

Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 6 November 2018 at 7.30 pm

Present:	Councillors Martin Kerin (Chair), Peter Smith (Vice-Chair), Alex Anderson, Terry Piccolo and Jane Potheary
Apologies:	Councillors James Baker
In attendance:	Councillor Coxshall, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration, Steve Cox, Corporate Director of Place, Andrew Millard, Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection, Julie Nelder, Assistant Director of Highways, Fleet and Logistics, Rebecca Ellsmore, Regeneration Programme Manager, Ken Dytor, Purfleet Centre Regeneration Ltd Representative, Jason Robinson, Urban Catalyst Representative, Duncan Innes, Swan Representative, John Rowles, Chairman of Purfleet Community Forum, 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.

16. Minutes

Regarding the minutes of the Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 11 September 2018, the Vice-Chair drew Members' attention to several points:

- That following a request from a motion at Full Council, the Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee were to consider whether 800,000 homes could be built in Thurrock. This was to be added to the work programme but may change now due to the newly formed Local Development Plan Task Force.
- That the Committee had not yet seen the Terms of Reference for the Local Development Plan Task Force.

The minutes of the Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 11 September 2018 were approved as a true and correct record.

The minutes of the Extraordinary Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 17 October 2018 were approved as a true and correct record.

17. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

18. Declaration of Interests

Councillor Piccolo declared a non-pecuniary interest as he was a Member of the Planning Committee.

The Vice-Chair declared a non-pecuniary interest as he was a Substitute Member of the Planning Committee.

19. Briefing: Purfleet Centre Update

The report was presented by the Officer, Rebecca Ellsmore, which provided an update on the Purfleet Centre project. Accompanying the report was a presentation given by Ken Dytor, the Purfleet Centre Regeneration Ltd (PCRL) Representative.

Councillor Potheary thanked the PCRL Representative for the presentation and mentioned that she had lived in Purfleet at a young age so was excited to see where the project plans laid. She appreciated the detailed presentation. In relation to the Highways England objection mentioned in the report, Councillor Potheary sought more detail on the objection and the bearing of the objection on the Purfleet scheme. She went on to query on the units of lost land in regards to the Environment Agency's objection due to the possible use of land for a future Thames barrier and asked if this would affect the economic viability of the proposed Purfleet town centre.

The Swan Representative, Duncan Innes, stated that the Highways England objection was based on the impact of the Purfleet scheme on Junction 30 of the M25. However, PCRL's view was that the Purfleet scheme would not have a significant impact on the said junction and Highways England had come in at a late stage to object. PCRL was in the middle of resolving this objection with Highways England.

Regarding the matter of the Environment Agency objection, the Urban Catalyst Representative, Jason Robinson, explained that the loss of the land was a significant amount. PCRL was working with its architects on the loss of space and there were plans to redistribute residential and other facilities elsewhere in the masterplan. The re-provision on the loss of land would still allow the Purfleet scheme to attain the targeted 2850 new homes and the finer detail would be looked at on how this would be delivered.

The Vice-Chair voiced his opposition to the Highways England objection. Going on to thank PCRL for the presentation, the Vice-Chair asked the representatives to expand on the Environment Agency objection and where the possible Thames barrier would be. The PCRL representative replied that the Environment Agency had no clear plans on where the possible Thames

barrier would be and there would likely be no further detail on the barrier for a considerable amount of time. The Purfleet scheme had gone through many consultations and the objection from Environment Agency had only come in during the planning stage. PCRL had been working closely with Thurrock Council and Environment Agency to reduce the impact of the barrier on the Purfleet scheme. In regards to the loss of land, it would not be left vacant but would probably not be capable of accommodating residential development.

The Chair invited the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration, Councillor Coxshall, to speak.

Regarding the late objection from Highways England, Councillor Coxshall was surprised but thought the one half of Highways England that was in discussions with the Lower Thames Crossing Task Force should be communicating with the other half of Highways England. Councillor Coxshall felt the objection was serious because if the objection was held, it could halt development and regeneration within Thurrock. He pondered whether one half of Highways England would object to the other half of Highways England in terms of Junction 30 because the future Lower Thames Crossing would have an impact on Junction 30 as well.

Referring to the site reserve (the lost space), Councillor Coxshall said he had first heard of this in September 2014 and that there would be a long lead time on this. However, Thurrock had a duty to protect one of UK's top 10 cities (London). He mentioned if the barrier had been located in Tilbury, this would have had a significant impact on Tilbury Port and DP World, so he was glad to see PCRL had taken the possible Thames barrier into consideration in the Purfleet scheme. Councillor Coxshall went on to say that Thurrock had 30 years in which to create an imaginative use for the site reserve.

Adding to Councillor Coxshall's comments, the Corporate Director, Steve Cox, said that the service and PCRL was working to agree a section 30 agreement with the Environment Agency, to enable the site to be used for 30 years whilst giving the Environment Agency reassurance that it would be available for a barrier when it was needed. There was expectation that a resolution could be reached to enable Highways England to withdraw their objection as well.

The Vice-Chair thought it was great the Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be able to discuss what the site reserve could be used for. It was good to see good working ideas.

The Chair echoed all comments from the Committee. He went on to ask how much of the 2850 homes were earmarked as affordable. The Urban Catalyst Representative answered that the scheme was not quite there yet in terms of schemes viability. It was expected that once the Purfleet town centre was built, homes around the area would rise as was the case with other town centres. It was a matter of balancing the infrastructure and number of homes.

