

Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 12 March 2019 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Martin Kerin (Chair), Alex Anderson, Terry Piccolo, Jane Potheary and Graham Hamilton (Substitute) (substitute for Peter Smith)

Apologies: Councillors Peter Smith (Vice-Chair) and Andrew Jefferies

In attendance: Leigh Nicholson, Strategic Lead of Development Services
Chris Atkinson, Head of Communications, c2c Rail
Wendy Le, 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.

29. Minutes

The minutes of the Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 8 January 2019 were approved as a correct record.

30. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

31. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

32. c2c and Network Rail Service Update

A presentation was provided by Steve Hooker, National Rail Representative and Chris Atkinson, c2c Representative. The presentation outlined the following:

- Signalling issues and power systems – had been reliable over the last 25 years but now required replacing to ensure faster service and to allow for more capacity. This would help to reduce the signal power failures that often occurred on c2c.
- Track – hot weather caused rail tracks to contract which resulted in track distortion. This caused the speed restrictions placed on trains.

- External events – the number of trespassing incidences had increased and Network Rail was working to secure these trespass points.
- c2c communicated updates through various channels and Twitter was the most effective.
- Issues with the sun rising on one side of the track resulted in line side issues in which the driver would then have to leave the train to walk down the platform to perform their safety checks.
- Service decisions from c2c were unpopular but these were for the safety of passengers or to ensure an efficient service following delays e.g. crowd control at Fenchurch Street station; or reserving carriages for Limehouse or West Ham.

Thanking the representatives for the presentation, Councillor Potheary said that information provided from c2c via the communication channels were sometimes inconsistent. On Chris Atkinson's comments regarding the effectiveness of the Twitter feed, Councillor Potheary disagreed and thought there needed to be better suggestions and advice given. She went on to state that information regarding c2c delays were not fed through Transport for London (TfL) channels and it would be useful for TfL and c2c to communicate with each other in this area. Councillor Potheary requested further information regarding the line side issues.

In response, Chris Atkinson said the sun rising on one side had often been an issue and it would affect one station on one day and on the next, it would affect another station instead. Money was being invested into this issue to resolve it. Councillor Potheary thought that the issue needed to be better communicated and more information than 'the sun is shining'.

Continuing on, Councillor Potheary said there were issues on other lines, in particular, the loop lines which was the Ockendon line and the Rainham line. There was a general perception that these lines were not as well looked after as the 'top' line (Fenchurch Street to Upminster). Purfleet Station had been known to have 4 train carriages during peak hours whereas top line stations would have up to 12 carriages. Councillor Potheary invited the representatives to comment on the perception mentioned.

Chris Atkinson replied that there had been similar conversations within Basildon Station and Southend Central Station. Demand for more trains often came from the main line and operationally, there were a different range of options. A graph would be sent to show the operational frequency of the trains. Chris Atkinson went on to say that one train route could have more trains than another route and the perception that Councillor Potheary mentioned was heard often but all stations were treated equal.

Councillor Potheary mentioned that there seemed to be fewer trains and more cancellations with no extra trains scheduled in to replace the cancellations. Chris Atkinson explained that extra trains were not scheduled in

because of the time gaps where freight trains would be passing in that time. All routes were running on full capacity and there were around 20 trains per hour in which no more could be put on.

Regarding Stanford le Hope station, Councillor Piccolo sought clarification on whether there would be a ticket office or ticket machines according to rumours he had heard. He went on to say that ticket machines did not have some of the features that a ticket office could provide. Confirming that there would be no ticket office, Chris Atkinson said the road opposite the station would need to be dug up to erect a ticket office there. It was not practical so ticket machines would be installed in the station instead. The station would have staff on site to help customers with ticket machine purchases. The one feature that would not be possible on a ticket machine would be claiming a refund; this would need to be done at another station. Councillor Piccolo queried whether discounted tickets such as family tickets and OAP tickets could be obtained from the ticket machine. Chris Atkinson would check and report back to the Committee.

