

INFRASTRUCTURE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

MONDAY, 20 JULY 2020

PRESENT: Councillors Christine Bateson, Jon Davey (Vice-Chairman), Phil Haseler, Julian Sharpe and Gurch Singh (Chairman)

Also in attendance: Councillor John Baldwin, Councillor Gurpreet Bhangra, Councillor John Bowden, Councillor Mandy Brar, Councillor Catherine del Campo, Councillor David Cannon, Councillor Stuart Carroll, Councillor David Coppinger, Councillor Geoffrey Hill, Councillor Andrew Johnson, Councillor Neil Knowles, Councillor Ewan Larcombe, Councillor Ross McWilliams, Councillor Samantha Rayner, Councillor Shamsul Shelim, Councillor Donna Stimson, Councillor Chris Targowski and Councillor Helen Taylor

Officers: Mark Beeley, Hilary Hall, Chris Joyce, Fatima Rehman and Ben Smith

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

MINUTES

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting held on 16th June 2020 be approved as a true and correct record.

APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTEEES

The Vice Chairman introduced the item and said the Chairman and Vice Chairman provided a shortlist of co-optees, and the clerk said the co-optees needed to be appointed with the Panel's decision. The Panel was being proactive rather than reactive and therefore the Overview & Scrutiny (O&S) was being used in the best way. He quoted the Communities A3d Constitution rule that said the Panel could use the process as the Panel sees fit and decide the methodology. He proposed to have several co-optees or residents for projects for Task & Finish Groups (T&FG).

The Vice Chairman said that most T&FG could be accomplished without external input, whilst residents could be appointed for more complex T&FG. He proposed to consider a co-optee for each item that had a T&FG as a Panel. For important topics, a political balance could be ascertained to have 3 or 6 Conservative members, 2 or 4 opposition members and 5 or 10 members, who would be the public to balance the number of Members.

Councillor Sharpe said co-optees could be appointed once the Forward Work Programme (WP) was decided. He was supportive of co-optees and proposed to decide this on items that required co-optees. Councillor Haseler agreed that co-optees could be invited as and when needed.

Councillor Bateson agreed with Councillors Sharpe and Haseler and said fewer Councillors should be involved in the T&FG and more members of the public to have their views heard.

The Chairman agreed that residents with specialist knowledge could be invited to provide their input, and the appointment of co-optees could be reviewed at a later meeting.

WORK PROGRAMME

The Chairman introduced the report and said there were many items suggested for the WP, some with proposed meeting dates and responsible officers, whilst other items needed further discussion and finalisation of meeting dates.

Councillor Sharpe said this was a good idea, but felt the report looked like a working draft rather than a finalised documentation and asked if this was intended by the Chairman. The Chairman said this was a suggested WP.

Councillor Sharpe said the first four proposed items were carried from the previous municipal year; therefore, they could be agreed.

Councillor Targowski asked the Vice Chairman about his requested item on 5G and queried the speculation of potential health risks associated with 5G frequencies and electromagnetic spectrum may have. On 29th February, the Vice Chairman wrote a blog article that 5G accelerated COVID-19, and he asked if the Vice Chairman believed the conspiracy theory. He asked if the Vice Chairman did not believe the conspiracy theory, why the ideas were promoted on his blog considering the government's Don't Feed the Beat campaign. The campaign asked the public to check the credentials of conspiracy theories on COVID-19, and the Vice Chairman would be viewed as a trustworthy source to the public as a Councillor.

The Vice Chairman said he did not think there was a direct link between COVID-19 and 5G, and he was concerned of the health risks posed by 5G with supporting documentation to prove this.

Councillor Sharpe said there were many items proposed for November 2020 and proposed to seek advice from offices with the workload. The Vice Chairman informed the Panel that officers were involved in the compilation of the proposed dates for items.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the following items and meeting dates for the WP be approved:

- **Volker and Project Centre Annual Review for November 2020**
- **Highways Investment Report for November 2020**
- **Draft Parking Permit Scheme Policy for November 2020**
- **Capital Programme Update for November 2020**

Singular Use Plastics Update Report

The Chairman introduced the item and said this was brought forward from the Communities O&S Panel and was suggested for 17th September 2020.

Councillor Sharpe proposed to take the item off the list and discuss this at another meeting and Councillor Bateson agreed. Chris Joyce, the responsible officer, informed the Panel that the item was due for the Communities O&S Panel, but the decision was made for it to be itemised for Infrastructure O&S Panel, as it related to the Council's commitment to reduce single use plastic.

