

Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 20 January 2016 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Brian Little (Chair), Robert Gledhill, Steve Liddiard and Robert Ray

Apologies: Councillors Martin Kerin (Vice-Chair) and Peter Smith

In attendance: Ann Osola, Head of Highways & Transportation
Matthew Essex, Head of Regeneration
Andrew Millard, Head of Planning & Growth
Les Burns, Chief Highways Engineer
Sean Nethercott, Growth & Strategy Team Leader
Chris Atkinson, C2C Communications and Stakeholder Manager
Julie Davis, C2C - Group Station Manager
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.

20. Minutes

The minutes of the Planning Transportation and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 4 November 2015 were approved as a correct record.

21. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

22. Declaration of Interests

Councillor Gledhill declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of Agenda Item 5 C2C timetable changes as many of his employees at his business could be affected by the changes.

23. C2C Train Timetable Changes

The Head of Highways introduced the report to members explaining that recent changes had occurred to the C2C timetable. The Communication and stakeholder manager and group area station manager was invited to the Committee to speak in doing so the following points were made;

- The Timetable had been changed due to a 15% increase in passengers in last 5 years, which had resulted in shifting carriages

around to match the demand, and also to improve links to and within London with 20-25% more trains stopping at TFL interchanges.

- C2C informed the Committee that they had already doubled the length of key trains in AM and PM peaks, and reduced the number of trains that called at West Ham; also season ticket holders had been offered a cash back equivalent to two days' travel as an apology for disrupted journeys.
- In the near future C2C would be identifying additional rolling stock for extra seats and had an agreement in principle in place with another train operator for some additional carriages which would be targeted at the busiest peak trains.
- There would be a focus on maintaining position as most punctual train operator in UK, introducing flexible season tickets to provide better value for money, and also stating a three year £33m station investment programme.
- C2C's franchise ends in 2029.

Councillor Halden proposed the following question 'There has been much concern regarding the C2C timetable change, however the suggestion of changes have been mooted. Can C2C explain how they are judging complaints and how that is informing possible changes?' C2C explained that C2C had an accurate load weigh data on each train that produced an accurate number of people on each train at each stop. It was added that C2C employees and network rail regularly carried out spot checks.

Councillor Halden asked a supplementary question 'how are C2C interrupting the data for the areas that are not as vocal on C2C's radar so that these are not forgotten about?' C2C explained that all passengers from Stations with long commutes deserved a seat, it was added that all passengers mattered to the organisation and areas certain areas would not be forgotten. The Committee was informed that more seats would be added to trains.

Councillor Liddiard highlighted that there had been many complaints from passengers in Tilbury, C2C were informed that there was big growth and regeneration taking place in Tilbury and that the service would need to cater for these changes.

Councillor Ray questioned when the C2C service would reach its maximum capacity. C2C explained that the capacity had already been met, but added that trains would be extended and more frequent due to a GPS breaking system that could be introduced in the future.

Councillor Gledhill queried what changes had already been made and how these would be communicated to passengers. The Committee was informed that many changes had taken place during the evening peak times which had resulted in success, it was added that the load weight data would be available on the website in the future to inform passenger what trains were less compacted.

Councillor Gledhill questioned if C2C had approached TFL to see if they had experienced a decrease in passengers and if TFL would fund C2C as passengers were using C2C instead of TFL services. C2C explained that this was something they were exploring.

The Chair of the Committee questioned C2C's target for next week regarding seat availability, it was explained that PM peak trains would be improving with the changes that had been made. It was also questioned how many additional carriages C2C were looking to purchase, the Committee was informed that there could possibly be 16/20 carriages purchased.

The Chair of Committee also felt that there was not an accurate comparison of passengers when looking comparing results between autumn 2015 and January 2016 it was question if this was a true reflection. C2C explained that this was not an accurate reflection but explained that there were more issues with the timetables other than seasonal use.

The Committee was informed that C2C were undergoing a survey carried out by national passenger service within the next seven months.

