

The West of England Partnership  
Planning, Housing & Communities Board meeting

07 September 2009  
at The Guildhall, High Street, Bath

**Present**

Cllr Charles Gerrish	Bath and North East Somerset Council
Cllr Vic Pritchard	Bath and North East Somerset Council
Cllr Jon Rogers	Bristol City Council
Cllr Dr Mark Wright	Bristol City Council
Cllr Elfan Ap Rees	North Somerset Council
Cllr Matthew Riddle	South Gloucestershire Council

**In attendance**

David Trigwell	Bath and North East Somerset Council
Kaoru Jargues	Bath and North East Somerset Council
Adrian Holloway	Bath and North East Somerset Council
Zoe Willcox	Bristol City Council
Nick Hooper	Bristol City Council
Michael Reep	North Somerset Council
Mark Hughes	North Somerset Council
Jon Shaw	South Gloucestershire Council
Barbara Maksymiw	South Gloucestershire Council
Peter Duppa-Miller	B&NES Local Councils Association
David Crook	GOSW
Terry Wagstaff	West of England Partnership
Laura Grady	West of England Partnership
Charlotte Hopley	West of England Partnership
Natalie Maletras	ERM

**1. Apologies for absence**

Cllr Brian Allinson	South Gloucestershire Council
Graham Sabourn	Bath and North East Somerset Council

**2. Public Forum**

No petitions, statements or questions were brought to the Board.

**3. Minutes of meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> July**

3.1 Cllr Vic Pritchard enquired if there had been any response to the letter sent to Baroness Andrews regarding the boards expressed disappointment with the

proposal on the Funding for Disabled Facilities Grant in the West of England. TW informed the board that no response had been received.

**ACTION: Terry Wagstaff to chase up response.**

#### **4. Joint Waste Core Strategy**

4.1 LG introduced the report and gave a brief update on the progress of the JWCS, covering the purpose of the JWCS and the spatial option, as well as the purpose of the JWCS. LG also drew the board's attention to Appendix D, the views of Joint Scrutiny on the three responses schedules.

4.2 LG introduced Natalie Malatras, project manager and technical support to the JWCS, who outlined the key themes of the JWCS, including waste minimisation, recycling & composting, residual waste treatment, landfill, development management, and, monitoring and implementation. NM also covered the identification of strategic residual waste sites.

4.3 Cllr Elfan Ap-Rees commented on point 3 of Appendix D, querying why a policy on CHP has not been included in the JWCS. LG and NM responded that a policy on CHP would not be possible, as it would contradict the strategy's technology neutral approach. The wording in the document also expresses that all applications are expected to have considered all practicable options.

4.4 Cllr Charles Gerrish re-alliterated the importance of strong linkages between the JWCS and the individual authorities Core Strategies.

4.5 Cllr Jon Rogers asked if there were any timescales put in place for monitoring, LG responded that it was envisaged that monitoring will be reported annually in the authorities individual AMRs, and at this stage it was not possible to state an appropriate time for reviewing the JWCS.

4.6 Cllr Charles Gerrish sought clarification on what the differentiation is between medium and long term with regards to phasing; and requested that just two categories be considered, short term and medium/long term. LG responded that these categories were based upon delivery, where short term represents 1-5yrs, medium term 5-10yrs and long term 10-15yrs.

**ACTION: LG to look into the possibility of two categories for phasing.**

4.7 Cllr Charles Gerrish requested alternative wording for Policy 13 – Safeguarding operational and allocated sites for Waste Management Facilities. The wording proposed is as follows:

Operational waste sites are safeguarded, ***except where other site-specific policies apply and where alternative facilities are to be provided as part of an approved or agreed strategy.*** The Specific sites listed within Policy 5 are safeguarded to deliver the Spatial Strategy. Where proposals would prejudice the implementation of the JWCS, consideration will be given to how they could be

amended to make them acceptable, or, where this is not practicable, to refusing planning permission.

The proposed change is requested so that the policy reflects and is inline with existing B&NES policies. NM stated that she would be willing to amend the text to make it stronger, but needed to check with the other authorities that they are happy with the exact wording proposed by B&NES.

**ACTION: NM to review wording of Policy 13.**

4.8 Cllr Mark Wright expressed concern over developers stating they had explored every possibility for material recovery and CHP when they haven't. Agrees with earlier comments that developers need to demonstrate that they have explored every practicable option, and that the JWCS should state this within the text.

4.9 Cllr Mark Wright asked how the JWCS planned to deal with the possibility of an oversupply of sites, it is understood that developers will have to confirm to the Spatial Strategy, but when considering applications is consideration given to built capacity or the capacity coming forward on applications. NM responded that the approach needed to be taken to avoid the over allocation of sites is monitor manage. This requires planning officers to keep track of the status of plans, to help inform decision-making when considering applications. Zoe Willcox contributed that developers would need to demonstrate why an application should be allowed, and would have to take account of other existing approvals.

4.10 Cllr Charles Gerrish noted that Strategic Area A had not been named on the map and requested this gets amended.

**ACTION: Amend map and inform the board its available on the Partnership website.**

4.11 Cllr Charles Gerrish commented that the consultation reports showed low levels of attendance to the drop in sessions, in addition to a reoccurring theme in respondents comments that the consultation was not well publicised. It was suggested more would need to be done in engaging the public as early as possible, making greater use of the media. Cllr Elfan Ap-Rees added that if information were sent to Parish Councils it would be worth highlighting the consultation to them and ask them to distribute papers for wider consideration.

