

## **BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET**

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

Monday, 21st January, 2019

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

Apologies for absence: Councillors: Peter Turner

#### **53 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### **54 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

The Chairman drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

#### **55 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Councillor Peter Turner gave his apologies.

#### **56 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

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

There was none.

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

David Redgewell made a statement regarding transport issues. He stated that the 178 and 179 bus routes were important and should be maintained. He also mentioned that the Somerset Tourist Guide does not have adequate local transport information as it did last year. David Redgewell also mentioned that the Tourist Information Centre in Bath is not accessible. Councillor Bull stated that the relevant officers would be informed on the above two points.

Clive Turner made a statement regarding cuts in the 179 bus service. He explained the service has gradually eroded since January 2017 which has had a huge impact on the community and caused enormous discontent. He asked that the Council help to get the assessment criteria amended so that the impact on the environment and communities is measured.

Councillor Richard Samuel made a statement regarding Bath Library and the decision to delay the integration. He stated that the predicted savings are shown in the budget papers and asked how the savings are to be made if the project is uncertain. He asked for clarity on exactly when the decision would be made on whether to go ahead with the plans.

Councillor Richard Samuel made a statement regarding the Clean Air Zone and the delay in the Cabinet decision. He asked if the decision would be made in March or after the May elections. He stated that the Council had missed the deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> December and was now exposed to financial risk. He added that residents want to know what is happening and the lack of clarity is unsatisfactory.

## **59 MINUTES**

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

## **60 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE**

The Cabinet Member for Transformation and Customer Services – Councillor Karen Warrington gave the following updates:

- Bath Library – the savings shown are to be made over the whole Modern Libraries Programme (Bath and community libraries). £450k had been saved to date.
- Mobile Library – this will be replaced as it had been difficult to maintain the vehicle, this was on target for April/May 2019.
- Community Libraries – there are 4 community libraries which are doing well in Weston, Timsbury, Saltford and Bishop Sutton. There are also a number of other community libraries developing – Peasedown, Larkhall, Paulton and Radstock.

### Questions from the Panel

Councillor Samuel asked if plans would be in the Capital Programme at the Cabinet meeting in February. The Cabinet Member confirmed this.

Councillor Bull stated that residents of Paulton have to pay an extra £20 per year on their Council Tax for their community library – he asked if the Cabinet Member felt it was fair that they would have to pay but Bath residents do not and their library will be unaffected. The Cabinet Member explained that the Council's statutory duty is to provide library facilities in Bath, Keynsham and Midsomer Norton. David Trethewey, Director of Partnerships and Corporate Services explained that each business case was different and there were a range of funding mechanisms.

The Cabinet Member for Development and Neighbourhoods – Councillor Bob Goodman gave the following updates:

- Bath Leisure Centre – opens on Wednesday following a successful refit.

- Keynsham Leisure Centre – this is progressing, no change in facilities.
- Waste – Christmas collections went well and the number of missed collections had gone down. There are ongoing talks with Curo and residents of flats with a view to bringing improvements.
- Litter enforcement – 3GS will prioritise education as well as enforcement in line with the Panel comments.
- Clean Air Zone – there had been a huge response to the consultation, technical modelling is ongoing and a report will be available soon.
- There is a clean air roadshow in 6<sup>th</sup> March.
- AQMP – there is funding for a feasibility study for Farrington Gurney in 2019.

#### Questions from the Panel

Councillor Hale asked for clarification on whether Keynsham Leisure Centre would have changing villages rather than male and female changing facilities. The Cabinet Member stated that there was no indication of a change from the original plan.

Councillor Gilchrist asked about timings for street sweeping. The Cabinet Member explained that streets were swept on demand.

Councillor Samuel if there had been any view expressed from DEFRA since the Council missed their deadline on the CAZ decision. The Cabinet Member explained that he had had a positive meeting and they were supportive of plans to move forwards.

