

Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 28 February 2023 at 7.00pm

Present:	Councillors John Allen (Vice-Chair), Adam Carter (substitute Councillor Robert Gledhill), John Kent (substitute Councillor Kairen Raper), Tom Kelly and Lee Watson
Apologies:	Councillors Alex Anderson (Chair), Robert Gledhill and Kairen Raper
In attendance:	Councillor Mark Coxshall, Leader and PFH for Growth Mark Bradbury, Director for Place Kevin Munnely, Assistant Director of Regeneration and Place Delivery (left at 8.35pm) Mat Kiely, Transport Development Manager Kenna-Victoria Healey, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised the meeting was being filmed and recorded, with the recording to be made available on the Council's Website.

34. Minutes

The minutes of the Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 26 January 2023 were approved as a true and correct record.

35. Items of Urgent Business

The Vice-Chair advised Members there was one item of urgent business. This was a verbal update from the Portfolio Holder for Growth and it would be the first item heard.

36. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

37. Portfolio Holder Report for Growth - Verbal Update

The Leader and Portfolio Holder for Growth presented his update to Members during which he highlighted:

- The Freeport was moving forward at pace, and he was hopeful that the first meeting could be held soon, subject to approval of the final formal decision. He added he felt the Freeport was going to be a big change for Thurrock and was really important as the benefits for the Borough were enormous.

- Under his role of Portfolio Holder of Growth and Leader he had been attending ASELA meetings. He commented it was pleasing to have all everyone in South Essex working together as leaders. He stated he thought it has been helpful to be part of the debates that's been moving forward.
- It was discussed how the Grays and Tilbury Town Fund projects were moving forwards slowly and he was hopeful that Government approval on the business cases would be received shortly. Councillor Coxshall referring to the regeneration projects explained that it also had to be acknowledged there were issues with Stanford Le Hope Station and the Grays underpass, which Officers were reviewing.

The Vice- Chair thanked the Leader for his update and sought if Members had any questions.

Councillor Kelly commented it was fantastic that the borough's ports were expanding, and that Tilbury and DP World had seen a huge increases in their freight going into the docks; however, this was causing an issue at rail stations such as East Tilbury, Tilbury and Grays. He continued by stating he appreciated the Council was in a difficult situation financially, but it was important to ensure that support was given to current projects to enable them to progress.

The Leader mentioned there was good news that nearly 25% of freight was now being transported via rail, it was his understanding that DP World were now using every effort to transport external freight also by rail. He continued by saying he agreed it was important to deliver and complete current projects.

38. Regeneration Programme Update

The Vice-Chair of the Committee introduced the item advising Members there had been a resident request to speak. He invited Mr McLean, Commodore of the Thurrock Yacht Club to address the committee and give his statement.

Councillor Kent thanked Mr McLean for attending the committee and continued by congratulating the Yacht Club on the work they were doing with young people and encouraging new participants into sailing.

The Assistant Director of Regeneration and Place Delivery then presented the report which could be found at pages 13 to 20 of the agenda.

During discussions, it was advised that the Grays Town Fund project was to be paused while an in-depth review was undertaken with regards to design and timescales for completion. Members heard how design work for the project was with the Planning department, however there was work to be completed and the purpose of the review was for officers to have a better understanding of costs for this project.

The Director for Place stated he wanted to be transparent with Members and set out the detail of the challenges which were facing officers, these challenges were therefore part of the reasons the planning process for the project was to be paused. This gave Officers the opportunity to get better understanding of how much the designing would cost and gave Officers the chance to look at all options available.

Members enquired as to the timeline of completion for the review. The Assistant Director advised there were three strands to the review, with the first draft being due in a weeks' time. He continued to mention he was hopeful to the review would be completed by the end of the municipal year.

During discussions, Members raised concerns relating to Stanford Le Hope Station, querying as to whether the business case was now completed and had been presented to the accountability board. It was further asked if the design process had begun as the area around the station could at times be subject to flooding depending on the time of year. One of the main concerns raised by Members was that there was currently a station which was not fit for purpose.

The Assistant Director addressed Members explaining a review of the design process and overall project were also being undertaken and as part of that review the interchange for buses was to be looked at to ensure it would work safely. He continued to explain that at all times during the review Officers were being mindful as to the cost to complete the project. He confirmed that the business case had been submitted, however, it had also been delayed due to further assessment and insurance work.

RESOLVED:

That the Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes and comments on the information provided for consideration as part of the full Regeneration programme review.

39. Transport Vision and Issues and Opportunities Update

The Transport Development Manager presented the report which could be found at pages 21 to 128 of the agenda.

Members thanked the Transport Development Manager for his detailed report. It was commented that looking at the long-term vision, as a Council, Officers and Members were against Lower Thames Crossing (LTC); discussing the A13 east facing slips road, Councillor Kelly commented he felt they were going to be an important area to focus going forward in terms of the LTC. He enquired if there was a backup plan in place, should the LTC go ahead and if there were ways to make the crossing work for Thurrock in this case.

The Transport Development Manager explained that a balanced view would be required of how to deliver the transport vision should the LTC not go ahead. He continued by saying there was a need to start conversations should the crossing be signed off and go ahead and confirmed that such conversations had been taking place over a period of time in terms of the mitigating measures that would need to be applied to support what Thurrock needed in terms of access to jobs and enhancements on the road network.

Members heard how there were ongoing conversations between the Council and National Highways to understand what could be brought forward to support the borough and the Council's mitigation measures and to reduce the impact of the LTC.

RESOLVED:

- 1 That Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview & Scrutiny Committee note progress on the Transport Issues and Opportunities and Transport Vision documents and accompanying appendices and provide comment that will help to shape this work.**
- 2 That Committee note that these documents will be used to inform stakeholder and member engagement before advancing to wider community engagement.**
- 3 That Committee note the opportunity to discuss this work in greater detail as the draft documents are developed and engagement feedback is received.**
- 4 That members note the requirement to further develop the Transport Plan in response to member and stakeholder feedback.**

40. Work Programme 2022-2023

Members discussed the work programme for the next meeting.

RESOLVED:

Members requested to be kept up to date with all regeneration projects.

The meeting finished at 9.05 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

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