

Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 4 July 2017 at 7.00 pm

- Present:** Councillors John Allen (Chair), Oliver Gerrish, Tom Kelly, Terry Piccolo and Peter Smith
- Apologies:** Councillors Barbara Rice (Chair)
- In attendance:** Roger Harris (Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health)
Andrew Millard, Assistant Director Planning & Growth
Charlotte Raper, Senior Democratic Services Officer
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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 meeting of the Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 7 March 2017 were approved as a correct record.

2. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

3. Declaration of Interests

Councillor Piccolo declared a Non-Pecuniary Interest regarding Item 5: Thurrock Design Guide - Residential Alteration and Extension Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in that he was a member of the Planning Committee.

Councillor Kelly also declared a Non-Pecuniary Interest regarding Item 5: Thurrock Design Guide - Residential Alteration and Extension Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) as he was the Chair of the Planning Committee.

The Chair advised Members that he had received a request to amend the order of items on the agenda. Item 8: Integrated Medical Centre Delivery Plan – Phase 1 would be heard first and the remaining items would follow as per the agenda.

4. Integrated Medical Centre Delivery Plan - Phase 1

The Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health introduced the report which outlined plans for the development of an Integrated Medical Centre (IMC) in Tilbury to address the health needs in the area and improve the

quality and capacity of primary care. The report also provided further detail on the proposed model of care and the delivery mechanism for the capital build project. Members were asked to consider and comment on the exciting opportunity, before the report being presented at Cabinet the following week.

The Chair asked whether the new IMC would include a Minor Injuries unit. The Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health outlined that there were hopes for 4 IMCs across Thurrock. While it would be unlikely that all 4 would facilitate Minor Injuries units 1 or 2 would. The unit(s) would be commissioned and delivered by the NHS and therefore he could not yet advise which site(s) would be selected.

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration assured the Committee that Basildon Hospital and all the NHS partners had signed a Memorandum of Understanding that services provided at present would not change until these IMCs were in place so there would be no loss of care in Thurrock. It was hoped that services such as Minor Injuries units and renal dialysis might be provided at some of the IMCs. The exact outcomes were subject to the consultation currently underway but the aim was to ensure services were more viable for both the Council and patients and it was an opportunity to ensure the best possible outcomes for Thurrock.

Councillor Smith highlighted the problem Thurrock faced around retention of GPs and urged for one of the IMCs to be designated as a GP training practice to encourage trainee GPs into the borough where they might settle, to the betterment of Thurrock. The Committee heard that the Council could influence plans but could not directly control as delivery would be controlled by the NHS, however the CCG had aspired to something similar for some time. The landscape of primary care in Thurrock was currently not in good shape and this made recruiting GPs tough.

Councillor Piccolo queried the business case process and the impact that might have on the timeframe for the IMC to be delivered. There would be 2 separate business cases, one for Cabinet to borrow money to build the centre and a separate NHS business case for service delivery. The NHS business case process was very complicated but there had been assurances that it would be a 1-stage process for the commissioning of primary care. While there were hopes for 4 IMCs across Thurrock, the scheme for Tilbury stood alone and would be considered on its own merit. The IMC in Tilbury had been planned regardless of consultations around plans for Orsett hospital; however the opportunities resulting from the current consultation would be an added dimension.

The Chair echoed the need for something to be done in Tilbury which was, at present, 8 GPs short. He wished to see the IMC sooner rather than later. Councillor Gerrish also echoed support for the project and agreed that the term 'Integrated Medical Centre' was far clearer for residents than some previous suggestions. He queried what room there would be for growth in the future, for example if additional services wished to join the IMC. The Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health outlined that there would be

specifications for the design team around maximising use of the centres, both around extended hours and 7 day weeks and around the utilising of space., such as shared reception areas. It was essential to future proof the sites for growth, both in terms of population and services offered; this was key to the regeneration aspect of the proposal.

The Chair referred to the Executive Summary within the report and the aims to reduce health inequalities. He welcomed the proposal which was very important for residents.

RESOLVED:

That Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- 1. Note the current status of the project and comment on the proposed mechanism for securing the delivery of the Tilbury and Chadwell IMC.**
- 2. Support the Council in taking the role outlined within the report including the decision to tender and appoint the design team.**

5. Thurrock Design Guide - Residential Alteration and Extension Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

The Assistant Director of Planning and Growth presented the report. The Residential Alteration and Extension Supplementary Planning Document was the first in a series of supporting documents to the Council's overarching Design Guide. Members were asked to comment on the document and the consultation process before it was presented to Cabinet.

