

# Minutes

of the Meeting of the

## Place Policy and Scrutiny Panel

Wednesday, 23 November 2022

held at the Town Hall, Weston-super-Mare.

Meeting Commenced: 14:00      Meeting Concluded: 16:18

### Councillors:

P John Crockford-Hawley (Chairman)

P Peter Crew

P Mike Bird

A Gill Bute

P John Cato

A James Clayton

A Sarah Codling

A Mark Crosby

P Patrick Keating

Phil Neve

A James Tonkin

P Richard Westwood

P: Present

A: Apologies for absence submitted

**Other Councillors in attendance:** Steve Bridger; Mark Canniford; Caroline Cherry; Karin Haverson; Huw James; Richard Tucker

**Officers in attendance:** Gemma Dando; Jenny Ford; Jo Jones (Place); Emma Diakou; Philippa Penney (Corporate Services)

### **PLA Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes**

**12**

Apologies received from Cllrs Gill Bute, James Clayton, Sarah Codling, Mark Crosby and James Tonkin.

### **PLA Public Discussion (Standing Order SSO9)**

**13**

None

**PLA 14 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest**

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None.

**PLA 15 Minutes**

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Minutes of the Place Panel Meeting held on 13 July 2022, to approve as a formal record.

**Resolved:**

that the minutes of the meeting of 13 July 2022 be approved as a correct record.

**PLA 16 Matters referred by Council, the Executive, other Committees and Panels (if any)**

16

None.

**PLA 17 Placemaking Strategies: Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead**

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The Head of Placemaking and Development presented the report, which provided Members with a summary of engagement with stakeholders and communities in Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead to develop Placemaking Strategies for key areas of those towns.

Particular attention was drawn to the partnership documents, realisable only through strong collaborative working to support delivery of action when needed. Members endorsed the extensive amount of interactive partnership working which had been conducted largely by stakeholder group consultation. However, it was also recognised that not all opportunities had enlisted as complete a public response and agreed that it would be helpful to understand the reasons behind this for future learning.

Members discussed each of the three geographical areas in further detail.

The consultation work in Clevedon had been led by Design West, inviting headline views rather than focusing on finer detail. It demonstrated a marking point in a continuing process to provide a vision of what could be achieved collectively. Individual projects would require various approvals along the way. Members noted that agreement for the strategy itself did not prejudice any future decisions regarding development at any specific site.

Nailsea's response had been similar. It was felt that the more general and high-level approach hadn't generated as much interaction, and it was hoped that more specific proposals and project ideas would be put forward.

The effort at Portishead had been based on a tri-partite group that had demonstrated a clear example of public consultation, communication, and engagement. It remained key to the project that it was not solely concerning residential led development but also that of commercial and employment.

Members expressed concern on the geographical reach of the strategy. Officers suggested that it wasn't appropriate or possible to have placemaking strategies for the whole town, but that other issues and concerns could be picked up through Neighbourhood Plans.

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

## **PLA 18 Weston placemaking funding applications and investments**

The Head of Placemaking and Development presented the update report which provided Members with information on funding applications to the Levelling Up (LUF) and Cultural Development Funds and the background on the intended use of funding.

Weston had been agreed as the bid focus as was best fit for the criteria most likely to succeed. Specific projects included Birnbeck Pier the Tropicana, Marine Lake, the Sovereign Centre, wayfinding improvements across the town, and Grove Park. The general aim was to make facilities financially and culturally viable and fun.

It was hoped that the decision for the LUF should be known in December, whilst that of the Arts Council was expected in March.

Members discussed the bids in further detail. There was frustration in the bid funding process that relied on chasing the government for grants, but that it provided a good opportunity nevertheless to see ambition for the area unlocked.

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

## **PLA 19 Your Neighbourhood update**

The Assistant Director for Neighbourhoods presented the report which outlined the progress made against the adopted Libraries and Leisure Strategies.

The Libraries Strategy had four key objectives: post-Covid recovery; use as digital access points, bringing services into communities, and; being accessible for all. The focus for the next twelve months was to bring in more funding by working with partners and community partnerships.

Members discussed the wide variety of benefits and use of libraries which was supported by our amazingly proactive library officers

Members asked for the next update to include local studies and heritage.

In discussing specific leisure services provision, it was acknowledged that some locations required more future planning and a greater understanding of the usage requirements and carbon implications.

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

**PLA 20**    **Bus Service and BSIP update**

The Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods and Transport presented the report which considered the one-year anniversary of the BSIP bidding document and the recent commercial and supported bus changes as the local bus market adjusts to a post covid operating environment.

Officers had received notice of a positive indicative settlement for the network and revenue funding shared with WECA to invest in bus services but were still awaiting final confirmation.

The negative impacts on the service had been largely due to a shortage of drivers and poor commercial viability for some of the routes. Opportunities within the BSIP funding would be explored to assist in bridging the gap. Members discussed options for a demand responsive service mapped by zones, although it was recognised that this approach had not really been tested in the UK so BSIP could prove fundamental in testing this.

Other issues discussed included the transfer of drivers across the routes and areas, more generic driver training for a wider range of transport modes, problems with passenger confidence and adverse effect on usage of the service.

Members agreed re recommendation to host a meeting to further understand what actions were being taken to reduce lost mileage with the local First Bus and Stagecoach operating companies. This should not just look at rescuing existing services but also review what future service provision should look like. The aim must be to persuade those not currently using the bus to start doing so to generate further usage and provide redress for the climate emergency challenge.

**Concluded:** that the report be received with comments sent to officers in the form of minutes, and that a scrutiny session should be convened with the local DVSA representative to understand what actions are being taken to reduce lost mileage with the local First Bus and Stagecoach operating companies.

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**Change to agenda order**

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**PLA 21**    **Quarter 1 performance and risk update for 2022/23**

The Head of Business Insight, Policy and Partnerships presented the report on progress against the organisational-wide commitments, the Key Corporate Performance Indicators that are reported to the scrutiny panel, and the Strategic Risk Register as of the end of Q1.

Discussion included issues regarding staff recruitment both locally and nationally, and the work undertaken to improve our recruitment offer

considering some of the attractions of the private sector. Members were referred to the link in the report to the online dashboard which provided more detail on performance and risk in areas across the panel's remit.

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

**PLA 22**    **Place Finance Update**

The Finance Business Partner (Place) presented the report which detailed the current forecast against budget for the directorate. Focus was currently on the in-year position and the main material challenges including: inflation on contracts; home to school transport budgets due to SEND demand and market conditions; and income shortfalls.

Members noted that whilst progress was positive the situation remained extremely challenging with no obvious short-term improvement on pressures. Members thanked officers for managing successful funding bids and income streams, particularly given that there was no centralised team to support this work.

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

**PLA 23**    **Place Panel Work Plan – November 2022**

The Head of Democratic and Electoral Services presented the Panel's Work Plan and informed Members that it would be updated considering discussion and agreement at this meeting.

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

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Chairman

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