



# West of England Partnership

**Bath & North East  
Somerset Council**



**North  
Somerset  
COUNCIL**

**South Gloucestershire  
Council**

Minutes of meeting of the

## Joint Scrutiny Committee

Friday 22 January 2010, 10am, The Council House, Bristol

### Present

#### **Bath & North East Somerset Council**

Cllr Caroline Roberts  
Cllr Martin Veal  
Cllr Eleanor Jackson

#### **Bristol City Council**

Cllr Mark Bradshaw (Chair)  
Cllr Barbara Lewis  
Cllr Steve Comer

#### **North Somerset Council**

Cllr Clive Webb  
Cllr David Pasley  
Cllr Tom Collinson  
(Substitute for Cllr Tony Moulin)

#### **South Gloucestershire Council**

Cllr Pat Hockey  
Cllr Ian Smith  
Cllr Geoff King

### In attendance

Gerry Hamersley	Natural England
Steve Grainger	Avon Wildlife Trust
Mike Sweet	Bristol City Council
Alistair Rice	North Somerset Council
Terry Wagstaff	West of England Partnership
Sally Gregory	West of England Partnership
Penny Bell	West of England Partnership

### 1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Tony Moulin of North Somerset Council and from Steve Evans of South Gloucestershire Council.

### 2. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Geoff King declared his employment with First Group.

### 3. Member and Public Forum

Statements had been received from 3 members of the public. David Redgewell presented a statement that outlined various concerns regarding particular bus routes in

the area, and also touched upon Rapid Transit and rail issues. He also enquired whether the letter to the Minister regarding rolling stock had been sent. Terry Wagstaff informed members that the letter had been drafted, and it was agreed that a copy of the final letter would be sent to members and to Mark Hopwood of First Great Western.

Members felt that the scrutiny of rail issues was very important and agreed that the issue should be elevated in the work programme, with a rail item being included on the February or March agenda.

Pete Goodwin of Bristol South Green Party and Pip Sheard of Transport for Greater Bristol Alliance both presented statements that summarised numerous concerns with the proposed South Bristol Link project. Pip Sheard also wished to draw members' attention to a series of public meetings that were taking place, and also clarified that the Alliance she represented had no political affiliation and was funded by a series of contributions from its member groups and from local grants.

Copies of all 3 public statements are available at:

<http://www.westofengland.org/meetings/joint-scrutiny-committee/22-january-2010>

Councillor Bradshaw thanked the members of the public for their statements and recommended that the statements be referred to the Joint Transport Executive Committee for noting. He also advised that the concerns regarding the South Bristol Link would be considered under Item 11 on the agenda.

#### 4. **Minutes of meeting held on 11 December 2009**

The minutes were agreed a true record of the meeting.

#### 5. **Matters arising from the minutes**

1. **Page 2: Copy of the draft MoU with the rail industry** – This had been circulated to members via email. Some members did not recall receipt and it was agreed that this would be circulated again
2. **Page 3: Copy of report on review of transport powers to Joint Transport Executive Committee** – This would be circulated to members when the papers were dispatched on 27 January
3. **Page 3: Network Rail presentation** - This had been circulated to members via email. Some members did not recall receipt and it was agreed that this would be circulated again
4. **Page 4: Joint Health Committee** – Councillor Bradshaw would make contact with the Chair to investigate scope for future joint working
5. **Page 5: Use of Community Land Trusts to 'lock in' affordability** – This was being considered as part of the Single Conversation process
6. **Page 7: Joint response to concerns raised at last meeting regarding linking of transport schemes** – This response had been circulated following the last meeting
7. **Page 7: Asset Register for Major Transport Schemes** – This was being considered as part of the development work on Joint Local Transport Plan 3.

#### 6. **2008/09 Scrutiny Achievements**

This item had been deferred from the previous meeting and was presented to members for final approval.

Councillor Veal commented that it was a very good document that covered well the Joint Committee's achievements. He questioned how the document should be published and how it should be handed back to the Executive.