Councillor Smith referred to recent events and, although not directly linked to the Design Guide, expressed his desire for Thurrock Council to be absolutely forensic with regards to matters of fire safety with applications for residential alterations. Members were advised that the matter was not covered by this document nor within the remit of Thurrock Council as a Planning Authority. It was a matter for the Fire Authority and Building Regulations.

Councillor Kelly asked what improvements the changes offered and whether planning applications submitted might be stronger as a result. The Assistant Director of Planning and Growth clarified that the document offered no changes to the existing policy. It was a supporting document, which provided a greater level of detail and would therefore strengthen the Council's hand if refused applications were appealed. He emphasised that the Design Guide did not try to constrain applicants but to stimulate imaginative design, particularly as Thurrock was such a diverse borough.

Councillor Piccolo referred to the consultation responses and noted that the large majority were from agents. He asked how the Planning Department proposed to get more input from draftsmen etc., who the guide was intended to assist most. He suggested the possibility of contacting previous applicants

to ask whether they would have found the guide useful. Members were advised that the top 20-30 agents to submit applications on behalf of Thurrock residents had been contacted and bespoke meetings had been held to obtain their views on the matter.

RESOLVED:

That Members note the current status and progress on the production and adoption of the RAE Design Guide and provide comments on the consultation process that will inform the production of the final document.

6. Grays Master Plan

The Chair advised Members that the Cabinet Member for Regeneration was present to contribute to both this item and item 7: Tilbury Master Planning.

The Assistant Director of Planning and Growth introduced the report which reviewed the progress already achieved and highlighted opportunities within Grays which prompted the outlined approach proposed for a new masterplan.

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration emphasised that there had been no major changes to the masterplan which had been agreed at Full Council under the previous Administration. This update was simply to refresh and bring the masterplan back to the forefront of people's minds to ensure the positive momentum was not lost.

The Chair sought confirmation that the State Cinema would still be renovated by JD Wetherspoon. It was confirmed that a planning application was expected in the summer.

Councillor Kelly asked whether it would be the entire building or merely a part which would be renovated. The whole building would be renovated, though obviously some areas would not be open to the public and would be used for back of house purposes. There were currently talks with English Heritage as how best to use the stage area, but there was confidence since JD Wetherspoon had converted a number of historical buildings previously. The Chair welcomed the restoration of the State given its current state of disrepair.

Councillor Gerrish welcomed the refresh. He highlighted the major issue of transport links, particularly around 2-way working in the town centre. He also asked whether the shopping centre and adjoining multi-storey car park were being explored. The Cabinet Member for Regeneration advised that these issues needed to be considered moving forward. With regards to transport issues and cultural opportunities, there was the offering of an entertainment centre and the currently under-utilised car park would have to be assessed. The masterplan would allow developers to see what the Council intended for the regeneration of Grays. The Assistant Director of Planning and Growth interjected that the whole town centre, particularly Crown House and the

multi-storey, should be assessed to see if they could be made into more attractive landmarks. The shopping centre itself was, at present, very low-scale and there was scope to build upwards.

The Chair enquired as to future plans for the Thameside Theatre. The Cabinet Member for Regeneration assured the Committee that this fell into the category of cultural and civic activities and was considered within the masterplan. The plan under the previous Administration had been to relocate onto the shorefront and it was agreed that this should not change. The plan for the regeneration of much of Thurrock involved opening up to face towards the Thames, with waterways and cycle ways. These long-term aims had not changed.

Councillor Piccolo noted that within the shopping precinct 'Savers' had upsized. This was a positive sign as businesses would not locate to a bigger store if they did not have faith that there was business to sustain it.

Councillor Smith added that there needed to be a major review of the road network within Grays, particularly around choking points and the pollution in the air.

RESOLVED:

That Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee comment on the proposed approach to updating the existing Masterplan for Grays set out in the report.

7. Tilbury Master Planning

The Assistant Director of Planning and Growth introduced the report which reviewed the progress already achieved and highlighted opportunities within Tilbury which prompted the outlined approach proposed for a new masterplan.