Councillor Stimson, Lead Member of Environmental Services, Climate Change, Sustainability, Parks and Countryside, said this was a fantastic report and a lot of work had been carried out on climate change, and she welcomed the report to be brought forward on September 2020. Councillors Sharpe and Bateson agreed with Councillor Stimson.

Councillor Bateson said there was confusion on the WP items because of the lack of clarity on the agenda document, as some Members had the original agenda, whilst others had the re-

published agenda. The Vice Chairman informed the Panel that the agenda was released and then removed as per officers' request and was re-published on the day of the meeting.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Singular Use Plastics Update Report for 17th September 2020 be approved.

Place Recovery Strategy

The Chairman introduced the item and said Russell O'Keefe, Executive Director, was the responsible officer, proposed for 17th September 2020.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Place Recovery Strategy for 17th September 2020 be approved.

5G, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), Internet of Things (IoT) and Big Data Use

The Chairman introduced the item and said the proposed date was 19th January 2021. The Vice Chairman said he wanted to explain the concerns of the use of 5G, the national policy framework, the funding from Telco, concerns showed by global nations and UK towns, the Glastonbury summary, the precautionary principle, Alzheimer's and the Mayor of Bavaria.

The Vice Chairman said businesses were excited about the potential of the new technologies and digital innovations. He questioned how the infrastructure would evolve to help local businesses to make the most of the future potential, the potential health risks by the electromagnetic spectrum and how the data gathered would be used and shared. The Vice Chairman sent an email to Members and officers, including a Glastonbury report and YouTube video that discussed the effect of electric and microwave radiation.

Councillor Sharpe said the meeting was to agree items and not to discuss them, and the Chairman said to agree the item and have a full and thorough discussion of the item later. Councillor Sharpe said the Terms of Reference on technology could be discussed in the September 2020 meeting.

Chris Joyce, the responsible officer, said this was an interesting and useful topic for the Panel to consider and suggested to take the item offline to understand the purview of the item. The Vice Chairman said he was concerned about the 5G signal being placed on the highway rather than specific places and proposed this as a T&FG item.

Councillor Haseler said he was confused on this item, as the Glastonbury report had no conclusions from its 5G T&FG. He was concerned about the health concern message that was being sent to residents and members of the public. He said Ofcom carried out tests on 5G and the highest result was 0.039% of the recommended exposure limit.

Councillor Carroll, Deputy Chairman of Cabinet, Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Health and Mental Health, said care needed to be taken in the messaging and phraseology that was conveyed regarding the 5G topic to the public. Councillor Carroll said there was a need to be careful about the messaging that was being given to members of public regarding 5G.

Councillor McWilliams said the Vice Chairman had made several party-political statements that were not part of scrutinising a policy.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That 5G, AI, ML, IoT and Big Data Use be considered by the Panel in future.

Chantry Road and Oldfield Road Junction Review

The Chairman introduced the item and said it was an operational task which would be taken offline with Ben Smith, Head of Commissioning - Infrastructure and responsible officer, and Councillor Taylor, who requested the item.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Chantry Road and Oldfield Road Junction Review be responded as usual line of business.

Homelessness Strategy and Homelessness Forum Update

The Chairman introduced the item in the absence of Councillor Price, who requested the item and said this was regarding an update on the homelessness strategy. Councillor McWilliams, Lead Member for Housing, Communications and Youth Engagement asked what update was required, as data from the strategy would be publicly published quarterly to be scrutinised.

The Vice Chairman said Councillor Price asked for Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to be analysed and asked if she could be involved in the Homelessness Forum. Councillor McWilliams informed the Panel that the Homelessness Forum was open to all Councillors and was made up of professionals in the industry. The KPIs were created by the housing professionals that was provided in the homelessness strategy.

The Chairman proposed to ask Councillor Price for further information and then see if this item needed to be on the WP, or if she would directly contact the housing team.

Councillor McWilliams said Councillor Price could get involved in the Homelessness Forum that was to be established in Autumn, once the terms of reference were established.

The Vice Chairman said Councillor Price was part of the Homelessness T&FG last year and said she did not feel involved and suggested to have her input in future reports.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Homelessness Strategy and Homelessness Forum Update be considered by the Panel in future.

Annual Monitoring Report

The Chairman introduced the item and proposed to bring this item to the January 2021 meeting, as the new Annual Monitoring Report would be published at the end of the calendar year.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Annual Monitoring Report for 17th January 2021 be approved.

