

## **BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET**

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

Tuesday, 1st November, 2016

**Present:-** Councillors Will Sandry (Chair), Barry Macrae (Vice-Chair), Colin Blackburn, Cherry Beath, David Veale, Christopher Pearce (in place of Lisa O'Brien) and Paul May (in place of Fiona Darey)

Communities, Transport & Environment Panel Members: Councillors Ian Gilchrist, Brian Simmons and Neil Butters

**Also in attendance:** Graham Sabourn (Head of Housing), John Wilkinson (Divisional Director for Community Regeneration), Sue Wordsworth (Team Manager, Strategy & Performance), Lisa Bartlett (Divisional Director, Development), John Cox (Business Support and Development Manager) and Peter Dawson (Group Manager, Planning Policy & Transport)

#### **25 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### **26 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

The Chairman drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

#### **27 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Councillors Lisa O'Brien and Fiona Darey had sent their apologies to the Panel. Councillors Christopher Pearce and Paul May were their respective substitutes for the duration of the meeting.

Members of the Communities, Transport & Environment Panel had also been invited to this meeting to take part in the debate relating to agenda item 9 (Joint Spatial Plan / Transport Study Update). From that Panel Councillors John Bull, Peter Turner and Bob Goodman had also sent their apologies.

#### **28 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

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

The Chairman announced that the funeral of Eric Snook, a long standing member of Bath City Council was taking place that afternoon and he asked those present to stand in silence for a few moments as a mark of respect.

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

There were none.

**31 MINUTES - 6TH SEPTEMBER 2016**

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

**32 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE**

The Cabinet Member for Homes & Planning, Councillor Liz Richardson addressed the Panel, a summary is set out below.

She said that the Council were awaiting the Inspector's report following the Examination of the Placemaking Plan that took place recently.

Councillor Barry Macrae commented that he attended one day of Examination and said that he thought our officers had done an exceptional job.

Councillor Liz Richardson spoke briefly regarding the Joint Spatial Plan as a fuller debate was scheduled for later in the meeting. She explained that the current document was a pre-draft version and that consultation on it was due to begin in November. She added that events have been planned as part of the consultation with a number drop in exhibitions due to be held across the Council with specific events already planned for Whitchurch and Keynsham.

She said that running alongside this would be the review of the Core Strategy which would also have some specific B&NES events.

She informed the Panel that the Englishcombe Neighbourhood Development Plan would be debated at the Cabinet meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> November.

She said that a homeless person count would take place later this month.

She stated that there was due to be a streamlining of reports for the Development Management Committee. The reports would be shorter in length for small non-contentious applications.

She referred the Panel to the Housing Services update report that had been circulated and said that the Head of Housing was in attendance should they have any questions.

Councillor Paul May said that he wished to thank officers on behalf of his local community in Whitchurch for what they have done so far in addressing them directly. He asked how the Panel's comments would feed into the consultation process.

Councillor Liz Richardson replied that their comments would be fed back via a report to the West of England Scrutiny Committee.

In response to a previous question at a Panel meeting regarding the number planning permissions that had not commenced during the first 12 months of approval Councillor Richardson said that figures were not held on this matter. She added though that figures were available for permissions that have been completed and those that have begun.

Councillor Colin Blackburn asked why there had been a slippage of delivered new affordable homes in quarter three.

The Head of Housing replied that a couple of schemes had slipped, including a scheme in Bathampton.

Councillor Barry Macrae commented that he was concerned that the performance indicator target relating to telephone response had not been met over the recorded five quarters. He also questioned how relative was the indicator for homelessness cases prevented. He added that he did not like the section of the printed update that contained a number of images to represent statistics.

The Head of Housing replied that they had actually received a great deal of positive feedback over the document and that the images looked much better in the officially published version. He said that the preventing homelessness was an important indicator to the Council and that he would see if there were any current benchmarking figures to set these into context.

Councillor Colin Blackburn asked for further information in relation to the performance indicator for invoices paid within 30 days.

The Head of Housing replied that this was with regard to invoices that the Council pay and predominantly associated with cases involving a Disabled Facilities Grant. He added that the reason for the negative figures is that the Council must record the date of the invoice itself and not from when they receive it, therefore any delay in it reaching the Council will lead to the indicator not being achieved. He stated that all invoices are paid within 14 days of being received.

Councillor Christopher Pearce asked how the customer satisfaction indicator is measured.