Stating that it was not just for social reasons, the Chair said it also economically made sense for workers to live in Thurrock too. He queried how

much of the Purfleet scheme was feeding into Thurrock's Local Plan. In answer, the Corporate Director suggested that the Purfleet scheme was infrastructure led and therefore aligned with Thurrock's Local Plan. In addition, some of the consultation approaches used within the Purfleet scheme could be adopted into the development of Thurrock's Local Plan.

The Chair invited John Rowles, Chairman of Purfleet Community Forum to speak.

Beginning with the background of Purfleet, the Chairman of Purfleet Community Forum explained the forum had come together 18 years ago and contained members from the community. He went on to say how Purfleet had expanded and developed over the years. A Purfleet Design Panel had been created to work with PCRL on the Purfleet scheme. There had been workshops for all ages which had helped to develop the Purfleet scheme into what it currently was. The Purfleet Community Forum had always looked at the Purfleet scheme with hope and hoped the scheme would bring the much needed development into Purfleet which previous administrations had failed to do.

Continuing on, the Chairman of Purfleet Community Forum said he had lived in Purfleet for 32 years and in that time, had only seen Purfleet gain a health centre. With no parks and no shops, there was hope that the Purfleet scheme would address this by putting the infrastructure in first. The forum hoped the scheme would also breathe new life into Purfleet which had been forgotten.

The Purfleet Community Forum envisioned shops and restaurants along the riverfront in Purfleet which was currently void of anything. Stating in a passionate tone, the Chairman of Purfleet Community Forum said the community of Purfleet wanted Purfleet to be the place where everyone wanted to be and the Purfleet scheme was fully supported. He ended by stating that the Purfleet Community Forum did not want Purfleet to be just a commuter area, but to be a better place.

The Committee applauded the Chairman of Purfleet Community Forum and gave thanks to his passionate statement. The Vice-Chair said Thurrock could do with more people of similarity to the Chairman of Purfleet Community Forum who would do so much for their community. The Vice-Chair went on to say towns were lacking in infrastructure which was much needed and projects such as the Purfleet scheme would give towns the infrastructure needed. He added that Thurrock were tired of seeing housing estates and thanked PCRL for the Purfleet scheme.

Echoing the Vice-Chair's comments, the Chair said Thurrock was lucky to have a forum in Grays as well. He thanked the Chairman of Purfleet Community Forum and other community forums for doing more for their local communities.

RESOLVED:

That the Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee commented on the approach being taken to progress the highlighted workstreams.

20. Fees and Charges Pricing Strategy 2019/20

Presented by the Corporate Director, the report outlined the proposed charges which would take effect from 1 April 2019 unless otherwise stated.

Councillor Piccolo stated that the appendices accompanying the fees and charges report were too small to read. He thought it would have been useful to have used a colour coded system to highlight what charges had increased or decreased.

Agreeing with Councillor Piccolo's comments, Councillor Potheary mentioned struggling to see the charges as well. She went on to ask who would be impacted by the increased fees and charges. The Assistant Director for Planning, Transport and Public Protection gave examples of where fees had been introduced. This included scooter training in schools which had been funded previously but schools now requested this. In the National Planning Policy Framework, informal discussions had taken place to acquire money to drive planning applications forward. The service may review those charges in a year's time. However, the planning charges were necessary to drive development schemes, such as the Purfleet Regeneration scheme, forward. Overall, very few fees had increased. In response, Councillor Potheary said the scooter fee had been one that she had been concerned about but could see the cost was small which was £30 for 10 children.

Referring to the licenses for highways, the Vice-Chair sought an explanation on the increased charges. The Assistant Director for Highways, Fleet and Logistics explained that the fees and charges had been benchmarked against other local authorities and were in line with current market value. These charges would also encompass staff costs and retained costs for possible damage to highways from vehicles as a result of works or activities undertaken in relation to the license.

On the mention of highways licenses, Councillor Potheary queried the charge for skip licenses. She sought clarification on whether the charge would have an impact on companies and went on to say that the service did not want to be discouraging people from hiring skips. Councillor Potheary also asked whether it was the people hiring skips or the companies that would absorb the cost. The Assistant Director for Highways, Fleet and Logistics answered the charge had been introduced to help control unauthorised skips on the highway. It was uncertain whether this charge was passed on by companies.

The Vice-Chair felt the Committee had not had the opportunity to pick up the smaller details of the fees and charges due to the format. He asked if comments could be provided to Officers in the next day or two. The Corporate Director answered comments could be picked up via email through

Democratic Services but the recommendations could be agreed subject to comments by Members.

Councillor Piccolo asked for a colour coding system to which the Corporate Director answered that a method would be used to highlight the increase and decrease of charges.

RESOLVED SUBJECT TO MEMBERS' COMMENTS:

1.1 That the Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted the revised fees, including those no longer applicable, and commented on the proposals currently being considered within the remit of the Committee.

1.2 That Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted that Director delegated authority will be sought via Cabinet to allow fees and charges to be varied within a financial year in response to commercial requirements.

21. Work Programme

The Vice-Chair queried on the process of the Local Development Plan Task Force. The Corporate Director answered a date for the first meeting would be confirmed after the Issues and Options 2 consultation went to Full Council. The first date could possibly be January 2019. The Vice-Chair went on to question the process of the Freight and Logistics report. The Assistant Director for Planning, Transport and Public Protection explained the service was still working on this.

No changes were made to the work programme.

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