Cycling Action Group (CAG) update

The Chairman introduced the item and proposed to bring this item to be addressed by the Windsor and Maidenhead Town Forums.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That CAG update be considered by Maidenhead Town Forum and Windsor Town Forum.

Queen Street Junction Review

The Chairman introduced the item and proposed to bring this item to be addressed as usual line of business.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Queen Street Junction Review be responded as usual line of business.

Street Lighting Review / Bus Routes / Maidenhead Town Centre CIL

The Chairman said Councillor Baldwin, who requested the above listed items, needed to provide further information to determine the outcomes desired with the responsible officers Ben Smith and Chris Joyce.

Councillor Baldwin said he would come back to the Panel with further information in the next meeting and was in email correspondence with officers.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Street Lighting Review / Bus Routes / Maidenhead Town Centre CIL be considered by the Panel in future.

Waste and Recycling/Plastic Free Windsor

The Chairman introduced the item and confirmed that these items were the responsibility of the Communities O&S Panel.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Waste and Recycling/Plastic Free Windsor be considered by Communities O&S Panel.

SERCO Contract

The Chairman introduced the item and confirmed that this item was the responsibility of the Communities O&S Panel.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That SERCO Contract be considered by Communities O&S Panel.

Hills Lane Junction Improvement / Bisham Road, Switchback Road and Lower Road Traffic Calming / Lower Road Pavement Improvement / Bisham Village Green Lane Parking and Resurfacing

The Chairman said the above requested items by Councillor Brar were operational matters that were outside the scope of the Panel and needed to be dealt with Ben Smith, the responsible officer, offline.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the above listed items be responded as usual line of business.

The Wraysbury Drain

The Chairman introduced the item and said this to be considered by the Flood Liaison Group. Councillor Larcombe, the requestee of the item, said the drain no longer functioned and had not done so for several years. He felt the Borough had not taken the appropriate action.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the Wraysbury Drain be considered by the Flood Liaison Group.

River Thames Scheme partnership funding / Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)

Councillor Larcombe, the requestee of the above items, introduced the River Thames Scheme, which was intended to be a partnership funding that had not been arranged. If this was not arranged, the new channel through Datchet, Horton and Wraysbury would not be built.

Councillor Larcombe addressed a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy from 2014 and his assertion was that the Borough failed to incorporate the strategy as part of its responsibilities as the lead local flood authority. He was unsure if the Flood Liaison Committee was an external or internal committee of the Borough.

Councillor Sharpe proposed to have this item scheduled for 2021 rather than November 2020 as there were many items scheduled for the latter date. Councillor Larcombe said he was able to write a report and have a determination of actions by November 2020.

The Chairman asked for Ben Smith and Chris Joyce's workload as the responsible officers, and the Panel were informed that there was a lot of business for November 2020 and therefore there may not be enough time to debate each item. Ben Smith proposed delaying the LLFA item for a later meeting to provide the item greater airtime, whilst River Thames Scheme could be covered in November 2020.

The Vice Chairman suggested that Councillor Larcombe liaise directly with Ben Smith to find alternative solutions regarding the matter, as the Borough was unable to afford £54,000,000.

Councillor Cannon, Lead Member Public Protection and Parking, said this was a large piece of work and other agencies would need to be questioned to create a balanced view about the issue. He proposed the meeting to take place in April 2021.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That River Thames Scheme partnership funding / LLFA be considered by the Panel in future.

Fly Tipping Review

The Chairman introduced the item, requested by Councillor Haseler, with a proposed date for January 2021. Councillor Sharpe said the item was topical as fly tipping was taking place in some areas and proposed to have the item for September 2020.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Fly Tipping Review for 17th September 2020 be approved.

CCTV System Review

The Chairman introduced the item and said this was requested by Councillor Bateson, proposed for January 2021. Councillor Sharpe said due to the workload for January 2021, he proposed the item to be scheduled for April 2021.

Chris Joyce suggested items to be approved at this stage, with a view of officers to review the WP and workload and bring suggested meeting times in the next meeting.

Councillor Taylor proposed to have this item considered at Windsor Town Forum and Maidenhead Town Forum before it came to Infrastructure O&S. The Chairman and Councillor Sharpe agreed with the proposal and said this item could be discussed once it had been discussed at the Town Forum meetings.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That CCTV System Review be considered at Windsor Town Forum and Maidenhead Town Forum in the first instance be approved.