The Committee requested an update report in March.

RESOLVED

- 1. The Committee receives a presentation from C2C on the recent timetable changes.**
- 2. The Committee commented on the timetable changes to inform C2C's ongoing timetable development and C2C response plans to stakeholders.**

24. Thurrock Local Plan Progress Update

The Committee were inform by the Head of Planning and Growth that the Council had adopted the local plan in the shape of the core strategy and policies for management of development (December 2011), however on the 12th February 2014 cabinet gave approval to undertake a review of the core strategy and being the preparation of a new local plan to guide the devilmnt of the borough over the period to 2035.

Following the adoption of the SCI in November and approval of the LDS in December 2015, it was proposed to take a report to Council on the 24 February seeking authorisation to publish the Thurrock Local Plan issues and options 1 consultation document that will then be the subject of a six week consultation event in February and March 2016.

Head of Planning and Growth informed the Committee of the key issues which the public could be given the opportunity to consider and comment on. The Chair of the Committee questioned how the Council managed the residents desires compared to the resident's needs. The Head of Planning and Growth explained that the Youth Forum was a combination of resident's communications and evidence.

Councillor Gledhill questioned if the timescale would be affected if there was a delay on the Lower Thames Crossing announcement. The Head of Planning and Growth explained that there would be no impact on the issues and options 1 consultation if the announcement was delayed. It was questioned further by Councillor Gledhill as to how the Local Plan would be communicated to travellers. The Head Planning and growth explained there was a new slimmer and user friendly focused document. The committee were informed that residents would also be able to engage in road shows, events and summer walks along with electronic and written surveys.

Councillor Gledhill suggested that a question was added to the consultation regarding what would residents would like changed in their area. It was added that Little Thurrock Rectory and possibly West Thurrock would prefer shops and housing rather than secondary employment as the small roads could not cater for large vehicles. The Head of Planning and Growth agreed to look at including this in the consultation questions.

The Chair of the Committee requested that the Thames and its foreshore were added to the draft list of questions for the first stage. It was questioned how the green belt was used by local authority in context with the new local plan. Head of Planning and Growth explained that they had been carrying out various technical studies and that the green belt would be included in later stages.

RESOLVED:

- 1. The Committee noted the report and provided comments on the approach being adopted by the Council preparing a new Local Plan**
- 2. The Committee continues to receive regular progress reports on the preparation of the Local Plan and provides oversight of the Plan making progress.**

25. Grays Development Framework Consultation

The Head of Regeneration introduced the report to Members explaining that a vision for the redevelopment in Grays was developed in July 2013 following an extensive public consultation exercise. It was added that a number of opportunities have been identified to use the Councils land holdings to generate funds to enable delivery of key projects such as a new theatre

complex and supporting the creation of a new underpass. The key principles of what the framework would do were as follows;

- New homes
- New shops and restaurants
- Creation of link public squares from the war memorial to Grays Beach
- Develop the evening economy
- Improved accessibility
- Enhanced arrival and meeting place at the rail station
- Re connect the town centre to the river
- A new riverside visitor destination

The Head of Regeneration highlighted the next steps in the Grays Development Framework to the Committee;

- Consultation January/February 2016
- Cabinet March 2016
- Use for regeneration and for funding bids
- Local Plan consultation October/November 2016
- Inclusion in Local Plan

Councillor Gledhill and Councillor Liddiard commended the work on the Grays Development Framework.

Councillor Gledhill suggested that the Grays rail station underpass would benefit if shops were incorporated on each side of the underpass within the plan; it was felt that this would make the underpass public friendly rather than hidden away. The Head of Regeneration supported the comments made and explained that the underpass could possibly be used as the entrance and exit of the station.

Councillor Ray questioned the completion date of the Grays underpass development. The Head of Regeneration explained that the underpass had been a long working process with Network Rail, it was explained that there had been many changes of circumstances although the capital commitment remained the same. The Committee were informed that the ability to forward fund the design work was still a work in progress.