Councillor Bradshaw commented that the report should be available on the Partnership website and should be presented to the Partnership Board. He also suggested that the Chair of the Board should be invited to a future meeting and should be presented with the report. Members were in agreement with this approach.

Councillor Hockey was happy with the content of the report but felt that it would be useful to have such reports earlier and on a rolling basis. She questioned when the report for 2009/10 would be available. Terry Wagstaff informed members that it could be brought to the next meeting.

**Resolved:**

- 1. To approve the 2008/09 Scrutiny Achievements report**
- 2. To publish the report on the Partnership website**
- 3. To invite the Chair of the Partnership Board to a future meeting and present the report to the Board**
- 4. To receive the 2009/10 Scrutiny Achievements report at the next meeting on 19 February**

**7. Audit Commission Review of Partnership Governance Arrangements**

Sally Gregory presented the report that summarised the Audit Commission's review and proposed the action to be taken.

The review had looked broadly at the governance of the Partnership and the subsequent Action Plan proposed by the Audit Commission had now been confirmed. The Action Plan was available at the Appendix to the report.

As a result of the Action Plan, the following improvements were proposed:

1. An updated Forward Plan for the Joint Scrutiny Committee to form a standing item on the Joint Scrutiny Committee's own agenda
2. Clearer signposting to the Forward Plans of the Boards and the Joint Scrutiny Committee on the Partnership website.

Members agreed the proposed improvements and also discussed the way in which the Joint Scrutiny Committee's comments were used in the wider Partnership agenda. The following points were raised during the discussion:

- It was not clear what happened to comments and advice that came from the Joint Scrutiny Committee
- The comments of the Joint Scrutiny Committee should be made accessible to other members and should form part of the papers to Executive meetings

- There was the opportunity to link Health Scrutiny and Joint Scrutiny in terms of transport related health issues
- There was a lack of resource to assist the Joint Scrutiny Committee to commission further work
- Invitations to external witnesses could be used to assist the Joint Committee on expert issues
- The role of the Joint Committee was to examine how the Partnership promoted its own work, such as the 'Travel+' branding. This should be raised with the Partnership Chair during future attendance at the Joint Committee
- It would be useful to receive an update paper to inform members of progress on promotional and media issues

Councillor Bradshaw proposed that he, Councillor Webb and appropriate officers met to determine how best to take these issues forward. Members agreed that this would be useful.

**Resolved:**

- 1. To note the Action Plan proposed in the Audit Commission's draft Review of the Partnership's Governance Arrangements**
- 2. To note the information provided on the role of the Joint Scrutiny Committee**
- 3. To further investigate the role of the Joint Scrutiny Committee and how to feed its comments into the work of the Partnership**
- 4. To receive an update report on progress with promotional and media issues.**

**8. Pitt Report: Learning lessons from the 2007 Floods**

Terry Wagstaff presented the report that had been deferred from the previous meeting. The report was intended to draw members' attention to the outcome of the Pitt Review and Report, which highlighted numerous actions to mitigate future flood risk.

It was the responsibility of all authorities to consider flood risk assessment during the production of Core Strategies and it was also a commitment in the West of England Multi-Area Agreement to consider the impact of climate change. Work was already underway with the Environment Agency on this.

Councillor Bradshaw was keen for members to consider the issue of flooding due to recent events. He hoped that the report would raise awareness and that the issues within the report be considered in line with growth plans.

Councillor Pasley asked whether it would be possible to receive a list or map of the flood risk areas in the region. Terry Wagstaff informed members that a map could be produced.

Discussion ensued on this subject and the following points were raised:

- There was concern that flood plains were still being built on despite authorities' objections to Government. The reason of 'exceptional circumstances' appeared to be used a lot, but the use of this reason should be challenged. Planning Policy Guidance 2 was thought to contain detail on 'exceptional circumstances'.
- The ability of old infrastructure to cope with growing pressure was questioned, and the result of infill on rain drainage
- Local flood risk plans were very detailed and might help to inform Planners
- Observations of local flood frequency increases were noted, particularly the River Frome
- Ashton Vale was identified as a flood plane and would be affected by proposals of the new stadium and South Bristol Link. Work was needed on the associated flood risks concerned.
- Associated policies should be joined-up and the authorities should be working together and sharing best practice.