Safety of Highway Trees

The Chairman introduced the item and said this was requested by Councillor Bateson, proposed for November 2020 with responsible officers Ben Smith and David Scott, Head of Communities.

Councillor Bateson said there were issues with highway and private trees that fell on roads, particularly in the South of the Borough in the winter. She wanted to know how often they were checked, as there was a policy to check trees every five years.

Councillor Baldwin informed the Panel there was a tree maintenance programme that checked trees every 5 years, with liability for fallen trees to be minimised by a regular inspection routine.

Councillor Baldwin said he was going to have a meeting with residents in the Belmont ward to discuss a highway tree that had outgrown its environment. This had a serious impact on residents' quality of life and supported the item to be on the WP.

Ben Smith informed the Panel there was a rolling programme to inspect all highway trees and trees within a certain distance of the highway. The reason for the item to be recommended for November 2020 was because the project was commissioned as part of the VolkerHighways contract and they would be able to input to the item.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Safety of Highway Trees for November 2020 be approved.

New Schools Infrastructure Plans

The Chairman introduced the item and the Panel were informed by Chris Joyce, responsible officer, that this was not an urgent item and could be discussed as part of the new Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That New Schools Infrastructure Plans be considered by the Panel in future.

Playground Equipment Safety

The Chairman said this item was to be considered in the Communities O&S Panel.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Playground Equipment Safety be considered at in Communities O&S Panel be approved.

Technology Infrastructure and Digital Connectivity

The Chairman introduced the item and said it was requested by Councillor Sharpe, with a proposed date for either September 2020 or January 2021. The Vice Chairman said the item linked to the 5G item. Councillor Sharpe agreed and said this item was more strategic regarding the technological infrastructure rather than about a specific technology.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Technology Infrastructure and Digital Connectivity be considered by the Panel in future.

Ascot Redevelopment

The Chairman introduced the item, requested by Councillor Sharpe which required more scoping. Chris Joyce, responsible officer, said he would liaise directly with Councillor Sharpe to scope the item.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Ascot Redevelopment be considered by the Panel in future.

Modern Road Infrastructure

The Chairman introduced the item, requested by Councillor Sharpe. The Vice Chairman said there was a need to scope the item with Ben Smith and Chris Joyce, responsible officers. Councillor Sharpe said the item would have a wide-ranging scope.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Modern Road Infrastructure be considered by the Panel in future.

Public Transport Requirements

The Chairman introduced the item, requested by Councillor Sharpe. Chris Joyce, responsible officer, said a new transport plan was to be developed in the next year and suggested this item to be included in the transport plan scrutiny. He said further scoping on the item was required, which could also include electrical vehicle charging.

Councillor Sharpe said this was a wide-ranging topic, and as part of the climate change commitments, there would be a need to change the way transport works in the Borough. There would be a need to encourage residents to use buses, cycling and walking, and a change in the infrastructure would be required.

Ben Smith, the responsible officer, along with Chris Joyce and Councillor Sharpe would scope this offline.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Public Transport Requirements be considered by the Panel in future.

Social Housing

Councillor McWilliams said the Borough needed more social housing and were now looking at the housing strategy following the approval of the Homelessness Strategy refresh. Open consultations were due to take place and the item would be brought to the Members once the draft report was created, or after the decision was made to scrutinise policy. The draft report would be ready by mid-Autumn, but this could be pushed back due to increased pressure on the Housing department.

The Chairman asked Panel members to consider this item in Autumn.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Social Housing be considered by the Panel in future.

Carbon-free Power Infrastructure

The Chairman introduced the item, requested by Councillor Sharpe, and asked Councillor Sharpe to scope the item with Chris Joyce, responsible officer.

Councillor Sharpe said there was a need to reduce carbon use in the Borough and encourage solar panels and use heat exchangers to heat and cool buildings rather than using gas or electricity to meet the Carbon Reduction Strategy. Chris Joyce suggested to have this item scheduled after the public consultation.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Carbon-free Power Infrastructure be considered by the Panel in future be approved.

Ascot Medical Centre Planning Process

The Chairman introduced the item, requested by Councillor Sharpe on behalf of Councillor Luxton. The item was outside the remit of Infrastructure O&S and would be responded as usual line of business.