The Chair of the committee asked for clarification on the word density when used in context of the Grays Development Framework. The Head of Regeneration explained to the Committee that the density of buildings anticipated through the Framework were around four to six storeys in general.

The Committee felt that the suggested theatre was positioned too far from Grays High-street. The Head of Regeneration explained that this was not set in stone as the department were waiting on the consultation feedback.

RESOLVED:

- 1. The Committed provided its views on the framework as a basis for leading the regeneration of Grays town Centre**
- 2. The Committee commented on the approach to the consultation set out in this report.**

26. Fees and Charges 2016/17

The Head of Corporate Finance informed the Committee that the report sought approval to revise fees and charges for Thurrock Council with effect from 1 April 2016. It was explained that the report provided a narrative for all discretionary charges for each directorate, it was added that there was a wider review of commercial opportunities across the Council in progress. Members were informed that any proposed price changes proposed as part of the wider review will be managed under the delegated authority of the Chief Executive and relevant Cabinet Member.

Councillor Gledhill questioned why the statutory temporary access licences were marked as 'POA'. The Head of Transportation & Highways explained that the price of the application varied on the site and nature of what was required. It was agreed that the committee would be informed of the different statutory licence charges.

The report highlighted that the car parking charges were to be approved by the Committee. Members were confused what Committee these charges were to be approved by, the Head of Transportation & Highways agreed to investigate and feedback to the Committee.

Councillor Gledhill questioned the parity of street parking charges across the borough. The Head of Transportation & Highways informed the Committee that fees had been increased by 5% across the borough, and that it was not appropriate to charge high fees in some areas of the authority as the Council were mindful not to undermine the regeneration aspirations when setting charges. The Committee were informed that Thurrock Councils fees were average when compared to neighbouring boroughs.

Councillor Gledhill asked for clarification on the annual admin fee. The Head of Transportation & Highways explained that this fee was used to reimburse the cost of applications.

Councillor Gledhill highlighted that the street light usage fee was not included within the report. The Head of Transportation & Highways explained that residents were not charged for street light usage and that this would need to be reviewed and brought back to Committee in the future.

The Committee were informed that an additional fee to enable businesses to have tables and chairs on highways was added to the Highways Fees and Charges section of the report. Members of the Committee felt that they were not given enough information regarding the additional fee, Members were also

concerned that there was no consultation for residents and businesses. The Head of Corporate Finance agreed that the concerns raised would be incorporated into the Cabinet report.

RESOLVED:

That the committee considered the proposed charges as detailed in the appendix

27. Highways and Transportation Draft 2016/17 Works Programme

The Head of Transportation and Highways informed the Committee that the report was a fulfilment of the promises to return for comments on the prioritisation principles used to determine the schemes put forward for delivery within the maintenance block of the 16/17 highways and transportation capital programme.

Councillor Gledhill felt that the timescale of completion was very short; The Head of Transportation and Highways assured the Committee that the Council were confident in their service and schedule. The Committee discussed a site visit to view the transitioning of street lights. The Senior Democratic Services Officer and Ann Osola agreed to liaise.

Councillor Gledhill requested that the Council must inform the Police as to what street lights had been changed, to enable more accurate information when gathering evidence through CCTV cameras.

The Chair of the Committee requested that the estimated completion dates were circulated to all Councillors to reduce the number of questions being asked to the highways department. The Chair of the committee also requested that the Committee received an update report every three months to provide the committee with the cost that have been saved.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the committee commented on the planned maintenance prioritisation criteria in line with government guidance on cost effective asset management as set out in appendix 1**
- 2. That the Committee commented on draft highways and transportation capital works programme 2016/17 in Appendix 2.**
- 3. That the committee noted the progress made on the delivery of the LED street Lighting Programme**

28. Work Programme

The Committee agreed that a C2C update report was added to the Work programme for March 2016.

The meeting finished at 9.25 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**