisations, especially the residents, noting that as the tenants' advisory body was involved, this should give residents confidence that they will be listened to.

I realise that my comments caused concern to other Panel members and members of the public. Although I had correctly declared an interest, I should not have spoken. I have discussed the matter with the Monitoring Officer and have realised that though there was never any attempt to hide my interest, I should not have spoken and should have left the room. I therefore offer the Panel and members of the public my full and unreserved apology for my error and I leave it to the process of the Standards Committee to determine my sanction.

Finally I would like to indicate to the Panel that due to a governance review at Curo and having served on the Board for over seven years I am unlikely to continue on the new Board in October, as the maximum service is now set for 2 x 3 years, and therefore further conflicts of interest will be removed. I reiterate my apologies to the Panel and in doing so will indicate that I shall be standing down as Chair of the Panel and as a member of the Panel after the end of this meeting. I thank you very much for your support over the last twenty months. We have achieved a lot and I am very proud of what we have done and wish you success for the rest of the Council term.

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

Nicolette Boater had submitted two questions. The questions and the answers approved by the Panel are given in Appendix 1. She also made a statement on Bath's World Heritage status (Minute 22), a copy of which is attached in Appendix 2 to these minutes.

Rosemary Naish, Chair of Clutton Parish Council, was concerned that a recently couple of planned webcasts of committee meetings had not taken place because of insufficient equipment. She urged the Council to acquire sufficient equipment to enable all important meetings to be webcast. The Chair thanked her and said that he would pass her comments onto the Cabinet Member for Resources.

David Redgewell made a statement about bus subsidies and public transport. He said that local authorities were moving away from revenue support towards capital support for bus services. He felt strongly that this was not the way forward. He pointed out that many people no longer work regular 9 to 5 days and that public transport provision needed to recognise this. Public transport needed every pot of money that was available. He urged that public transport issues should be fully taken into account at the regional and local planning levels and in s106 agreements. The Chair said that he was sure that the officers present would note his comments. He suggested that the Cabinet Members present might discuss these issues with the Cabinet Member for Transport, and asked officers to draft a reply to Mr Redgewell.

## **19 MINUTES - 5TH JULY 2016**

Councillor Appleyard said in his declaration under item 4 “non-pecuniary” should be amended to “disclosable pecuniary interest”. Councillor O’Brien objected to this, saying that he had not declared a pecuniary interest. It was y the Panel agreed that the existing wording should remain.

Councillor O’Brien said that at the end of item 9 on page 14 it should be recorded that “The Chair made a statement.” This was agreed by the Panel.

Councillor Blackburn asked for it to be recorded that at the end of Cllr Appleyard's statement at the 5th July meeting he had had an exchange with a resident who had earlier presented to the panel. She was told she was not able to reply to the statement made as the panel was not a discussion forum. Cllr Appleyard had then stated "don't worry, we will look after you". Members agreed that Councillor Blackburn’s recollection was correct.

The minutes were approved subject to these amendments.

## **20 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE**

Councillor Liz Richardson, Cabinet Member for Homes and Planning, gave an update on matters within her portfolio.

Neighbourhood Plans: High Littleton and Hallatrow had recently submitted an application to become a designated Neighbourhood Planning Area. Twenty parishes were now involved in neighbourhood planning. Three Neighbourhood Plans have now been made.

She circulated an update on Housing Services, a copy of which is attached as Appendix 3 to these minutes.

The Chair requested Councillor Richardson to report back to the Panel on the number of homes whose construction had not commenced within 12 months of receiving planning permission.

Councillor Anketell-Jones, Cabinet Member for Economic Development, gave an update on matters within his portfolio.

- Bath Festivals Board was working very hard on the financial plan for the Bath Festival.
- There was a need for a coach park. A report on the management of coach parking had been commissioned by the Council.
- The Colonnades and Undercroft project had been approved by the Development Management Committee, but no work would be commenced until there was a committed tenant, as the cost was too great otherwise.
- He was keeping an eye on Bath University. He would like to see the interests of the University and the City coincide. There was considerable scope for the University to provide better information.

- Heritage Week: the City had about 18 visitor attractions which could be described loosely as “museums”; the focus of Heritage Week needs to be wider than just Roman remains.

Councillor Beath said that she was aware that the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases was owned by the RUH, but wondered whether the Council had any plans to preserve and include it as part of a “Spa Quarter”. She thought it would be inappropriate if it became a hotel, for example. Councillor Anketell-Jones agreed and said that he hoped its historical local character could be preserved.

The Chair asked what was being done to publicise the fact that coaches could park at the First Group depot; there didn’t seem to be any signage indicating this. Councillor Anketell-Jones replied that communication between the coach companies and the Council was very good and that this information was provided to them. The Chair replied that the Council might be providing information to coach company head offices, but it might not be trickling down to the drivers. He wondered whether there was any communication on the ground between the Council and drivers; there was some inappropriate coach parking taking place. Councillor Anketell-Jones said that he would be happy to report back on this at a future meeting. He had not received any complaints about coach parking.