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration outlined that the key difference between masterplans for Grays and Tilbury were that the vision for Grays was easily seen however Tilbury had seemingly had things done to it with no real connectivity. There was a need for a wider vision and investment. Given the huge opportunities presented to Tilbury this was a chance to ensure Tilbury got what it needed, otherwise it could have a largely negative impact if not done properly.

The Chair referred to section 2.1 of the report. In his view the most important aspect was for Tilbury to be a place where people were healthy and the possibility of a green lung could prove very special. He also hoped that the local MPs would join Thurrock Council in continuing to lobby the Government to reconsider the proposed route of the Lower Thames Crossing. While there were clearly benefits from a number of the opportunities coming forward, such as employment, the overall impact these would have on Tilbury were not too clear. He feared the Asda roundabout would reach its maximum capacity. He welcomed Tilbury 2 using rail to keep freight off the road networks. The

Cabinet Member for Regeneration highlighted that a key issue was to consider how individually and collectively these major developments would impact Tilbury, particularly the road networks. This was an issue for all Members, not just the Councillors for Tilbury wards and the masterplan would be crucial for transport and logistics.

Councillor Gerrish welcomed the focus on Tilbury but stressed the importance of including the community so they did not feel these were simply more changes being imposed upon Tilbury. He queried the breadth of the Estate Regeneration proposed in section 3.7 of the report and plans to involve the community. Estate Regeneration was critical for Tilbury; it was quite deprived and out of the way. Tilbury was somewhere you had to have a reason to go to. However it was understandable that residents wished to stay in their houses and therefore the regeneration would need to be handled delicately, with resident engagement throughout.

Councillor Kelly referred to the Lower Thames Crossing and the possibility of Tilbury 2. He asked whether the possibility of a relief road could be seriously considered. He also expressed concern regarding the increased rail movements; while it was preferable to avoid adding to congestion on the road networks he was concerned about the impact it would have along the line, such as Stanford-le-Hope and Purfleet. The Assistant Director of Planning and Growth agreed the increased rail movements were a concern as the network was strained already however it was preferable to road movements. If both developments went ahead it would be logical to relieve the pressure on the Asda roundabout by rerouting traffic to a separate junction. The Council hoped to influence thinking.

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration reiterated the concern over the combined impacts of development, particularly on the Asda roundabout. Increased freight lines, such as HS2, would allow for passenger lines to be released and would be better for Thurrock.

Councillor Piccolo expressed the need to manage residents' expectations around any consultation to avoid any misconceptions around what changes would be possible. He was concerned that there would soon be a net surplus of jobs in Thurrock which would lead to increased commuters and increased congestion. If it was difficult to commute into the borough there would then be a strain on the housing market. He wanted to ensure it could be made easier to fulfil jobs so that additional houses could be well planned rather than forced upon the borough. Members were advised that this explained the need for the Local Plan. There were two possible scenarios moving forward, either an increase in commuters to fill jobs created, or if the jobs could not be filled then local economics would slow. There was a need to balance economic growth with housing growth. The Tilbury ferry was already used by many people living in Kent to commute to work in Tilbury Docks and it was necessary to improve transport links within the borough.

The Committee discussed options such as extending the Oyster zone and extending clipper boat services. The issue would be that running such

services would only be viable at peak hours and it would not be beneficial for the Council to have to subsidise the services. Councillor Piccolo interjected that Thurrock did not do enough to encourage tourism. With RSPB sites the borough could be far more attractive, if the Grays and Tilbury riverfronts were improved. The Cabinet Member for Regeneration agreed that with better riverfront access, access to the Elizabethan fort and improvements such as a green lung there could be far more to offer passengers of the cruise liners which docked in Tilbury. It was essential to consider what the desired outcome and vision was for Tilbury so that sustainable improvements could be made.

RESOLVED:

That Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee commented on the proposed approach to the masterplan for Tilbury set out in the report.

8. Work Programme

Members were asked if they wished to propose any additions or amendments to the Work Programme.

Councillor Smith suggested inviting Purfleet Centre Regeneration Ltd to the Committee.

Councillor Gerrish requested an item surrounding the “Fill it” aspect of “Clean it, Cut it, Fill it” to be brought before the Committee.

Councillor Piccolo noted that the Agenda for the meeting to be held on 12 September 2017 was very full. Officers agreed to discuss whether any reports could be postponed to a later meeting and the Members would be advised outside of the meeting.

The meeting finished at 8.25 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**