**Members noted the report.**

## **5. Private Sector Renewal Funding bid 2010/11**

5.1 Nick Hooper introduced the report to the board, outlining the proposed themes for bidding. NH requested the board note a cut in the amount of regional funding likely to be received. The cut is most likely to effect the funding received through a bidding round between SW LAs, however, if the Partnership put forward a strong bid, this reduction is likely to be less.

5.2 The West of England is not eligible to apply for Local Authority Loan Schemes, as they are already part of the successful Wessex Loans Authority.

5.3 Para 5.2 of the report should be amended to take account of both hard to treat and non-traditional built properties.

5.4 Cllr Vic Pritchard expressed concern that Georgian Bath buildings aren't specified within the document as being hard to treat. NH explained certain types of buildings were not specified in order to avoid being too prescriptive and to ensure that any awarded grant can be spent. If necessary, after discussions / advice from SW Councils & GOSW, it may be possible to be more specific about property type.

**Members agreed bid to be made based upon outline paper.**

## **6. MAA: Planning and managing the growth in homes and jobs to build mixed and sustainable communities.**

6.1 Terry Wagstaff introduced the report as a reminder of MAA negotiations and how the objectives outlined in Appendix A need to be embedded within the principles of Local Authorities Core Strategies.

6.2 Appendix B (pg 6) was queried as to whether we can now phase development, as it was understood in previous discussions that authorities were not permitted to give preference to PDL. TW responded by explaining the importance of acknowledging a long-term plan for infrastructure planning and marketability.

6.3 Cllr Elfan Ap Rees reiterated North Somerset's position regarding the opposition to the RSS requirement for an urban extension to the South East of Bristol.

**Members noted the report.**

## **7. Single Conversation: Summary of Progress**

7.1 Terry Wagstaff presented the item to the Board, advising councillor support to officers, as discussions are crucial on the single conversation to ensure we can be as explicit as possible to leverage funding into the West of England. This process should support the development of UA's Core Strategies.

7.2 Cllr Charles Gerrish expressed concern over the tight timescale and whether there would be enough time for officer/member comments to be taken into account; particularly where assumptions are not clear / basis of conclusions may need further comment. TW advised that three authorities had submitted comments on the infrastructure report, and that Roger, Tyms and Partners are building in assumptions, to be explicit about the conclusions they have reached.

7.3 Cllr Charles Gerrish mentioned that the report needs to look at both employment and housing, at present the report neglects the potential demand for employment sites. Therefore the report needs to carry a caveat stating that it hasn't addressed the issues surrounding employment sites.

**Members noted the report.**

## **8. Appointment of sub-regional housing co-ordinator.**

8.1 Jon Shaw presented the item, outlining the requirements for resource for a sub-regional housing co-ordinator and highlighting the emphasis from the Audit Commission on the importance of partnership working.

8.2 The report outlined the cost of the post over a 3yr fixed term basis, stating that HomesWest partners have offered a contribution of £23,000 to March 2011, after this date it is likely that contributions will come from new partners. JS explained that over the first 2yrs the costs of the post can be maintained, however after 2011 there is likely to be a funding shortage, unless contributions come forward from new partners or the UA's.

8.3 Cllr Elfan Ap Rees cannot justify North Somerset contributing to the post of a housing co-ordinator; would be preferable if the money in the pot should go towards paying for a consultant to ensure HomesWest progresses. The report is considered to be too prescriptive and should have explored other potential scenarios such as part time working or a secondment.

8.4 Cllr Mark Wright queried what the contribution is per authority, is the amount required £23,000 per year or is this a one off sum? JS clarified that the £23,000 was a one off payment, but the current arrangement takes us up to 2011, JS also highlighted the potential for UA's to take a one-year holiday from making payments.

8.5 Cllr Vic Pritchard stated that the financial position being experienced in North Somerset was not unique as all UA's have financial issues. Cllr Jon Rogers asked if North Somerset had engaged in discussions with other UA's, Mark Hughes responded that the authority had engaged in discussions with other UA's and that this was a joint decision made by politicians and officers.

8.6 Cllr Vic Pritchard expressed concern that if the other three authorities continue to work together, this will put North Somerset at a disadvantage. Concern was also expressed by Cllr Jon Rogers over the potential withdraw of £10,000 which has already been committed, as this could potentially have a negative impact on the other authorities.

8.7 Cllr Charles Gerrish enquired if there was any possibility of coming to a compromise. Cllr Elfan Ap Rees responded by stating he was not against partnership working; but would of expected a more thorough report with different options included (such as one lead authority with consultant support; part-time post; a post for 2yrs up to 2011; secondment etc).

8.8 Cllr Vic Pritchard asked if it was possible for the report to be revised to incorporate further work for the next meeting, JS stated that it was possible, but a decision does need to be reached otherwise HomesWest will withdraw there £23,000 contribution. Cllr Jon Rogers queried whether a revised report will actually be considered by North Somerset, and that the work to be undertaken by the Housing Co-ordinated is a priority of Bristol City Council. Cllr Elfan Ap Rees does not think the issue can be resolved by the next meeting in October, and supports the temporary appointment of a consultant to undertake any urgent work; Nick Hopper

highlighted that the appointment of consultants often turns out more costly than other alternatives.

8.9 Cllr Charles Gerrish pointed out that North Somerset would be able to take a funding leave in 2010/11 if required. Cllr Gerrish then went on to suggest a compromise to ensure they secured the funding from HomesWest; it was proposed that the post be seconded from the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2010 to March 2011, the post will then be reviewed to assess performance and to see if the UA's deem the post beneficial.

**ACTION: Officers to revise the business case and present to members for consideration at the next meeting.**