The Team Manager, Strategy & Performance replied that forms are handed out to customers of their services which have six key questions on them. She added that these questions were also available to answer online.

Councillor Barry Macrae commented that it was the duty of Councillors to represent their public on the matter of the Joint Spatial Plan and that their views must be given to the West of England Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Paul May asked if licensed HMO's were inspected every year.

The Head of Housing replied that the licences last for five years and in that time they will be subject to one inspection, ideally two.

Councillor Paul May asked how some of the £5m funding had been achieved.

The Head of Housing replied that contributing towards this figure was the New Homes Bonus for bringing empty properties back into use, Department for Health grant for young people's housing, and HCA funding for various schemes.

The Chairman asked if the process of streamlining Development Management report had been risk assessed.

Councillor Richardson replied that this type of report would only ever be used for low risk applications.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Councillor Patrick Anketell-Jones addressed the Panel, a summary is set out below.

He said that the final terms of the lease for Bath Quays South had been submitted to BMT and that he was still awaiting a report regarding Coach Parking on Bath Quays North. He added that there are now 3 or 4 options for Pioneer House being explored.

He stated that the Wayfinding Project was ongoing and that a consultation about it was due to commence.

He informed them that the Destructor Bridge would open in a sequence of events that would see it first used by pedestrians, then cyclists followed by northbound traffic.

He said that the developers of BWR were producing a plan to conclude the development on the site.

He explained that having produced a restructured programme for the Arts Council for England that Bath Festivals were due to receive £100,000 in funding from them.

He said that the future of the Royal Mineral Hospital was now the subject of some discussion as the NHS had begun to promote the sale of the site.

Councillor Barry Macrae commented that the future of the Royal Mineral Hospital was a planning issue for the city centre.

Councillor Cherry Beath said the Council should use this opportunity to explore options and provide a business case for the future use of the Royal Mineral Hospital.

Councillor Patrick Anketell-Jones replied that officers were willing and able to explore the use of the site.

Councillor Cherry Beath asked if BMT will be allowed any slippage with regard to Bath Quays South and had a parking solution been agreed.

Councillor Patrick Anketell-Jones replied that no slippage will be allowed and that parking will be under the office block development.

The Divisional Director for Community Regeneration commented that the planning application for Bath Quays South has now been submitted.

Councillor Colin Blackburn asked when the Destructor Bridge would open.

Councillor Patrick Anketell-Jones replied that he would seek an answer for the Panel.

Councillor Colin Blackburn asked if a price for the Royal Mineral Hospital had yet been mentioned.

The Divisional Director for Community Regeneration replied that he believed that advisors for the NHS were promoting the sale of the site for £30m.

Councillor Barry Macrae commented that he was surprised that the Council did not have a plan in place for this site and asked if we were addressing the matter.

Councillor Patrick Anketell-Jones commented that he had heard that the Bath Preservation Trust were considering applying for the Royal Mineral Hospital to be considered as an Asset of Community Value.

The Chairman thanked both Cabinet Members for their updates on behalf of the Panel.

### **33 JOINT SPATIAL PLAN / TRANSPORT STUDY UPDATE**

The Chairman had invited members of the Communities, Transport & Environment Panel to be present for this item and contribute to the debate. Councillors Gilchrist, Simmons and Butters were in attendance.

The Divisional Director for Development introduced this item to the Panel. She explained that the forthcoming consultation on the draft West of England Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) and Joint Transport Study (JTS) document entitled "Towards the Emerging Spatial Strategy" had been designed to start a conversation following on from the work undertaken between November 2015 and January 2016 (Issues and Options consultation).

She said that the consultation was due to take place across the West of England from 7th November to 19th December 2016.

She stated that the JSP will be a statutory Development Plan Document and will therefore need to be prepared in accordance with local plan regulations and national policy to ensure it is a 'sound' document supported by technical evidence. She added that the selection of development locations will need to be clearly justified and that at this stage no final decisions have been made and the spatial strategy is not

fixed. She said that responses to this next stage of consultation will help to inform the Plan as it progresses.

She informed them that the Transport Vision is very ambitious, representing a total of around £7.5 billion of investment in multi-modal packages, for delivery across the West of England over the next 20 years.

She said the approach to formulating the spatial strategy had sought to adhere to sustainability principles, including a focus on developing in main urban centres and making the best use of urban land; seeking to locate development outside of the Green Belt as far as possible; and consideration of Green Belt locations only where there is strong justification and evidence of exceptional circumstances.

