

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

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

Monday, 22nd January, 2018

Present:- **Councillors** John Bull, Brian Simmons, Neil Butters, Alan Hale, Richard Samuel, Peter Turner, Patrick Anketell-Jones, Ian Gilchrist and Michael Evans

57 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

58 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chairman drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

59 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

There were none.

60 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

61 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There was none.

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

The following people made statements to the Panel:

David Redgewell – Transport South West made a statement regarding the Great Western Rail consultation, bus summit and bus station. *A copy of this statement is attached to these minutes.*

Councillor Butters asked if WECA are responding to the GWR consultation, Mr Redgewell stated that he had concerns about different fares in different areas if GWR is broken up. Councillor Hale asked whether Avon Valley railway at Bitton could be used by commuters, Mr Redgewell stated that in theory it could. Regarding Bath Bus Station, he explained that this needs effort and investment and maybe WECA will get involved.

Hal Macfie made a statement regarding changes to the traffic arrangements in Wellsway, Keynsham. He thanked the Panel for the answers to his questions on this subject (*a copy is attached to these minutes*) and added that residents also asked for 20mph flashing lights in both directions.

David Andrews referred to the Tram Study and he congratulated officers on the report.

Adam Reynolds made a statement regarding the Tram Study report. *A copy of this statement is attached to these minutes.*

Councillor Butters asked that, if we did have Trams, what should the priority route be. Mr Reynolds stated that he thought it would be Twerton/Newbridge area and also Lansdown and Weston.

The Panel noted two questions from Mr Hal Macfie and the answers circulated. *A copy of this document is attached to these minutes*

63 MINUTES

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

64 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

The Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment, Councillor Mark Shelford updated the Panel on the following:

- Public Transport – he encouraged people to respond to the Bus consultation.
- Parking Services – the parking and coach strategies would come to Cabinet soon.
- Passenger Transport – continued work on ‘Getting from A to B Strategy’ with a view to working on the roads around Queens Square.
- Highways and Traffic – not withstanding budget pressures, this is very positive. Work planning on Tog Hill Lane with South Gloucestershire.

(A copy of his full statement is appended to these minutes)

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

Councillor Shelford confirmed that Councillor Hale’s request for funding for a consultation on traffic calming on Park Road Keynsham was in the programme.

Councillor Gilchrist asked about the subway in his ward, it was confirmed that there is money set aside for refurbishment.

Regarding the GWR consultation, the Cabinet Member explained that he had not had the meeting about his yet and would report back.

Councillor Bull asked if the bus consultation is available for people to respond who do not have digital access. The Cabinet Member stated that he would report back on this.

The Cabinet Member for Development and Neighbourhoods, Councillor Bob Goodman updated the Panel on the following:

- River Safety – officers are working with Avon Fire and Rescue and with the Student Safety Partnership.
- Air Quality – there is a report on the agenda.
- Refuse – since the roll out of the new system there have been some challenging times but it is likely that the new recycling figures will put BANES in the top 10. He reported that the push now is to reduce side waste and this is being tackled in a number of ways – waste doctors, waste diaries, contacting homeowners and if necessary issuing fines. The vast majority of residents are complying.

Councillor Samuel stated that there are 123 non-collected bags along London Road outside 40 properties which are mostly flats. He stated that he supports the policy but non-collected bags are a public health issue. The Cabinet Member explained that waste on the streets cannot be allowed and stated that a lot of non-collected bags contain recyclable materials. He stated that we are not there yet and London Road is a particular problem but numbers will go down gradually with the measures put in place (listed above).

Councillor Bull asked if there was a particular problem with students as they are sometimes only at properties in term time. The Cabinet Member explained that he has worked with student groups and they are compliant.

Following a query from Councillor Anketell-Jones, the Cabinet Member explained that the authority does not send recycling to China.

Councillor Anketell-Jones stated that there was a perception that operators' attitudes are problematic, the Cabinet Member explained that it is a very hard and taxing job.

The Cabinet Member for Transformation and Customer Services, Councillor Karen Warrington updated the Panel on the following:

- Bath Library – there is continued engagement with groups. In May the design phase begin and work will start the following March. Staff functions are being looked at. Regarding The Hollies – design drawings will be sent out.
- Community Libraries – none have been closed, negotiations are getting close to transfer in some areas as people are coming forward. All local forums are being informed.

Councillor Bull asked if other methods are being used to get information out as forums are not always well attended. The Cabinet Member explained that there are posters in libraries and ward members have been informed.

Following a question from Councillor Turner, the Cabinet Member explained that volunteers will have access to professional advice from the Council, some libraries will be able to hire a part time librarian.