## **9. Green Infrastructure: Presentation from Natural England and Avon Wildlife Trust**

Gerry Hamersley of Natural England and Steve Grainger of Avon Wildlife Trust gave a presentation on opportunities for green infrastructure in the West of England.

The presentation focused largely on the correlations between the quality of the natural environment and people's health and wellbeing. It also highlighted issues such as sustainable food production and consumption, global warming and current initiatives in the West of England.

A copy of the presentation can be found at:

<http://www.westofengland.org/media/170292/item%209%20green%20infrastructure.ppt>

Members found the presentation informative and raised many points in the discussion that followed:

- It was important that the authorities worked together on green infrastructure issues
- The value of having quality parks and green spaces was considered and whether the value of such was considered higher than the value of gardens
- The Regional Spatial Strategy appeared to conflict with green infrastructure aspirations by indicating the need for mass urban development and high numbers of new homes
- On new developments it was important to achieve a balance in priorities so that proposals did not conflict with green aspirations
- The loss of trees in urban areas due to maintenance issues was a concern
- It was important to have green playing spaces, even small spaces, close to homes

to encourage small children to get out and play. Otherwise there was the risk that children became too used to playing indoors

- It would be useful for the authorities' infrastructure maps to join up so that long distance paths that cross authorities' boundaries could be identified. These opportunities were being explored through the Pathfinder Project
- The Environment Agency should be challenged to champion green infrastructure issues as well

Councillor Bradshaw thanked both Gerry and Steve for their thought provoking presentation that touched upon many issues on the West of England agenda. It was hoped that members would be ambassadors for these issues within their own authorities.

## **10. Transport Schemes Monitoring Framework**

A report had been prepared to present members with improved performance monitoring information for major transport schemes in the West of England. Such monitoring and reporting had recently been implemented at the request of Chief Executives and Leaders as part of enhancing the Partnership's governance framework.

An example of a high-level report was provided to show the layout and the type of information that was reported. The Joint Transport Executive Committee would receive updated information on the schemes on 4 February as part of the regular quarterly monitor.

**Resolved:**

**To note the report.**

## **11. South Bristol Link Major Transport Scheme Bid**

Alistair Rice of North Somerset Council presented the report. The South Bristol Link was one of several major transport schemes in the Joint Local Transport Scheme that was being promoted by the West of England authorities. The South Bristol Link would link the A370 with the A38 and the A4174 at Hartcliffe Roundabout adjacent to Hengrove Park. The preferred option for the route was shown at Figure 1 to the report.

Members were asked to give their views and comments on the proposed South Bristol Link Major Transport Scheme Bid to the Department for Transport prior to its consideration by Joint Transport Executive Committee on 4 February and the Cabinet of Bristol City Council and the Executive of North Somerset Council in February/March.

Members expressed a range of views on the merits or otherwise of the proposed scheme. Public statements were made at the beginning of the meeting which both raised significant issues concerning the process adopted and the detail of the bid proposal.

After a wide-ranging and extensive debate, Councillor Bradshaw summarised the discussions on behalf of the Joint Committee as follows.

The point that was highlighted above all else was the incompleteness of the officer report, particularly on the economic (jobs and regeneration) performance of each option and combination of options. It was understood that economic analysis work had been

commissioned by at least one authority some time ago. Given the need to attract investment and jobs to South Bristol, this would seem a logical and quite essential component of the decision-making process.

