

Minutes

of the Meeting of

The Placemaking, Economy and Planning Policy and Scrutiny Panel

Wednesday, 22 November 2023

Kenn Room

Meeting Commenced: 2.00 pm

Meeting Concluded: 4.04 pm

Councillors:

John Crockford-Hawley (Chairperson)
Peter Crew (Vice-Chairperson)

Ashley Cartman
Patrick Keating
Bridget Petty
Luke Smith
Helen Thornton
Joe Tristram
Martin Williams

Apologies: Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly.

Absent: Councillors Marcia Pepperall and Timothy Snaden.

Also in attendance: Councillors Steve Bridger, Peter Burden, Mark Canniford, James Clayton, Thomas Daw and Mike Solomon.

Officers in attendance: Jenny Ford, Julia Stuckey, Natalie Richards, Richard Kent, Michael Reep, Jo Jones and Brent Cross.

PEP Declaration of disclosable pecuniary interest (Standing Order 37)

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None.

PEP Minutes

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Minutes of the Panel meeting held on 31 July 2023 – to approve as a correct record.

Recommended: that the minutes of the meeting of 31 July 2023 be approved as a correct record.

PEP 10 Placemaking and Development updates including Levelling Up Fund and development sites

The report, presented by the Interim Assistant Director, Placemaking and Growth, updated the Panel on the delivery programme for placemaking and development. This included details on the placemaking and rural strategies, Weston placemaking delivery, the Levelling Up Fund (LUF) projects, and the Council's Development Programme.

It was emphasised that strategy and delivery work in an area would normally include engagement with local members as part of the consultation process. Members were reminded that the Weston placemaking projects had all resulted from suggestions given during the Weston Wishes engagement process, and that the Levelling Up Fund projects had also been drawn from that public engagement.

The Rural Strategy would be both community- and local business-led. Members requested a further informal briefing on this as soon as it was ready for Panel input. Members also requested a briefing on the Tropicana commissioning plan before the report went to February Council.

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

- Members were familiar with Super Culture but requested more detail on Trigger Stuff (the second local National Portfolio Organisation, funded by Arts Council England). *Trigger Stuff were an organisation based in Blagdon, who operated internationally and used art and culture to solve social and environmental problems.*
- Members requested assurance that post-Covid work looking at the arts in rural areas, carried out by the Economy team, would not be lost.
- That the Levelling Up Fund required that all projects be delivered by March 2025 (although an extension was being requested).
- The difference between this and previous plans for the Tropicana. *The process was being commercially informed and capital works would be done through LUF before the venue was leased out. This made it less challenging for those wishing to lease the site. There had been a range of companies nationally expressing an interest during the soft market testing with fourteen positive responses and there would be a stringent procurement process. The Tropicana building would be more usable, efficient and smarter. This would enable the venue to be a regional multi-use, flexible entertainment space. The commissioning plan would be coming to February Council, and officers would look to arrange an informal briefing in advance. There would be controls on the lease to prevent change of activity and the venue would continue to be regulated through the licensing team.*
- Members discussed the potential partnership with Aequus, Bath and North-East Somerset Council's local authority development company. It would be challenging for us to set up a similar company due to the upfront costs required and would probably take two to three years before such a company would become fully operational. Using Aequus or similar companies would speed up development work.

Recommended:

- (i) that the report be received, and comments forwarded to officers in the form of minutes; and
- (ii) that informal briefings on the Rural Strategy and Tropicana Commissioning be organised for further input from the Panel.

PEP 11 Infrastructure Delivery Plan progress update

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The Planning Policy Team Lead – Technical and Infrastructure presented the report which proposed the approach to identifying infrastructure requirements associated with the Local Plan in the draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan. A schedule of the sites and schemes in the Local Plan would be published in the week following this meeting as part of the Local Plan Regulation 19 consultation. It was agreed that An informal meeting of the Panel would be held following publication to brief Members.

The report also set out background information on the proposed categories for infrastructure development, as well as the indicative priority system and the details of the levels of risk for each scheme. The draft Plan would be published as a supporting document for the public consultation due to commence on 27 November.

Members discussed the following: that Yatton-Clevedon public transport connectivity and the Baytree school site featured in previous versions of the schedule; that the schedule showed all infrastructure that was required, but the priorities were used for timing and ordering when infrastructure was to be developed; how the Plan would help develop North Somerset Council's corporate objectives; and that any changes to replace Section 106 and the Community Infrastructure Levy were some years off.

Recommended:

- (i) that the report be received, and comments forwarded to officers in the form of minutes; and
- (ii) that an informal meeting to brief the Panel on the sites listed in the schedule accompanying the Infrastructure Development Plan.

PEP 12 Place Finance Update

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A report outlining the Place directorate's budget position was presented by the Finance Business Partner (Place).

Members made the following general points:

- Whether there was a way to quantify costs of having to return for missed waste collections if roads were blocked.
- That Home to School transport cost overruns were an ongoing issue.
- That overspends on library and community buildings were a result of less income since the Covid pandemic, and that a report on this was coming to the next meeting of the Transport, Climate and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Panel.
- The costs of cutting back vegetation (such as trees over highways)

Recommended: that the report be received, and comments forwarded to officers

in the form of minutes.

**PEP
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The Policy and Scrutiny Senior Officer discussed the Panel's work plan and invited discussion with Members for additional items to add to it, as well as picking up any actions from the meeting.

Chairman