In response to a question from Councillor Samuel regarding litter enforcement, the Cabinet Member explained that 3GS prioritised education along with enforcement.

Councillor Michael Evans asked that the Panel receive an update report on 'Fix My Street' (this will be emailed to Panel members).

The Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment – Councillor Mark Shelford gave the following updates:

- Winter preparation – thanks to the officers for their preparations (salt, gritters, drivers and flood preparation) over Christmas.
- Underpass (Widcombe) – there have been some delays but this is going ahead, when the designs are signed off, there will be another 4 weeks work.
- Buses – he explained that he was supportive of public and rural transport and urged the WECA mayor to engage with this. He added that a rural bus committee had been formed.

#### Questions from the Panel

Councillor Hale asked what influence the Council can have on keeping bus services running. He stated that it does not make sense to encourage people to use public transport while services are being cut. He mentioned the 349 service. The Cabinet Member replied that there is a small amount available to keep vital lines going but in

the long term the subsidy is declining across the UK. He commented that the 349 is a commercialised service.

Councillor Butters asked about the 179 service. The Cabinet Member replied that this was also a commercial service and that he had not spoken to First Bus about this route yet.

Councillor Gilchrist asked if the delay on the subway is adding to the cost. The Cabinet Member said he would report back.

Councillor Gilchrist asked if there was any enforcement when people park on pavements. The Cabinet Member explained that a number of London Boroughs have designated pavement parking and that this was being trialled in Westmoreland ward. He further explained that enforcement officers do pick this up where it is correct to do so but not where it is unclear. Councillor Samuel stated that it was not illegal to park on a pavement but it was illegal to drive on the pavements. He added that there can be damage caused by vehicles parking on pavements. He asked if the policy was going to be examined. The Cabinet Member explained that there would not be a policy review at this stage and that there must be a safe and balanced approach.

The Cabinet Member mentioned a new rural transport group was being set up – Councillors Bull and Butters volunteered to be part of this.

## **61 COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER POLICY**

Andy Thomas, Head of Strategy, Engagement and Marketing and Sara Dixon, Locality Manager, Communities Team introduced the report.

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

Councillor Hale asked how fast CATs (Community Asset Transfers) take. The officer explained that each one is different, some are more complex than others.

Councillor Gilchrist asked if people might be put off by how cumbersome the process is. The officer explained that organisations wanted to get it right and welcomed the detailed information.

Councillor Anketell Jones asked if any community groups would be disadvantaged by not having the resources to put a business plan together. The officer reassured the Panel that an equalities analysis had been carried out.

Councillor Butters asked if organisations would be allowed to develop on any land gained as a result of a CAT. The officer explained the Council can only grant a lease if it is receiving benefits so that if there were potential profits made by an acquirer, they would be shared. It was acknowledged that in the past CATS may have had different arrangements. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources explained that CATS can take longer than they should which has often been the result of legal delays.

Councillor Symonds summarised the consultation response given by Keynsham Town Council. The officer stated that this feedback would be taken into account in the consultation process.

The Panel made the following comments on the draft policy:

- This progress is encouraging and the Policy will streamline the process.
- Encouraged by the determination to learn from best practice.
- Support from the Panel for the draft policy.

## **62 CORPORATE & BUDGET PLANNING 2019-20**

David Trethewey, Director of Partnerships and Corporate Services introduced the report.

Councillor Charles Gerrish, Cabinet Member for Finance and Efficiency, Martin Shields, Corporate Director, and Mandy Bishop, Director of Environmental Services, were also present to answer questions.

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

Councillor Anketell Jones asked, regarding the Organisational Plan, what the critical point was if the amount in the pound spent on adult and children services kept on rising. The Director of Partnerships and Corporate Services explained that there is no categorical answer but that a Fair Funding Review was in place.

Regarding the Core Offer (page 61), Councillor Evans referred to the middle section and stated that he was concerned that safety was becoming the only criteria regarding roads rather than travel. The Director of Partnerships and Corporate Services explained that the Council has resources for core delivery but it can still influence others to affect results.