She stated that the current evidence identifies a need for 102,200 homes to be developed during 2016-2036 across the four local authorities although the JSP will test for up to 105,000 homes during 2016-2036. This is a working number until the evidence to support the publication plan is finalised in Summer 2017.

She added that a significant proportion of the overall Housing Target would need to be delivered as affordable housing in light of the identified level of need. She said that it will not be able to fully meet the affordable housing need over the plan period through the planning system alone. Instead the JSP recognises that a proportion of the overall affordable housing need could be delivered through the planning system.

She said that around 66,800 dwellings are committed across the West of England in the form of permissions, local plan allocations or future small windfall sites and that the JSP prioritises the need to maximise the use of brownfield sites, particularly within existing urban areas, and 14,600 dwellings are identified from this source – primarily in Bristol. This leaves up to 23,600 dwellings to be identified through the JSP.

The Group Manager for Planning Policy & Transport said that the Transport Vision represents the scale of investment that is considered necessary to tackle key existing challenges, and to support future economic growth, with an emphasis on public transport and sustainable travel options.

He said it was important to have a long hard view of the transport infrastructure required and to be able to provide Government with evidence to support schemes and gain funding.

The Divisional Director for Development explained that a partial review of the Core Strategy was also due to commence.

The Chairman commented that he felt that the Panel could have an effective role in reviewing the consultation strategy.

Councillor Ian Gilchrist asked if the figure quoted in the report should be nearer to £10bn rather than £7.5bn.

The Group Manager for Planning Policy & Transport replied that the figure of £7.5bn was what they were currently working within and that in the words of Sir Peter Hendy it was important to have a 'costed strategy', not necessarily an affordable one. He added that potential future funding could come from Highways England and Network Rail.

Councillor Cherry Beath commented that she wanted to hear that rail improvements will be sought and that the Green Belt will be preserved. She said that she also welcomed Bristol's density plans.

The Group Manager for Planning Policy & Transport replied that the Council would look to maximise what it can from the rail network. He added that if some housing is not put in the Green Belt this may cause further transport issues.

The Chairman commented that he was concerned over the use of some known flood areas.

The Divisional Director for Development replied that these areas would be avoided where possible.

Councillor Neil Butters asked how certain was it that the proposed Mayoral Combined Authority would go ahead.

The Divisional Director for Development replied that the Government had not changed its view with regard to this process.

Councillor Paul May asked why areas such as Long Ashton and Ashton Vale had not formed part of the emerging spatial strategy due to issues relating to the Green Belt yet Whitchurch had been included in the plan. He added that he was concerned over the costs associated with the plan and that the format of the maps between the two documents was not consistent.

The Divisional Director for Development replied that the nature of its location, the contribution that could be made to improving sustainable transport options south east of Bristol, as well as its relative performance in Green Belt terms constitute the exceptional circumstances to justify the release of land south of Whitchurch Village from the Green Belt.

This additional response below in italics was supplied following the meeting.

*We agree with you that consistency between the emerging JSP and Transport Vision is essential, and we are making every effort to achieve this through partnership working between the planning and transport workstreams.*

*Specifically, you referred to the A4-A37 and south Bristol orbital route, and its presentation in the relevant JSP and Transport Vision diagrams.*

*The Transport Vision diagram given on page 61 of the meeting report pack has now been superseded, by a new diagram which will be released very shortly as part of*

*the engagement presentation material. The new diagram is updated in content, and much improved graphically.*

*The latest Transport Vision diagram does not show any new continuous road link around south Bristol, instead a new/improved alignment is shown, from the A37 at Whitchurch only as far as the Hengrove employment area in south Bristol.*

*The JSP diagram after p50 in the report pack shows a 'lozenge', representing strategic transport improvements generally between the A4 and A37. This is the main focus of investment in B&NES south east of Bristol, and as noted above, there is now no indication in the Transport Vision of a continuous road for all traffic around the southern edge of Bristol.*

*Additionally, as will be noted clearly in both diagrams once they are released, all locations and alignments are illustrative, and not intended to indicate specifics.*

*Therefore broad consistency is the best that can be achieved at this level of presentation, and based on the above, the JSP and Transport Vision diagrams are considered to be broadly consistent.*

Councillor Barry Macrae said that he agreed with comments made earlier that Government need to hear a consistent message. He added that this process must be explained clearly to residents and their views must be taken into account. He said that it was of paramount importance to get the right infrastructure in place.

The Chairman asked officers to explain the consultation process and asked how communities would be made aware of the process.

The Divisional Director for Development replied that there would be a West of England JSP launch event on November 8<sup>th</sup> 2016. Themed round table discussions will then take place November 21<sup>st</sup> 2016. Information exhibitions will be held across B&NES in Keynsham Library (7<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> November), The Hollies, Midsomer Norton (21<sup>st</sup> November – 2<sup>nd</sup> December) and Bath One Stop Shop (5<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> December).

She said that Community Forums would also receive briefings and that specific workshops had been arranged for Whitchurch (15<sup>th</sup> November, 6.30pm – 8.30pm in Whitchurch Village Hall) and Keynsham (30<sup>th</sup> November, 6.00pm – 8.00pm in the Somerdale Pavilion).

Councillor Paul May said it was important to make sure that other Local Authorities were doing similar exercises.

The Divisional Director for Development replied that they were and that she felt ours would be a very thorough process.

Councillor Ian Gilchrist asked if there would be an opportunity to see information and give feedback online.

The Divisional Director for Development replied that there would be.



Councillor Barry Macrae said that this information needs to be on the front page of our website.

Councillor Neil Butters said that there should be a press release and it should form part of the weekly e-newsletter that is sent out to the public.

The Divisional Director for Development agreed with these comments.

The Chairman asked who the Dedicated Engagement Officer is.

The Divisional Director for Development replied that it was an officer within South Gloucestershire who has been working with the four Local Authorities across the West of England regarding communications.

Councillor Barry Macrae commented that information on this matter should be sent to all Councillors.

The Chairman said that he was concerned that some of the events were for invitees only.

The Divisional Director for Development replied that some of the events were directly about encouraging developer input into the process and agreeing their commitments. She added that our local businesses will have discussions and feedback through Business West on the process.

Councillor Paul May asked if there was a timescale for this process.

The Divisional Director for Development replied that an examination of the JSP was scheduled for Summer 2018 and that development would be due post 2026. She added that the Transport Vision would end in Spring 2017 whereby detailed transport planning would then commence.

Councillor Neil Butters asked about the prospect of a light rail service to Bristol from B&NES.

The response below in italics was supplied following the meeting.

*While rapid transit can be delivered in the form of a bus-based mode, the ambition is for new light rail solutions, where the potential is greatest for high passenger flows. Furthermore, on some corridors in the greater Bristol area, there will be a limit to which the current bus system is able to accommodate more demand, and new rapid transit options will be needed to meet growing travel demand.*

*One such corridor experiencing high demand for public transport is from Bath to Central Bristol. Consequently an LRT (light rapid transit) route is included in the Transport Vision, following a broad alignment along the A4.*

*Rapid transit between Bath and Bristol is proposed to complement an improved rail corridor and better accommodate a wider range of trip patterns. A new Saltford*

*Bypass would help to remove through traffic in the village and release roadspace for effective rapid transit through the village.*

*Options would need to be considered for the best mode for this rapid transit route. This could initially be a MetroBus standard route, for example to provide early access to the Keynsham growth area identified through the emerging Joint Spatial Strategy, but the longer-term ambition would be for a light rail solution.*

*The initial focus would be the route from Keynsham to central Bristol, but in the longer term this would extend to (and through) Bath east-west, most likely via Lower Bristol Road and through Bath Western Riverside. It is recognised that this would require substantial re-engineering of the road network along the whole A4 corridor, including at Bath, Saltford and Keynsham.*

Councillor Neil Butters asked if further Park & Rides were planned as part of this process.

The Group Manager for Planning Policy & Transport replied that one was still being considered for the East of Bath and that he believed new ones were being considered within Bristol.

Councillor Neil Butters commented that an East of Bath Park & Rail should not be discounted as an idea.

The Group Manager for Planning Policy & Transport replied that he was willing to take this proposal on board.

Councillor Neil Butters asked if any HGV restrictions could be put in place on the A36 and traffic diverted onto the A350.

The Group Manager for Planning Policy & Transport replied that discussions would need to take place with Wiltshire County Council regarding the A350 and Highways England in terms of the A36.

Councillor Barry Macrae asked how the Council will tackle developers attempting to use specific areas of land.

The Divisional Director for Development replied that the best defence will be to follow the Acts and Government guidance and to have a robust strategy in place.

The Chairman referred the Panel to the Core Strategy Review Programme that was set out on page 137 of the agenda pack.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to:

- i) Ask that their comments made during the meeting regarding the West of England "Towards the Emerging Spatial Strategy" consultation document be recorded as part of the consultation process.
- ii) Note the Core Strategy Review Commencement Document.

iii) Note the proposed amendments to the Local Development Scheme.

## **34 BATH AND SOMER VALLEY ENTERPRISE ZONE**

The Divisional Director for Community Regeneration introduced this item to the Panel. He informed them that negotiations were on-going with DCLG/HMT on the Government agreeing to fund the granting of Business Rates discounts for occupation of premises within the existing Enterprise Area fiscal boundary, which would effectively give the ability to grant the same reliefs as are available in an Enterprise Zone.

He gave a presentation to the Panel, a summary of this is set out below and a full version can be seen online as an appendix to these minutes.

### **Enterprise Zone Proposed Expansion**

#### **Business Case**

- Address market constraints & economic vulnerability
- Promote employment provision in accessible development locations emerging from the WofE JSP
- Enable improved broadband provision
- Focus new investment through clustering & agglomeration benefits

#### **Somer Valley**

- Consolidation of Old Mills, Paulton
- Brownfield sites at Welton Bibby Baron / Welton Hollow
- Completion of existing employment sites
  - Bath Business Park / Westfield / Midsomer Enterprise Park

#### **Keynsham**

- Allocated sites at Somerdale & A4 East of Keynsham
- Keynsham Peninsula employment land

### **Enterprise Zone Business Rate Uplift: £ 76,350.67 from 11 sites**

#### **Enterprise Zone Timeline**

10<sup>th</sup> November 2016: Council approval sought for extended Bath & Somer Valley Enterprise Zone. Delegated authority to enable proposals to be finalised, agreed with LEP and submitted to government by 9<sup>th</sup> December 2016.

23<sup>rd</sup> November 2016: Autumn Statement – formal announcement on Enterprise Zone.

30<sup>th</sup> November 2016: WoE Prog.Board – Agree final Implementation Plan.

Agree and sign MoU between LEP, Bristol City Council and Bath & North East Somerset (including agreed objectives and priorities for the Enterprise Zone as well as terms necessary to give effect to the Memorandum of Understanding with DCLG).

9<sup>th</sup> December 2016: Deadline for Enterprise Zones commencing in April 2017 to provide final boundary maps and BR baselines for existing properties. Councillor Barry Macrae stated that land allocated through this process for employment use should not be allowed to become housing if the initial employment project should fail. He also asked if there was any flexibility within the process to look at small sites if they become available for local jobs. He encouraged decisions regarding any of the sites to be announced locally so that the community are aware.

The Divisional Director for Community Regeneration replied that small sites are not within the Government policy on Enterprise Zones. He added though that development of the Old Mills site may make other schemes more attractive to developers.

Councillor Paul May asked about the connectivity of the sites in Welton and if any of the sites in Keynsham were within known flood areas.

The Divisional Director for Community Regeneration replied that site deliverability and scale had formed the proposals. He added that with regard to flooding some schemes may take 10 – 15 years to come to fruition.

The Business Support & Development Manager added that due to the recent Placemaking Examination the decision was taken to proceed with sites allocated within the Core Strategy.

Councillor Cherry Beath asked if Devolution would affect any of these plans.

The Divisional Director for Community Regeneration replied that Devolution was creating a number of opportunities to discuss these proposals.

Councillor Colin Blackburn asked why the sites of Pinesgate and Roseberry Place were not able to be included.

The Business Support & Development Manager replied that colleagues within the Resources Directorate were concerned over the delivery of the sites and the achievable uplift in rates.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to;

- i) Note the current position and proposed next steps in relation to the proposed expansion of the Bath & Somer Valley Enterprise Zone.
- ii) Note that a report is being taken to Council on the 10th November 2016 seeking approval for the proposed Enterprise Zone expansion.

**35 PANEL WORKPLAN**

The Chairman introduced this item to the Panel. He said that they were likely to receive a budget report relating to their remit at their January 2017 meeting.

He is also proposed that they receive a report relating to Flood Risk Management at the same meeting.

The Panel agreed with this proposal.

The meeting ended at 6.05 pm

Chair(person) .....

Date Confirmed and Signed .....

**Prepared by Democratic Services**