

Minutes

of the Meeting of

The Place Policy and Scrutiny Panel

Wednesday, 13 July 2022

New Council Chamber - Town Hall

Meeting Commenced: 2.00 pm

Meeting Concluded: 4.20 pm

Councillors:

John Crockford-Hawley (Chairman)

John Cato
James Clayton
Sarah Codling
Patrick Keating
Phil Neve

Apologies: Councillors: Peter Crew, Mark Crosby.

Absent: Councillors Mike Bird, Gill Bute, James Tonkin and Richard Westwood.

Also in attendance: Councillor Ann Harley.

Officers in attendance: Bella Fortune; Lindsay Margerison; Marcus Hewlett; Victoria Barvenova; Michael Reep; Claire Courtois; Luke Johnson (Place); Brent Cross (Corporate Services).

PLA Election of the Vice Chairman for the 2022/2023 municipal year

1

Resolved: that Councillor Peter Crew be elected Vice-Chairman.

PLA Apologies for absence and notification of substitutes

2

Apologies received from Cllrs Mark Crosby and Peter Crew; Cllr Ann Harley present as substitute for Cllr Crew.

The Chairman expressed his disappointment at the lack of notification from Members not attending, finding this both unacceptable and inexcusable.

PLA Public Discussion (Standing Order SS09)

3

David Redgewell, of the South West Transport Network, addressed the Panel on the Bus Service Improvement Plan, bus stop and shelter maintenance, bus, rail and coach interchanges, and the lack of repair, passenger information, and graffiti on public transport shelters.

He emphasised the need to carry out urgent maintenance on bus shelters, as some had been in a state of disrepair for some time. He also noted that bus maps at some bus stops were woefully out of date. The disabled passengers' lift at Weston-super-Mare railway station had still not been built despite funding being allocated, and North Somerset Council were urged to contact Network Rail about this.

He also suggested that a round-table meeting between the Panel, WECA and the bus operators would be useful.

PLA 4 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest

None.

PLA 5 Minutes

Minutes of the Place Panel Meeting held on 10 March 2022, to approve as a formal record.

Resolved:

that the minutes of the meeting of 10 March 2021 be approved as a correct record.

PLA 6 Matters referred by Council, the Executive, other Committees and Panels (if any)

None.

PLA 7 Place Annual Directorate Statement 2022/23

As officers were unable to attend, this item was deferred to an informal Panel meeting to be held as soon as possible.

PLA 8 Development Programme updates

The Head of Development and Placemaking presented the update report, which provided Members with updates on development sites already approved to be progressed. This included updates on the Parklands Phase 2, Castlewood, Weston Business Quarter, and Nailsea Uplands sites.

In discussion, Members raised the following points (*officer responses in italics*):

- Was there a definition of affordable housing? *The technical definition used by the North Somerset Council affordable housing team was accommodation that was rented at between 50 and 80% of market value. The definition also included some types of shared ownership properties, as long as they met specific criteria.*
- A request for more information about the alternatives for Weston Business Quarter. *More information would be shared as the review of options progressed. The option of selling the land to a business who wanted it to run their own operations might be more economically feasible, as the business case would be based on the future of their business rather than on the development value of the land. The business would also then take*

on the investment risks.

- Was there potential for splitting developers across a site? *The consortium approach was being encouraged where appropriate, particularly with the procurement related to the Weston town centre and Parklands phase 2.*
- Whether sites were being delivered for self-builders. *The Planning Policy team had a register of land suitable for self-build, and the development team had funding activity to encourage community-led housing groups. This had led to a group being set up in Clevedon, who were looking at options in that area.*
- Whether social housing providers still had an appetite to develop. *Registered Providers had a significant appetite. Many had entered into strategic partnerships with Homes England, which meant that they had secured large amounts of funding across a number of years. This meant they were very active in the market, looking to buy sites or to add affordable homes to sites that were already progressing.*

Concluded: that the report be received, and comments sent to officers in the form of minutes.

PLA 9 Local Plan 2038 update following consultation on Preferred Options

The Planning Policy Manager gave an update on the Local Plan, giving details on the Local Plan Preferred Options consultation and a summary of the key issues which emerged from the consultation for consideration at the next stage of plan making.

In discussion, the following points were raised:

- The importance of infrastructure planning such as transport, schools, health and community facilities alongside new development.
- The concerns from many communities over the nature and scale of development proposed, particularly at villages. Was the amount of development proposed in rural areas too high and leading to unsustainable development patterns? There was a need to ensure that the plan contained an appropriate range and mix of sites, including locations which could be delivered in the short term.
- The importance of identifying how the full housing requirement would be addressed in the plan before submission for examination. If sites were to be removed, then these would need to be replaced.
- The need to consider potential locations in terms of the spatial strategy and sequential approach.
- Whether it was probable that the standard method formula for calculating housing numbers would be changed.
- The weight in national policy terms of protecting Green Belt as opposed to considering areas at risk of flooding. The government attached great importance to Green Belts and their role was to retain openness and prevent urban sprawl. If development was proposed in flood risk areas, then this could be seen as being contrary to the climate change objectives while the additional costs of flood mitigation could impact on resources for other aspects of infrastructure development.

Concluded: that the report be received, and comments sent to officers in the form

of minutes.

PLA 10 Transport Decarbonisation Action Plan

The Head of Transport Planning and the Principal Transport Policy Officer presented on the development of the action plan, the Joint Local Transport Plan 4, and the Transport Decarbonisation Study commissioned by WECA.

The study aimed to establish the gap in reducing transport carbon emissions, and to test the options for closing the gap to the goal of a net-zero target by 2030.

Officers then went on to detail the next steps up to the development of the Joint Local Transport Plan 5 by March 2024.

Members discussed the following points:

- Whether the goals were realistically achievable. *The political will to implement the levers needed to be present; the tools to deliver the goals were not complex, and any income generated would need to be reinvested to give people more choice in how their lifestyles would change.*
- That the Demand Management tools would need to be implemented carefully, as there might be popular resistance to 'being told what to do'.
- Whether any modelling been done to look at medium-term impacts on daily life if the reductions were achieved. *This was being considered; there was more work to do around the public's idea of what success would look like for them.*
- Whether the modelling had granularly compared reductions in people driving vs an increase in home deliveries, government mandated increases in electric vehicle sales, decreasing costs of electric vehicles, and the broader impacts on the economy of North Somerset if the number of car trips was halved.

Concluded: that the report be received, and comments sent to officers in the form of minutes.

PLA 11 Place Panel Work Plan

The Scrutiny Officer presented the Panel's Work Plan and asked for Members' input into areas to focus on.

Concluded: that the work plan be updated, picking up actions and discussion outcomes from the meeting.

Chairman