Councillor Anketell Jones asked about the PREVENT agenda and the Director of Partnerships and Corporate Services explained that the Council would continue to work with partners and the community.

Councillor Samuel stated that the Council had a long way to go to make it's online services more transactional which would lead to huge savings. He added that the One Stop Shop is not a comprehensive service and the current website is not fit for purpose. The Director of Partnerships and Corporate Services responded by explaining that there is a proposal in the digital transformation plan a move to a transactional service around parking and a new website is being worked on. Councillor Bull raised an equalities issue with transactional services by stating that not all people have access to or can use online services. Councillor Hale sought assurance that we never move away from the human voice on the phone system. The Director of Partnerships and Corporate Services stated that this would be considered in the roll out of services and residents access needs would be assessed but could not give an ongoing assurance regarding the phone system. Councillor Hale stated that an automated phone system would be a backwards step. Councillor Symonds gave an example that there were 650 members of Dial a Ride in his area

and only 50 have access to email so many would have problems accessing the Council if any services were online only.

Councillor Samuel asked why the parking strategy (page 63) was marked as high risk. Mandy Bishop, Director of Environmental Services explained that this will now be reassessed as medium risk.

In response to a query from Councillor Neil Butters regarding parking income, Martin Shields, Corporate Director explained that the income can be used to support the highway (for example safe routes to schools).

Councillor Bull noted the large savings that were predicted from 'Getting from A to B', the officer confirmed this and added that the savings will be mainly in 2020/21.

Regarding a query about pothole repairs, the Director of Environmental Services explained some permanent pothole repairs would become part of the Capital programme. She explained that the CIPFA guidelines had changed recently. The Panel supported this.

There was some discussion on Green Waste collections. Councillor Gilchrist stated that there was a proposed increase in charges but reduction in this service and asked if some residents could pay more to get a full 12 month service. The Corporate Director explained that there had been a review of the service which found that it would not be cost effective to pick up small amounts of waste. Councillor Samuel pointed out that if the service operates on a cost recovery basis, it would not matter if there was a gap in the service. He added that when services are intermittent, they are not used. Councillor Charles Gerrish, Cabinet Member for Finance and Efficiency, stated that he had heard the points made.

Councillor Samuel stated that the 'Fix my street' App is a great innovation but still did not provide adequate feedback on what had been reported. The Corporate Director explained that it was a mechanism to make clear what was in the system but in the future it could be refined to link with back office systems to give more information. The Director of Environmental Services said she would check out Councillor Samuel's suggestion of sending a picture of a repair to the complainant.

In response to a question from Councillor Butters, the Cabinet Member explained that strategic work is funded by WECA and local work by BANES.

The Cabinet Member confirmed that the gulls nest removal programme will continue in response to a query from Councillor Gilchrist.

Regarding Air Quality monitoring, Councillor Samuel explained that he had asked if the Council had considered bidding to DEFRA for real time monitoring in the city. He explained that diffusion tubes were in place currently and they only looked backwards. The Corporate Director explained that the Council was in detailed discussion with DEFRA regarding what they would fund.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to pass on the following comments to the Cabinet:

- Regarding the digital transformation and core service redesign – consideration be given to those residents who cannot access or use online services.
- Consideration be given to the possibility of giving residents the option of paying more for a full 12 month green bin service.
- Consideration be given to refining the 'Fix My Street' App, which is a great innovation, so that it can provide adequate feedback to complainants.
- Consideration be given to getting real time monitoring (regarding Air Quality) across the city.

### **63 PANEL WORKPLAN**

The Panel noted the workplan with the following amendments:

- 11<sup>th</sup> March 2019 meeting – add '20mph zones Update'

The meeting ended at 7.10 pm

Chair(person) .....

Date Confirmed and Signed .....

**Prepared by Democratic Services**