Regarding Bath Central Library, Councillor Samuel asked if the work will go on while the Library is open and working. Ian Savigar, Divisional Director for Customer Services explained that it is a bit early for full details but talks with the architects is ongoing regarding the transformation, it is hoped that there will be a continued service.

65 TRAM STUDY

Kelvin Packer, Group Manager Highways and Traffic introduced the report and gave a presentation to the Panel on 'The Potential Introduction of Trams to Bath' which covered the following:

- Strategic Evidence – Commuting by car/Commuting by bus/Bus accessibility/Key Corridors
- Technology
- Corridor Arrangements – Highway widths/Highway Gradients/City Centre Highway Width/Summary of Constraints
- Summary
- Issues to be considered
- Next Steps

The officer introduced Ian Brown from UK Tram who commented that there is nothing about Bath that precludes a tram scheme but that it is a big commitment and must be subject to a proper procurement procedure. He added that there were five considerations – economy, regeneration, environment and air quality, agglomeration effect and alleviating congestion.

Councillor Bull commented that members must serve all residents, not just those in the city of Bath. Ian Brown stated that people from all around the area travel into the centre for work and leisure so would be affected.

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

Councillor Bull asked what the added value of a tram scheme would be if there is already a Park and Ride in the area. Ian Brown stated that he had never seen a tram scheme that works from a Park and Ride and that it was unlikely it would be justified in that circumstance.

Councillor Butters asked about rail alignment and also which other cities of a similar size are going down this route. Ian Brown commented that if rail alignment is in place

a tram scheme would be a lot cheaper. He mentioned that Birmingham built a scheme that stopped outside the city centre and was not widely used. He further explained that there could be a tram solution in Cambridge where science parks are being built.

Councillor Hale asked how much the study has cost and where the land would be found. He also stated that he had visited Croydon when the trams system was being installed and there was a degree of travel chaos. Ian Brown stated that Croydon serves as an example to others in terms of disruption but there is more technology in place now.

Councillor Gilchrist asked what provision there was in the budget regarding trams. The Strategic Director stated that there was a regional approach so this would be discussed with WECA, she explained that there is not a specific mention in the budget.

Following a question from Councillor Turner, Ian Brown commented that the first question is whether the authority wants a tram scheme and if so, the specification must be very clear - it takes 7 years to the paperwork, 3 years to build and 1 year to commission.

It was **RESOLVED** that a Task and Finish Group be set up with a view to looking at detailed issues regarding a Tram Scheme which covers the points mentioned in the 'Next Steps' slide (set out below):

- *Set up Officer Client Group to include an expert from UK Trams.*
- *Undertake a detailed assessment on one corridor (subject to expert advice).*
- *Investigate opportunity to progress the study further/develop a business case with support from WECA.*

Members of the group – John Bull, Neil Butters, Alan Hale, Peter Turner and Brian Simmons. The Chairman explained that it was a future aim to hold a Scrutiny Inquiry Day on the issue to bring in bodies/experts.

66 BATH AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN UPDATE

Cathryn Brown, Team Manager for Licensing and Environmental Protection and Aled Williams, Environmental Protection Manager, gave a presentation to the Panel which covered the following:

- National Air Quality Plan Background
- The Bath AQAP Consultation
- The Headlines
- Relationship between BAQAP and NAQP
- The NAQP timeline
- NAQP governance
- NAQP funding opportunities
- NAQP progress since July 2017

- NAQP next steps until March 2018
- NAQP communications and stakeholder engagement
- Real-time air pollution dials

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

Councillor Bull asked if there was an explanation for levels falling. The officer explained that engine technology is improving and vehicles are being updated but 3 years of low level data is needed to confirm an improvement. Councillor Hale pointed to the improvement in air quality as a result of the one way system in Keynsham.

Following a question from Councillor Samuel, the officer explained that the project board is attended by Cabinet Members and action points are noted, a project manager runs the meetings and takes the notes. Councillor Samuel asked that if the plan was in place by December 2018 and there was a change of administration in May 2019 – can elements of the plan be changed. The officer stated that she would take advice but she believes that the authority would have to comply with the plan.

Councillor Samuel asked if there would be any special measures put in place around primary schools, the officer stated that the mandate is to bring all areas within the standards.

Following a query from Councillor Gilchrist, the officer explained that by the end of December 2018, the option must be agreed and before 2021 it has to be implemented.

Councillor Bull stated that the only way to create a significant reduction is to look into prohibiting certain vehicles. Anti-idling measure would need constant enforcement. The officer noted the comment.

Councillor Bull asked if there are lessons to be learned from clean air zones in other areas, the officer stated that this information is shared at DEFRA workshops.

