

**MINUTES of the meeting of Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 4 June 2013 at 7.00pm**

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**Present:** Councillors Gerard Rice (Chair), Charles Curtis (left at 7.55pm), Mike Stone (substituting for Sue Gray, Tom Kelly, Garry Hague and Oliver Gerrish

**Apologies** Councillor Sue Gray

**In attendance:** David Bull – Director of Planning & Transportation  
Andrew Millard - Head of Planning & Transportation  
Matthew Essex – Head of Regeneration  
Matthew Boulter – Democratic Services Officer

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**1 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee, held on 5 March 2013, were approved as a correct record.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

a) Interests

No interests were declared.

b) Whipping

No interests were declared.

**3. LOCAL SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT FUND OUTCOMES**

Officers introduced the report as an annual report that reflected on the past twelve months of work but also delivery for the next twelve months. The Committee was reminded that the Council had been awarded £5 million in 2011 for the projects. The projects in place were designed to reduce single occupancy car travel but also set in motion a number of benefits including the reduction of obesity and road traffic accidents and boost employment opportunities.

Officers confirmed that they were working closely with large employers to ensure they had travel plans in place for their workforces. The Council influenced this through the powers they held in granting planning applications. The Council already worked with the Port of Tilbury regarding their travel plan and future work was expected with Morrisons, Royal Opera House, B&Q and Unilever.

Following a question officers also stated that every school had a travel plan, although a number needed refreshing.

Bus provision was a key aspect to the future transport planning across the borough and the Council was working with rail companies and bus companies to ensure the services linked together and complimented each other.

**RESOLVED that the report be noted.**

## **5. GRAYS TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION VISION**

The committee were informed that the Council had undertaken a consultation with businesses and residents to ascertain how they felt the town centre should be developed. The Council had undertaken a variety of different methods to reach different groups of people and not rely on regular consultees. Further workshops proved very helpful in gathering information.

The key regeneration aspects of the town were the riverfront, the train station, the development of retail into shops that the local community needed, the development of an evening economy and more cultural events. Officers stated that the college would provide the initial drive for this regeneration and it was important for the Council to capitalise on this.

During the debate officers clarified that to realise the regeneration potential, they had cut the consultation by two months as it was clear that the Council's plans aligned with the wishes of residents. The Council was already working closely with Network Rail to improve the rail station area and the future of a number of key buildings in the high street were being progressed.

The Committee noted the need for a travel plan for South Essex College and that parking restrictions may need to be revised when the college was fully operational as there could be an influx of cars from students and staff. However, this would be reviewed when appropriate. It was added that the one way system would also be reviewed.

Officers stated that shops could be encouraged to maintain their shop fronts to align with a street scape vision but it would be inadvisable to enforce strict controls. The key was to make the demand in the high street to a level that would encourage good quality businesses to establish themselves there.

The future of the State cinema was discussed briefly and officers confirmed they were addressing this. Likewise, the Committee suggested Grays Yacht Club as an asset to the regeneration of the riverfront.

**RESOLVED That**

- i) The above comments are taken into account as part of the consultation process.**

## 6. LOWER THAMES CROSSING PRESENTATION

The Committee were taken through a presentation which updated them on the lower Thames crossing proposals. The key points that were highlighted were:

- Free flow tolling was due to start in October 2014.
- The Council was keen to work with Essex and Kent County Councils to bid for funding now to improve travel networks related to the crossing.
- The advantages and disadvantages of the three government options were outlined.
- The Council was encouraging residents to vote for the 'other' option in the consultation.
- Construction on any option would not take place until at least 2021.

Councillor Hague felt that the Council needed to provide some form of alternative proposal or it would be overlooked. The Committee discussed this and felt that an alternative proposal would not need to be very detailed but enough to offer a valid alternative.

The Committee was informed that the Leader wished to keep the debate on the crossing going and was due to schedule a number of council and cabinet debates in future months.

Officers suggested that option A in the plan was not supported by any party and that Essex and Kent County Councils were most likely in support of Option C, which included roads being built across Orsett. For Thurrock to have weight in the debate it was important for the issue to be discussed and for the Council to speak with one voice and gain support for its alternate visions from other councils such as Gravesend.

The Committee discussed the interim plans in place before a resolution was achieved. Officers responded that the Council would look to work with Essex and Kent to gain funding for road network improvements, although this funding would be competitive and limited.

The Committee felt that there were a number of alternative options still available and officers replied that a number of options had been discounted in the research the government had already taken. One such option was to have a tunnel leading from Canvey Island.

### **RESOLVED: That:**

- i) The committee look to convene a two day scrutiny session to question and gather evidence from the key partners in the crossing project.**
- ii) The crossing be added onto the work programme for a future date.**

## 7. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee agreed that the work programme remain as agreed in March 2013 with the addition of the Thames crossing

**The meeting finished at 8.32pm.**

Approved as a true and correct record

**CHAIRMAN**

**DATE**

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact  
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