



West of England Partnership

Bath & North East
Somerset Council



North
Somerset
COUNCIL

South Gloucestershire
Council

Minutes of meeting of the

Planning, Housing and Communities Board

Thursday 15th February 2010, 10.30am, BAWA, Bristol

Present

Cllr Charles Gerrish	Bath and North East Somerset Council
Cllr Jon Rogers	Bristol City Council
Cllr Elfan Ap Rees	North Somerset Council
Cllr Mathew Riddle (Chair)	South Gloucestershire Council

In Attendance

Ian Ducat	Social, Economic and Environmental Partner
Dave Crook	Government Office for the South West
David Bishop	Bristol City Council
Karuna Tharmananthar	North Somerset Council
Karen Ross	South Gloucestershire Council
Terry Wagstaff	West of England Partnership
Tim Lansley	West of England Partnership
Laura Grady	West of England Partnership

1. Apologies for absence

Action

Apologies were received from Councillors Vic Pritchard (B&NES) and Brian Allinson (S.Glos.), David Trigwell (B&NES), Zoe Willcox and Nick Hooper (Bristol City Council), Mark Hughes (North Somerset Council), Barbara Maksymiw and Jon Shaw South Gloucestershire Council, and John Cottrell (HCA).

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Member and Public Forum

There were no public forum items.

4. Minutes of meeting held on 12 November 2009

5. Matters arising from the minutes

Cllr Riddle advised that a response from government about concerns arising with the allocation of Disabled Facilities Grant suggested that the issue is not likely to be addressed until the CSR and following the general election. He indicated that the only course of action remaining to the councils was to seek support from the PCTs. David Crook indicated that he would seek a response from CLG about the specific concerns raised by the Partnership. Cllr Rogers stated that Chief Executives should seek advice from the PCTs about the issue.

Karen Ross advised that it had not possible to appoint a Housing Co-ordinator and that the post would need to be re-advertised, she requested that the term of the contract be re-considered by the PH&CB, as this may generate more interest. The PH&CB felt that the post should be advertised as a secondment opportunity, It was agreed that the post should continue to offer a fixed 1 year contract, and be advertised as a secondment opportunity to UAs and Registered Social Landlord partners.

6. Next meeting: Thursday, 18th March 2010, The Campus, Weston-super-Mare

Exclusion of Press and Public

7. Single Conversation

Terry Wagstaff advised that the outcome of the Single Conversation- the agreement of a Joint Investment and Delivery Plan (JI&DP) for the sub-region would provide support for Core Strategy delivery and could become a 'material consideration' at planning appeals and inquiries. David Crook advised that for this purpose, the Plan would ideally be established as a Supplementary Planning Document in the context of RPG10.. It was also advised that if the process to produce the JI&DP was based on a robust evidence base and had been consulted upon, it may already be considered to have a certain weight of material consideration.

Members advised that they would like to explore the option of producing an SPD provided: it could be done within an appropriate timescale to be relevant; it was clear what the added value would be, that it would offer more weight in material consideration than the current process.

David Crook advised that he would secure advice on the subject from the Planning Inspectorate.

DC

The draft Plan offers a balance of investment across the sub-region and between different types of investment. It has been discussed with a range of public agencies including the Environment Agency, the Highways Agency as well as HCA and SWRDA. Developers have also been consulted, some of whom have expressed concern about the optimism of the assumptions about the potential development trajectory shown by the Plan in the context of the recession. These uncertainties about development viability and about the RSS and public investment need to be recognised. They will need to be monitored with HCA.

Laura Grady summarised the key investment requirements of the Plan advising that the HCA propose to invest approx £60m pa in supporting development in the West of England over the next 3 years, the plan also includes an agreed measure of overprogramming.

Cllr Rogers asked if any schemes such as support for the Wapping Wharf Development had been deleted as a result the prioritisation process undertaken in selecting schemes for support. LG advised that funding for Wapping Wharf may be secured under the sub-regional themes, and would seek clarification from Bristol Officers.

Cllr Gerrish expressed concern about the exclusion of Somerdale from the list of priorities, he felt that the regeneration of the site was unlikely to be viable without public support and that funds should be allocated in anticipation of a proposal from the owner. Cllr Gerrish advised that the support of the B&NES Cabinet was unlikely to be secured without the inclusion of support for the regeneration of the site. LG

Terry Wagstaff advised that the issue would be discussed with B&NES officers.

Cllr Riddle asked how the Plan would deal with 'surprises'.

Terry Wagstaff advised that a Programme Board would need to be established to review progress and to decide when to re-fresh the plan. David Bishop advised that over-programming offered a way of dealing with uncertainties about prospects for progress with particular projects. Cllr Rogers advised that the narrative should address this issue, and demonstrate that the authorities had considered the possibility of changes in circumstance and had contingency plans. WEPO

Cllrs Riddle and Gerrish emphasised the importance of safeguarding funding for rural areas. TL

Karuna Tharmananthar expressed concern about 'ring-fencing' funding owing to the loss of flexibility to allocate available funding between a range of schemes across the sub-region.

Laura Grady highlighted the flexibility to address needs for affordable and supported housing outside 'priority places' offered by the funding proposed for smaller locations. Cllrs Ap Rees and Rogers expressed support for these proposed allocations.

It was requested that the narrative on affordable housing outside priority places was strengthened to reflect the difficulties in delivering housing in rural areas..

It was agreed that the assumptions shown about development for employment uses should distinguish between requirements arising from growth and requirements arising from changing locational patterns of development. TL

It was agreed that requirements for gypsies and travellers needed to be re-considered.

Terry Wagstaff expressed concern about whether or not economic development requirements, in particular employment land issues, are adequately reflected by the Plan. Investment requirements at Avonmouth/Sevenside are considerable and well beyond the budget of the key agencies involved in the 'Single Conversation'. Other ways of addressing funding issues are required such as through designation as an 'Accelerated Development Zone'.

Terry Wagstaff described the next steps in progressing the 'Single Conversation'. These include consideration by the Partnership Board on 25/2 closely followed by B&NES Cabinet. For these purposes, the Plan would remain confidential owing to sensitivities about dwellings proposals for South Gloucestershire. prior to their Core strategy being put before Cabinet on March 8th, and about financial details in all cases.

Following discussion, it was agreed that investment data would be made available to the public in aggregated form within the covering report.

Terry Wagstaff advised that HCA within the region would be appraising the proposals as part of confirming the final budget allocation to West of England proposed schemes. He advised that following the 'Single Conversation' meeting on 19/02, a press release would be drafted. A letter confirming this process would be sent to Chief Executives within the next few days.

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