

Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 7 March 2017 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Barbara Rice (Chair), Peter Smith (Vice-Chair), John Allen and Oliver Gerrish

In attendance: Chris Atkinson, Head of Communications, c2c Rail
Andrew Millard, Head of Planning & Growth
Ann Osola, Head of Highways & Transportation
Brian Priestley, Regeneration Programme Manager
Paul Rogers, Programme Manager Major Schemes
Stephen Taylor, Programmes and Projects Manager
Colin Walker, Project Manager - A13 Widening
Jenny Shade, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the meeting, all present were advised that the meeting may be filmed and was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

33. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 5 January 2017 were approved as a correct record.

34. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

35. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

36. Presentation on C2C Update Report

Chris Atkinson, Head of Communications at c2c presented the report to Members and report that:

- 1,600 more Thurrock station passengers now get a seat compared to September 2016.
- 85 per cent of Thurrock passengers were now seated despite the increase of 5.6 per cent of Thurrock passengers in the last six months.
- c2c trains are less crowded at their busiest periods.
- c2c punctuality was better now than last autumn.

Chris Atkinson commented on the latest Thurrock passenger numbers comparing them from March 2016 to February 2017 and explained the availability of seats at the AM and PM peak times.

The latest passenger satisfaction survey undertaken by Transport Focus on 30,000 c2c passengers indicated an 87 per cent of passengers were satisfied with the service with key crowding metrics being scored the best results for last three years.

Chris Atkinson stated that punctuality had been the main issue affecting satisfaction scores in September 2016. The 83 per cent punctuality satisfaction was c2c worst figure in recent times but was still far higher than the United Kingdom train operator average of 69 per cent.

Chris Atkinson informed Members that c2c had been purchased by Trenitalia who were Italy's main rail operator. He confirmed to Members that it was business as usual for c2c and passengers and that further announcements would likely to be made over the coming year regarding technology and ticketing.

Councillor Rice thanked Chris Atkinson for the report.

Councillor Gerrish commented on the levels of crowding especially at Barking Station and asked what steps c2c were putting in place to monitor this. Chris Atkinson stated that Barking to West Ham had always been the busiest area. C2c had to balance the needs of all passengers and continually monitored the situation.

Councillor Smith stated that the report did not seem to reflect the feedback received from passengers. Chris Atkinson explained that c2c had not become complacent. It had addressed the issues and improvements had been made. Compared to this time last year significant changes had been made to address overcrowding.

Councillor Smith questioned why the new trains had not been allocated to the Thurrock network. Chris Atkinson stated that c2c had been clear throughout that the new trains would not be coming into Thurrock and that the trains were designed for longer distance journeys. This had freed up more carriages for Thurrock which were standard 15 years old carriages.

Councillor Gerrish questioned whether the length of stopping time at Barking Station could be reduced based on feedback received from passengers. Chris Atkinson stated that 90 seconds was the intended time for the train to dwell to ensure sufficient time to allow passengers to get on and off the train. Barking Station was the busiest station and that c2c would continue to monitor these times.

Councillor Rice stated that Members found the coloured AM and PM peak seat availability tables useful and looked forward to future reports and updates.

RESOLVED

That the c2c Update Report will continue to be presented to the Planning Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a six monthly basis.

Chris Atkinson left the committee room at 7.20pm.

37. A13 Widening - Scheme Update

Colin Walker updated Members on the progress on the A13 Widening scheme and requested comments that would be fed into the next stage.

The scheme included:

- Proposed improvements to A13 between junctions with A128 and A1014.
- Works to widen A13 Stanford le Hope Bypass from two to three lanes in both directions.
- The widened section of road will tie in with the existing three lane section of the A13 to the west of the A128.
- Works would include demolition and replacement of four bridges and reconfiguration of Orsett Cock roundabout with partial signalisation.

The need for the scheme:

- A13 was already congested at peak times and forecast to reach capacity in 2017.
- Continued congestion would inhibit Thurrock Council's plans for business development.
- The scheme would allow freight operations to perform competitively while residents and commuters can travel efficiently.
- The need for additional capacity as recognised during the development of London Gateway Port.
- Works were permitted under the London Gateway Port Harbour Empowerment Order 2008.

Colin Walker stated that the work would take place over a two year period and be planned to minimise disruption to road users during construction and that the award of detail, design and construction contracts would be awarded in March/April 2017 aiming for completion of works in October 2019.

Colin Walker confirmed that there will be a strong communication plan in place during the period of construction.

Councillor Smith asked what reassurances could be given to residents regarding noise levels. Colin Walker stated that low-noise surfacing would be used on the whole width of the entire road to alleviate noise and that noise barriers were already in place and would continue to be monitored by AECOM.

Councillor Gerrish asked what the speed limit would be during the period of works and what impact this may have on congestion. Colin Walker stated that

the speed limited would be set at 50 miles per hour and would only affect a four kilometre stretch of road. Good communications between the Council and the contractor have already taken place and work with Essex Council was in hand to look at those vehicles undertaking longer journeys and it would be the aim to keep the A13 flowing.

Councillor Allen asked what plans would be put in place to monitor noise and pollution on the A1013. Colin Walker stated that no plans for active monitoring were in place as established noise barriers were already in situ on this route and that the air quality would continue to be monitored through the existing air quality sites in Stanford le Hope. Colin Walker stated that the aim would be to keep all vehicles on the A13 during the period of the scheme and the project would encourage this by providing sufficient information for residents to plan their journey.