**RESOLVED** to note the updates from Cabinet Members.

## 21 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK UPDATES

The Divisional Director–Development and the Group Manager–Policy & Environment updated the Panel.

The Group Manager explained that the Local Development Framework is a group of documents which provides the main policies within which planning decisions must be taken in Bath and North East Somerset.

He reported that consultation on the West of England Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) would begin on 9 November. The JSP is a high-level plan setting out goals for housing, employment etc. within the West of England area. He said that a presentation about the JSP could be made to the November meeting of the Panel, if it wished. Closely aligned with the JSP is the Review of the B&NES Core Strategy; both will be on the Cabinet agenda on 19 October. The Cabinet will consider the Pre-Commencement Document, which sets out the scope and timetable for the Review. This will not be a full-scale review.

He reported that B&NES was in the top 4% of local authorities for adopted or made Neighbourhood Plans.

The Council has started to receive income from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). A review will take place in November to consider what infrastructure is needed to bring forward the growth outlined in the Core Strategy. A policy will be prepared setting out the criteria on how the income from CIL should be spent.

There will be a review of the Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) Supplementary Planning Guidance. The Chair asked how the allocation between student accommodation and accommodation for key workers would be determined. The Group Manager replied that it was a matter of deciding whether there was greater demand for family homes or for student accommodation and of monitoring the impact of multiple occupation on the housing stock.

Councillor Beath congratulated the Planning Service on their success with Neighbourhood Plans. She also said that housing completions in B&NES over the last seven years had been very good. She suggested that the Panel should receive a report on HMOs.

Councillor Darey asked about the impact of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 on affordable housing targets. The Divisional Director replied that this would depend on Regulations issued under the Act, which were awaited.

Councillor Blackburn asked whether data was available on the occupiers of houses in multiple occupation. He was concerned that the availability of accommodation for professionals was being eroded by the growth in student accommodation. The Group Manager said that the planning system could not distinguish between the types of occupant of HMOs.

**RESOLVED** to note the updates.

## **22 WORLD HERITAGE STATUS - 2ND INSCRIPTION**

The World Heritage Manager presented this item. A copy of his PowerPoint presentation is attached as Appendix 4.

**RESOLVED** to note the report.

## **23 ARCHIVE CENTRE**

The Chair noted that this item had been on the Panel's workplan for some time.

The Head of Heritage Services presented the report. He informed the Panel that the South West Committee of the Heritage Lottery Fund would consider the Council's bid for funding for the Archway Centre on 20 September and that the National Trustees would meet on the 26<sup>th</sup> September, and would notify the outcome on the following afternoon.

He said that archives had been a "Cinderella" service for many years. They were founded in 1967 and were at first with the Chief Executive, then they were transferred to the Council Solicitor, then to Democratic Services and then to Libraries. In the course of a reorganisation some years ago he had volunteered to accept them in Heritage Services, which already employed professional archivists. Unfortunately new space had not been found to house them. They are lodged in the basement of the Guildhall and very much "out of sight, out of mind". User surveys

consistently show that users of the Bath archives have the highest satisfaction rates of any local authority archive users in the South West. Yet, as noted in the report, many other local authorities are ahead of Bath in implementing ambitious schemes to house their archives. Those other schemes give good examples of synergies and economies of space achieved by appropriately co-locating different facilities. He thought that the way forward for the Bath archives and local history centre was to find a larger project within which they could be based. He did not think that in the current financial climate a new standalone building would be provided. He was liaising with Councillor Anketell-Jones and the Regeneration Team about potential opportunities.

Councillor O'Brien suggested that the archive could be located in an old building, perhaps King Edward's School. The Head of Heritage Services replied that the problem was that land values in central Bath were very high. Devon Archives were located on an industrial estate on the outskirts of Exeter, close to a park and ride and a junction on the M5. He would certainly not rule out moving outside of the city centre.

Councillor Horstmann asked whether the Royal Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases had been considered as a possible location. The Head of Heritage Services said that it had crossed his mind. At present it belonged to the NHS Trust, but they were seeking to dispose of it. It did have a lot of open space inside it. He was conscious that other parties were taking an interest in the building; a number of things might be able to come together there.

## **24 PANEL WORKPLAN**

The Panel considered the forward workplan.

Councillor Beath suggested that the Panel should have an update on the JSP and Local Development Framework and on the coach park. The Chair suggested that it would be appropriate to consider coach parking in November before the Christmas Market was held. Councillor Anketell-Jones agreed that he could report back on coach parking at the November meeting.

The workplan was noted.

The meeting ended at 3.37 pm

Chair(person) .....

Date Confirmed and Signed .....

**Prepared by Democratic Services**