The following points highlight the other issues of concern raised by members. It was suggested that additional information be taken into account or work commissioned before a final decision on the detailed bid is made:

- Community engagement – the consultation undertaken appeared limited
- The impact (and demonstrated need) associated with the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) option and its relationship to other local public transport services (Greater Bristol Bus Network, rail etc). Also, the frequency of BRT services (18 minutes - was this right?)
- The impact of the preferred option on traffic flows on existing roads, particularly, Winterstoke Road and the Parson Street gyratory
- As an extension of the economic case, details of business requirements in terms of accessibility and connectivity. A list of supporting business organisations was rather superficial for this purpose. For example, was the South Bristol Link about facilitating a better link for Heavy Goods Vehicles across South Bristol and onto the trunk/motorway network? If so, why the linkage to Bristol City Centre?
- The proposals to expand Bristol International Airport and the insufficient public transport accessibility to and from the airport now and with projected growth, with consequent pressure on local communities. This could not be relieved until completion of the South Bristol Link.
- Concerns about community severance and the impact on green spaces were also raised.

**Resolved:**

**Members agreed that the comments and observations above should be passed on to members of the Joint Transport Executive Committee for the meeting on 4 February, at which members will consider the endorsement of the South Bristol Link Major Transport Scheme Bid.**

**12. Scrutiny Theme 2: Strengthening Sub-Regional Economy**

This item was deferred to the meeting on 19 February 2010.

**13. Single Conversation: Delivery & Infrastructure Investment Plan**

Terry Wagstaff explained that the purpose of the Single Conversation was:

- To plan infrastructure in line with the authorities' Core Strategies
- To build a strategic case to convince government and the private sector of the need to invest
- To provide the evidence to help avoid unwanted development.

The Delivery and Infrastructure Investment Plan being developed covered the ten-year

period from 2010/11. Officers were currently firming up proposals and beginning to prioritise sites. There would be reports to the Planning, Housing and Communities Board on 9 February and Partnership Board on 25 February.

The process provided a number of challenges because the authorities were still developing their Core Strategies. It also involved assessing the viability of sites, since it was intended that public investment would be focused on the sites that would not be viable without it. Sites were also dependant on transport investment for schemes submitted under RFA2; however, officers were currently being asked to consider cuts of various different percentages. Other uncertainties included whether the Community Infrastructure Levy would be in place and the possibility of an Accelerated Development Zone (ADZ). Despite these uncertainties, it was important to progress the work.

The following points were made in response:

- Some of the numbers of jobs given for the priority development locations requiring public investment seemed very low. Terry Wagstaff said that not all the information on jobs numbers had been provided by the authorities when the papers were published and he expected that the figures would rise.
- Were these numbers of new jobs or had job losses been taken into account? Terry Wagstaff explained that the job numbers were net estimates, which needed to be further refined, and were aspirational, while the housing numbers were those the authorities intended would be built. He acknowledged that levels of economic activity would also have an impact.
- Councillor Lewis asked whether the Partnership had contingency plans in place in relation to potential cuts to RFA2 capital funding for transport. Terry Wagstaff said that it was not yet clear what was required, but that authorities jointly at regional level were being asked to develop possible scenarios for reductions in investment. The Partnership was waiting to hear whether two of its schemes had achieved Programme Entry and the announcement had been deferred from January to February. The Partnership was keen to submit two other schemes before the end of March. The sub-region had a strong case for its schemes, but a requirement for substantial reductions in the region was likely to affect the West of England.

Other issues:

- If the West of England did not get the transport investment it needed, could housing growth be stopped?
- How many people in the proposed new developments would be travelling to jobs?
- Work to meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers should be speeded up.

Comments on the paperwork:

- Maps did not include two of South Gloucestershire's planned Park & Ride sites
- The numbering of sites on the maps should be consistent between maps
- The section on Yate/Chipping Sodbury should be revised to reflect the facts that: it had been growing for a considerable time; transport links were inadequate, not

'good'; and people travel to work in the North Fringe, as well as Bristol

- Flood risk was not mentioned in the Temple Meads and St Phillips section: was remedial work required? (Terry Wagstaff would check)
- It would be helpful to have a transport map with existing networks as well as proposed developments.

#### **14. Next meetings**

Friday 19 February, 10am, The Campus, Weston-super-Mare

Friday 5 March, 10am, Guildhall, Bath