Councillor Rice stated that pollution and air quality would be a vital part of the communications that would be required to inform residents.

Councillor Smith urged that smart signage and the appropriate communications should be used to keep residents informed of any delays.

Councillor Rice welcomed the scheme but reiterated that communication should play a vital part in effectively keeping residents informed.

RESOLVED

That the Planning Transport Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the progress on the A13 Widening scheme and provide comments to help inform the detailed design and construction phase.

38. Grays South: Delivering the Pedestrian Underpass

Andy Millard presented the Grays South Project which aims to transform Grays town centre, creating public squares and an underpass to replace the pedestrian level crossing in Grays High Street together with the development of modern retail and residential units.

The Council continued to work closely with Network Rail to develop the proposals and support the project through design and their approvals process although it had become apparent that they were unable to offer significant funding towards the delivery of the scheme.

For the project to progress the Council would meet most of the costs and a funding strategy had been developed drawing upon the existing commitments within the capital programme, available Section 106 funds, anticipated receipts from future development and funds from the Local Growth Fund.

In February 2017, the Council received notification that its bid for £10.8 million from the Local Growth Fund had been successful and that the Council would

receive the full payment requested to complete the funding package to deliver this project.

Councillor Rice congratulated Officers for this great news project and for securing the monies required.

Councillor Rice asked for reassurance from Officers that the Section 106 monies would be available. Brian Priestley stated that the Section 106 funds had already been received for this project.

Councillor Allen asked Officers whether the design of the underpass took into account the prevention of any anti-social behaviour, whether CCTV cameras would be installed and what facilities would be in place in the case of flooding. Andy Milliard stated that the project was not at this design point yet but these considerations would be taken into account.

Councillor Smith stated that this was a great project for Thurrock and asked Officers on the timescales for the project. Brian Priestley stated that the project would take about 5 years to complete following completion of agreement with Network Rail. A report will be presented to Cabinet in April seeking formal approval to proceed with the project.

Councillor Gerrish welcomed the project and was thrilled to see the project going forward and asked Officers to come back to committee to present the vision and design of the underpass and to update members on progress.

Councillor Gerrish asked Officers what the proposed time periods would be when the existing crossing would be closed. Andy Milliard stated that the Council was working closely with Network Rail and agreed it would be more amicable to keep the crossing open for as long as possible.

Councillor Rice stated that the Council had to meet the public's expectations and communication was vital for residents to be involved and kept informed.

RESOLVED

That the Planning Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to comment on the approach to managing the delivery of the Grays South Project including;

- a) The division of roles which proposes that Network Rail lead technical design and construction of the underpass, access ramps and steps (elements which are on sensitive operational land) while the Council lead land assembly and design of the public realm;**
- b) The terms on which the Council will agree to this division of roles as set out in paragraph 3.6 of this report;**

- c) **The funding strategy which is based on current commitments in the capital programme, S106 funds, use of development receipts from Council land, and the grant from the Local Growth Fund;**
- d) **Land assembly based on an approach that keeps land acquisition to the minimum necessary and is based on negotiated settlement with Compulsory Purchase used as a last resort.**

Brian Priestley left the committee room at 8.10pm.

39. Stanford-le-Hope Transport Interchange - Scheme Update

Paul Rogers, Programme Manager for Major Schemes, updated Members on the progress made on the £12.05 million station and bus interchange improvement scheme at Stanford Le Hope including the proposed design and programme of works.

The project objectives were:

- Develop an interchange that will connect bus, rail, cycle, taxi and pedestrian modes of transport at Stanford le Hope station.
- Expand capacity at Stanford le Hope station and ticket gate line.
- Provide improvements to public transport infrastructure and service reliability to new housing developments.
- Help curb traffic growth and minimise growth in transport emissions in the area.

The scope of project was:

- Two car passenger drop off positions with landing island.
- Two taxi rank positions with landing island and shelter.
- Protected pedestrian walking routes.
- Two drop off and one pick up position.
- 84 new cycle parking spaces.

The new station building would have:

- Integrated waiting facilities.
- Passenger toilets.
- Integrated passenger footbridge and lifts with public access.
- Level access from London Road to both station buildings.
- Real-Time customer information system for shuttle bus services.

Councillor Rice asked Officers what the difference in distance would be for residents using the old and the new footbridge. Paul Rogers confirmed that pedestrians would have to walk a further 15 metres.

Councillor Rice stated that this was a very impressive and a much needed project for Stanford le Hope and another success story for Thurrock. Councillor Rice congratulated Officers for securing the monies required.

Councillor Smith stated this was a fantastic project which would be great for residents and great for the borough. Councillor Smith urged Officers to make Thurrock proud when undertaking this project and to bring the station into the 21st Century.

Councillor Rice indicated that communication with residents was vital to help this project proceed.

RESOLVED

That the Planning Transport Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the progress of the Stanford Le Hope scheme together with the proposed design and timescale for delivering the scheme.

40. Work Programme

The Chair stated that this was the last Planning Transport Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee for this municipal year and that the work programme was now complete.

The Chair thanked Members and Officers for their contribution and their continued support to the Planning Transport Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

The Chair asked Members if there were any items to be added or discussed for the work programme for the next municipal year.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the item on Local Plan Update be presented to the Planning Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee early in the next municipal year.**
- 2. That the item on c2c be presented to the Planning Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a six monthly basis.**
- 3. That the item on Health Hubs in Thurrock be presented to the Planning Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**

The meeting finished at 8.27 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk**