

Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 29 July 2015 at 7.00 pm

Present:	Councillors Brian Little (Chair), Martin Kerin (Vice-Chair), Steve Liddiard and Peter Smith (arrived at 7.15pm)
Apologies:	Councillors Robert Gledhill and Colin Churchman
In attendance:	Councillor Speight, Councillor Speight, Portfolio holder for Regeneration Councillor Gerrish, Portfolio holder for Transport Councillor Stewart Matthew Essex, Head of Regeneration Stephen Taylor, Programmes and Projects Manager John Pope, Public Transport Manager Peter Newman, Chairman of Ensign Buses Tony Davis, Member of the Public Gary O'Brien, Member of the Public Mike Tarbard, Member of the Public Jessica Feeney, 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.

1. Minutes

The Minutes of the Planning Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee, held on 4 March 2015, were approved as a correct record.

2. Items of Urgent Business

There was no items of urgent business.

3. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference were noted.

5. Thames Enterprise Park

Chris Brookhouse introduced himself as the CEO of Thames Enterprise Park and Thames Oilport, which were owned by a joint venture of Greenergy, Vopak and Shell, he added that was also a director of Greenergy. Graham Alexandra introduced himself being the Head of Business Development, and

Phil Kennedy a Senior Director at FTI Consulting both present to speak on behalf of Thames Enterprise Park.

The Final Interim Masterplan was presented to the Committee by Thames Enterprise Park. The presentation set out the development strategy and planning considerations for the creation of Thames Enterprise Park, a site comprising approximately 405 acres of previously developed land at the former Coryton refinery.

The Final Interim Masterplan informed the committee of the following;

- It would provide for a range of other uses, such as logistics, storage and distribution and complementary ancillary services.
- That the scale and location of the site, provided scope to both respond to market demand and to create an attractive environment within which to invest and to work.
- It was explained to the Committee that once completed the Thames Enterprise Park will form one of the largest developments of its kind in Europe and provide a major boost to future growth and prosperity of the Borough and the wider Thames Gateway South Essex area.

It was explained to the Committee that Thames Enterprise Park held a meeting in March 2015 to inform Head Teachers of the potential job opportunities that would arise from the development of the Thames Enterprise Park. Councillor Kerin felt that the employment and training opportunities were good and questioned what outcomes came from the meeting with Head Teachers. Thames Enterprise Park explained that the meeting was very responsive and that school visits would be arranged by the preferred bidder when the sale is complete which would encourage young people to consider a career in this area of work. The Head of Regeneration explained that they will aspire to a similar training process currently undertaken at the Royal Opera House. It was added that Officers would aspire to populate the workforce at Thames Enterprise Park with Thurrock residents. The Chair of the Committee requested for a follow up report to come back to the Committee regarding the education training for The Thames Enterprise Park.

Councillor Liddiard questioned if public transport was being considered in the development, it was explained by Officers that this was incorporated in the transport plan. The Head of Regeneration confirmed that £9 million had been secured for the redevelopment of Stanford station. Further to that the Committee was informed that the Thames Enterprise Park would create 5,964 transport movements over 24 hours it was explained that there was more work to do in the future to reduce that figure.

The Chair of the Committee questioned if there would be one owner of the Thames Enterprise Park, and if so would the Council have a guarantee if the land management was to fail. Thames Enterprise Park confirmed that there would be one owner of the 403 acres that were for sale, with the current owners retaining land for Thames Oil port. They explained that there was no

guarantee that the land management would not fail, although it was added that the risk of this happening was very low.

RESOLVED:

To note that the Committee endorsed the emerging Final Interim Masterplan for the Thames Enterprise Park.

6. Local Bus Services

The Public Transport Manager introduced the report to the committee during which he highlighted the following points;

- The budget had reduced from £835,000 in 2008/09 to £245,000 in the current financial year, and that this level of funding does not provide a service for all communities or at a frequency that users consider acceptable
- Without financial support it is unlikely that areas such as Fobbing, East and West Tilbury, Bulphan and Horndon on the Hill would have any bus services.
- A consultation is currently being undertaken with users of the three supported services which will run until 10 September 2015.

The Chair informed the Committee that three members of the public and Councillor Stewart were present at the meeting to ask a question or make a statement; he also informed the Committee that three written statements had been circulated to the Committee from Amber Coaches, Carol Rintoul a member of the public and Thurrock Coalition.

Mike Tarbard was welcomed to speak to the Committee and in doing so he highlighted the following points to the Committee;

- That access was denied to Basildon Hospital, libraries, dentists, opticians and shops and students would not be able to get to college or reach recreational places because there would be no weekend service.
- It was stated how the 11 bus route was covered by other current bus routes and that the 374 bus route was not.
- That the council should reconsider the decision made on the grounds of total isolation of Horndon-on-the-Hill.

Gary O'Brien was welcomed to speak to the Committee and he raised the following points;

- The difference between the two bus routes 11 and 374.
- Results of a Survey of passenger movements on 374 Bus between Corringham Social Club and The Five Bells Roundabout both outgoing and incoming.
- A Survey of passengers using the 374 through Fobbing.

- Observations on how bad the Road Safety and Health and Safety for those who are forced to walk from Fobbing to either the Five Bells or The Corringham Club to Board or Alight any bus.
- Ongoing Report and Survey of Thurrock Bus 374 prior and after 2 May 2015.

Tony Davis was welcomed to speak to the Committee he covered the following points;

- Many residents have lost their ability to go out and socialise with friends and family, loss of social contact could lead to depression and anxiety.
- That the impact of the loss of the bus was in no way confined to the elderly age group and that some younger people also do not have a car and must use a bus to go to work, to school or to college.
- On May 2 the bus was removed without any consultation, It was felt that if Thurrock Council held a consultation 8 weeks ago it would have prevented the current situation.
- On behalf of the residents Tony Davis provided Report and Survey findings to the Committee which states why the bus should be reinstated to run through Fobbing and requested that the council investigate the possibilities of the reinstatement of the 374 bus.

Councillor Stewart was welcomed to the Committee to make her statement and ask her question, in doing so she highlighted the following points;

- That the Planning and Transport Officers gave the highest of priorities to the 374 route as being the most necessary bus service to preserve but it was the number 11 that was given the lowest priority because its route was covered by other bus services.
- The reason given for keeping the number 11 service was due to necessary access to health centres, yet to date, no research had been completed to substantiate that claim.
- Councillor Stewart felt it would have been fairer to ensure access for all residents across Thurrock to hospitals and health centres rather than just some. As the average age of residents in Fobbing is close to 50 and over a quarter of residents are over 65.
- The Village had no local convenience store or shops and left elderly residents with up to a 3 mile round walk which included a hill just to get a pint of milk or loaf of bread or to catch a bus.

Councillor Stewart asked the Chair of the Committee and the Members to review and thoroughly scrutinise this unsound decision to remove the vital bus route through Fobbing, basing its findings on accurate research and invited the Committee and Portfolio Holder on a site visit.

The Chair of the committee accepted the invitation; the Democratic Services Officer agreed to arrange a site visit.

Councillor Kerin said he would like to see an objective measurable way to address the priority of the bus services. It was also suggested that the Planning and Transport Officers look at sourcing other funding internally from Adult Social Care and Education.

Peter Newman the Chairman of Ensign Buses explained to the Committee that they previously operated the 374 bus route. Peter Newman suggested two short term solutions for Horndon on the Hill and Fobbing:

- That the number 11 bus route stops in Horndon on the Hill and then goes onto Basildon.
- He recommended that Officers talk with First Buses who run the number 100 bus route and enquire as to whether they could run one bus an hour through to Fobbing.
- He believed the old 374 service was nearly viable as a commercial route.

The Chair of the Committee requested that Peter Newman's comments were included in the consultation with other operators.

RESOLVED:

- 1. To note that the Committee considered appropriate local bus budget to ensure access to employment, healthcare, education, shopping and leisure facilities, enabling residents to live independently, minimising the cost of services provided by the local authority.**
- 2. To note that the Committee considered alternative ways of providing communities with the transport services required.**

7. Grays South and Rail Station Regeneration

The Head of Regeneration explained to the Committee that in July 2013 Cabinet approved the introduction of a broad (8m wide) underpass beneath the railway line to replace the existing level crossing. The proposals included:

- access via high quality,
- landscaped public squares at either end of the underpass
- The potential for a redeveloped rail station to provide a significantly enhanced arrival point into the town centre.

At December 2014 Cabinet it was envisaged that Network Rail would lead the design and construction of the underpass and the Council would lead the necessary land assembly. The Committee was informed that both organisations had commissioned consultants to develop the design proposals and consider the land and property implications respectively and a preferred underpass option had been identified and valued and a Land Acquisition and Partnership Strategy developed.

The Head of Regeneration explained that the cost estimates provided by Network Rail showed a design and construction cost that was similar to the budget price identified in the studies by Ramboll of £8,851,565. However additional costs appeared excessive, which took the cost estimate to £15,163,396 for the underpass with additional sums for relocating Crown Road and for inclusion of lifts. The Regeneration Team explained they were working with Network Rail to understand these estimates and to consider how they could be reduced.

Members were informed that further reports would be submitted to Cabinet for consideration of the next stages of the project including detailed design, funding and, if necessary, the drafting of a Compulsory Purchase Notice.

Councillor Kerin praised the project and questioned how many people from Thurrock would get the opportunity to work on the construction, Councillor Liddiard also questioned if the work would cause an impact to the train line. The Head of Regeneration explained that companies within Thurrock would be considered and that the construction of the underpass would not affect the train line as it would be a single weekend closure over Christmas. Councillor Liddiard also felt that more communication needed to take place to inform Thurrock residents of the underpass and the benefits.

Councillor Liddiard raised a concern regarding flooding and the underpass; the Head of Regeneration assured the Committee that a pumped solution was in place to resolve that issue.

Councillor Liddiard questioned where funding was being sourced from, The Head of Regeneration explained that they had a variety of funds at their disposal including an allocation within the Council's capital programme, some S106 monies and both Network Rail and C2C had identified funds that could be used to support the scheme. It was referenced that the Local Growth Fund could be an opportunity to secure the funds still needed.

RESOLVED:

To note that the Planning Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee provided their views on the design options and cost estimates and the approach to land assembly set out in this report.

8. Work programme

The Democratic Services Officer explained that there was some new agenda items that had arose from the meeting and that she will circulate the amended work programme electronically.

The meeting finished at 9:26 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**