Referring to Chris Atkinson's comments earlier in regards to train drivers carrying out safety checks during line side issues, Councillor Hamilton asked if there was a station master to undertake these checks. He also questioned whether ticketing options could be more flexible such as extending Oyster out to other stations. He also mentioned that ticket machines were unable to give route information to passengers whereas a ticket office was able to do this. Explaining that staff would be present at Stanford le Hope station, Chris Atkinson said staff would be able to help with route information. In regards to Oyster, c2c was considering a smart ticketing system similar to the London system. On station masters, these were known as Platform Dispatchers and a number of c2c staff was being trained in safety measures but they were not on platforms as standard. However, Platform Dispatchers would be in place in stations that were identified as needing them.

On Oyster cards, Councillor Piccolo commented that the card only extended to Grays. Many people had to alight/board at Grays to be able to use their Oyster. Chris Atkinson explained that the Oyster extended to Grays because c2c had a train route terminating at Grays and this was not due to borough boundaries. He reiterated that c2c was looking into smart ticketing options to enable use on c2c and London routes.

The Chair thanked the representatives for their presentation and update.

33. Planning Obligations

Presented by Leigh Nicholson, Strategic Lead of Development Services, the report provided an overview of the mechanisms that were currently in place to secure and allocate developer contributions for infrastructure in Thurrock.

Councillor Anderson queried the process to determine who sat on the Council's s106 Panel. Leigh Nicholson replied that the Panel was overseen by

the Corporate Director of Place and membership was nominated by the Place directorate team.

Commenting on the five s106 contributions that funded certain projects, Councillor Piccolo said that there were a number of contributions coming in but most were not as high as they could be. He continued on to say if the 5 s106 contributions were to be pulled as mentioned, to achieve a deficit in particular projects and there was not enough applications to gain s106 funding; what would happen with the underfund. Councillor Piccolo queried whether the underfund would be used to fund another similar project. Leigh Nicholson explained that s106 contributions did not necessarily have to fund one project in one particular area; instead it could be used to fund several small scale projects within that particular area. Some of the s106 contributions did not have to be requested if the project was to be incorporated into a larger overall scheme such as the Local Plan.

Although pleased to hear of the s106 process, Councillor Potheary expressed concern on how residents could be involved in the process. She went on to say that residents would not necessarily understand planning systems or that they could be involved. Referring to the Local Plan, Leigh Nicholson answered that residents were consulted through the Your Place, Your Voice events that were currently being rolled out to the local communities as part of the Issues and Options Stage 2 Consultation. This encouraged residents to give their opinions and made them aware of the potential developments within the borough. The Council website also had an infrastructure list although this needed more promotion.

Councillor Potheary sought clarification on whether there was a specific development of ideas from developers within the Local Plan and how these would work. She also queried how residents could be involved in these ideas. Leigh Nicholson confirmed that the Local Plan included developers' ideas and the Local Plan actively encouraged involvement from the local community. The Local Plan also looked at the timeline of developments and led these to where they needed to be.

Referring to appendix 1, the Chair noted that community groups and residents were able to nominate projects in the s106 process and he queried how the Chairs of community groups could engage in this as most were not aware of this. Aside from the events stemming from the Local Plan, the Chair asked how the Local Authority could advise Chairs of community groups to partake in the s106 process. Leigh Nicholson would check with Place directorate and feedback to the Committee.

Councillor Piccolo noted that s106 contributions provided a proportion to the impact of a development and applications were applied with reduced contributions resulting in a deficit. Councillor Piccolo sought clarification on how the deficit could be obtained through the planning system. Leigh Nicholson explained that a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was introduced when a funding gap was identified. Using CIL too early would

result in lower funding so the Infrastructure Requirement List (IRL) was introduced first.

RESOLVED:

That the Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted and commented on the report.

34. Work Programme

Noting that the Stanford le Hope Hub Interchange Update was still to be heard at Committee, Councillor Potheary questioned when the update would come. Leigh Nicholson would discuss with the Place directorate team.

The meeting finished at 8.20 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