Councillor Anketell Jones asked if the Air Quality Action Plan would conflict with the Parking Strategy as it seeks to encourage short stay visits and discourage commuters. The officer explained that the consultants working on Air Quality are also working on the Parking Strategy and parking services representatives are on the Air Quality project team.

Councillor Bob Goodman, Cabinet Member for Development and Neighbourhoods stated that he was confident that compliance would be delivered in the timescale and he thanked the team.

The Panel noted that there would be a report on 'Air Quality (regarding A37)' to the May meeting of the Panel and that Panel members would be sent an email briefing on the strategic outline case for the National Air Quality Action Plan.

67 COUNCIL OPERATIONAL PLAN

The Chair explained the aspects of the plan that were within the remit of the Panel. He explained that the Strategic Director for Place, Louise Fradd and Divisional Director for Environmental Services, Martin Shields were present to answer questions.

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

Regarding 'Transport Planning' (page 99, Appendix 1) Councillor Bull asked that if reliance on consultants is reduced, is there capacity within existing staff to carry out the work. The Divisional Director explained that, following a restructuring across the Highways Team, there are now staff who can do the work that had been done by consultants.

Councillor Butters asked (regarding 'Parking and Transport') if customers would be able to pay directly by card under the new proposal or will they have to download an App. The Divisional Director explained that the plan was to reduce payment by card (and the additional transaction fee). The Strategic Director explained that other areas use this model and there will be a phased approach. The Divisional Director explained that with the App customers can adjust their stay period.

Councillor Bull asked (regarding 'Transport and Parking Services Review') if the £707k saving had been made as a result of the parking review. The Strategic Director explained that this had already been agreed as part of the previous budget process but at this time the parking review was still under consideration. However there had already been additional income from parking charges, particularly around the Christmas period and it was felt that the income target was realistic and may even be exceeded.

Councillor Bull asked (regarding 'Transport – moving people from A to B') if the proposals result in changes to eligibility for transport and asked if future service users will be disadvantaged by the proposal. The Strategic Director explained that the review has been ongoing and savings are now coming. She added that personalised budgets have had a positive impact on costs and discussions are ongoing with local dial a ride groups. In addition she added that the programme of safe routes to school would further reduce the need for transport to be provided and that the Council was looking at how it could use its vehicles to move patients to and from hospital more cost efficiently.

Regarding 'Waste and Parks' Councillor Turner asked if Parks Groups are aware of the service review. The Divisional Director explained that the service will be looking to work with friends of groups and any other partners who can contribute and that the service will become more commercial in the way it does business with fee paying customers.

Councillor Bull asked (regarding 'Refuse Collection') if it is anticipated that there will be resistance to reducing garden waste collections in winter months as people pay for this service. The Strategic Director explained that the reduction in collections during winter months (when there is less garden waste) was preferable to increasing the fees.

Regarding 'Modern Libraries and Customer Services Review' Councillor Bull asked if it was wise to withdraw funding from community libraries when there is more emphasis on digital communication and many people only access computers in their library. The Cabinet Member for Transformation and Customer Services, Councillor Karen Warrington explained that people are coming forward and discussions are ongoing, if people want an internet connection then that will be factored in. The Panel will be kept informed.

Councillor Simmons asked about the 3 month vacancy freeze (page 116) and if this could cause a problem in audit. The Strategic Director explained that if there is a need for a post to be filled then it is possible to fill a post before 3 months. She added that this policy has been applied for the last 6 months and it represents due diligence in assessing if there is a need for the post.

Regarding 'Management Arrangements and Staffing' Councillor Bull asked if the reduction in 300 staff was in addition to the staff reductions shown in this report. The Strategic Director explained that the 300 figure was made up of the staff reductions shown in the budget papers and other posts which have not been identified yet. This will be phased over 2 years. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Efficiency, Councillor Charles Gerrish added that smoothing reserves could be used in the phased period.

Councillor Hale asked if there is any work to be done with University's, the Cabinet Member reported that there is a lot of work being done on this.

Councillor Gilchrist asked if the Gulls nest removal programme was going ahead, The Cabinet Member confirmed that this was in the budget proposals.

Councillor Gilchrist asked if there was any provision in the budget regarding residents parking zones, the Divisional Director reported that arrangements regarding residents parking zones would be reviewed as part of the parking review but in the meantime there is no change to the current process.

68 PANEL WORKPLAN

The Panel noted the workplan and the following updates:

- Transport – Getting from A to B update – March 2018
- Parish Charter – March 2018
- Air Quality – A 37 – May 2018
- Waste Collection Review – May 2018

The meeting ended at 7.45 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