The Vice Chairman said the item was kept on the agenda to educate Members and encouraged the Constitution to be read to understand what items were within the remit of the Panel. The Chairman said that as stated in the Annual Scrutiny Report, Members required more training on O&S meetings.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Ascot Medical Centre Planning Process be responded as usual line of business.

Social Infrastructure Review

The Chairman introduced the item, requested by Councillor Sharpe on behalf of Councillor Hilton, with a proposed date for January 2021.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Social Infrastructure Review for January 2021 be approved.

Council 'Vehicles' Governance

The Chairman introduced the item, requested by Councillor Jones and said it was to be considered at by Corporate O&S Panel.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Council 'Vehicles' Governance be considered by Corporate O&S Panel be approved.

CIL / Developer's Contribution

The Chairman introduced the suggested T&FG and said that two requests were CIL related, to be reviewed in greater detail with Chris Joyce, responsible officer.

Councillor Sharpe proposed to decide the T&FG once the WP was compiled.

Councillor Haseler said there may not be a need for a T&FG for CIL as there was an item programmed on the WP regarding this, and Chris Joyce could provide answers to questions.

Councillor Baldwin said there was a need for a T&FG as Maidenhead Town Centre was exempt for CIL. He was waiting for the original documentation from Chris Joyce and was concerned about the validity of the decision to exclude Maidenhead Town Centre from CIL. A large part of the report leading to the decision was in Part II. If CIL was not applied on Maidenhead town centre's redevelopment, up to £24,000,000 would not be in the capital reserves of the Borough.

Chris Joyce, responsible officer, said the documents would be shared with Councillor Baldwin at the end of the meeting. The original decision for 0 rate CIL went through Cabinet in Part I and Planning and Housing O&S. The final decision to submit the documents and adopt the charging schedule was part of the individual inspector's recommendation. The only recommended change was to reduce CIL for large offices. The Panel was informed that processing CIL had to be publicly decided, with viability evidence and expert advice. The town centre would not have been able to cope with CIL.

Councillor Baldwin said the original viability statements from the consultants were hired by the Borough. He had information from individuals on the panels who said the documents were under Part II. Councillor Haseler said there may or may not be a need to have a T&FG on CIL, subject to the information shared by Chris Joyce.

The Vice Chairman suggested Councillor Baldwin speak to Chris Joyce offline, and a T&FG to be established if required after the reports were reviewed.

Councillor Sharpe suggested to decide the need for a T&FG once the scope was agreed, and Councillor Bateson agreed to this. Councillor Baldwin said he was unsure if he could propose a T&FG as a non-voting Member.

The Vice Chairman said the CIL T&FG was brought forward from the last municipal year but had not been executed. Councillor Sharpe said once the reports were reviewed, the Panel could collaboratively scope the T&FG.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That CIL T&FG be considered in future by the Panel be approved.

Homelessness and housing solutions

The Chairman introduced the T&FG item. Councillor McWilliams said the original Homelessness T&FG was created to ascertain the core strategy going forward, the delivery of the strategy and the personnel. He asked what the purview of the proposed Homelessness T&FG was, which may already be addressed in the Homelessness Forum.

The Vice Chairman said the T&FG was brought forward from the previous year and could be reconsidered this municipal year if there was anything new to explore.

Councillor Sharpe said the T&FG should be agreed when there was further detail on the scope of the groups. He said the requirement for a T&FG in homelessness had been minimised because of the previous Homelessness T&FG.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Homelessness T&FG be considered in future be approved.

Councillor Bateson said written reports should be provided at least 48 hours before the meeting to Members. The Vice Chairman said there was a delay in re-publishing the agenda. The agenda was published a week prior, but the items had to reviewed.

Councillor Sharpe said the report was withdrawn, with adjustments made less than 24 hours prior to the meeting. The Vice Chairman said there had been instances of late reports in other meetings.

The Chairman thanked the officers and Vice Chairman for their contribution. There were infrastructural challenges as the Borough emerged from COVID-19 restrictions with the need to rebuild the local economy and undertake the redevelopment of the Maidenhead town centre. There was a need for the Panel to fulfil its duties without politically motivated distractions.

The Chairman addressed the vote of no confidence in his chairmanship from the Conservative group that was signed by all three of the Conservative representative Panel Members. He expressed his disappointment that the concerns were not directly discussed with him.

With the representatives being the majority on the panel, he felt he could not remain the Chairman for the Panel without hindering the work programme and residents' interest. The Chairman resigned with immediate effect.

The meeting, which began at 6.20 pm, finished at 8.30 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....