

## GLoucester City Council

### MINUTES OF ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY FORUM MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2016.

<b><u>Present:</u></b>	Richard Trelfa (Chair)	- Gloucester Civic Trust
	Stephen McDonnell (Sec)	- Environmental Co-ordinator, Gloucester City Council
	Meyrick Brentnall	- Neighbourhood Manager, Gloucester City Council
	Andrew Harley (Vice Chair)	- Gloucester City Homes Tenants Forum
	Cllr David Brown	- Gloucester City Council
	Ray Pass	- Stagecoach in Gloucester
	Mark Holder	- Stagecoach in Gloucester
	Jo Martin	- Environment Agency
	Pam Daw	- Friends of Alney Island
	Barry Leach	- Gloucester City Centre Community Partnership
	Pam Jones	- Friends of Alney Island
	Alan Lomax	- Hempsted Resident
	Brigit Lomax	- Hempsted Resident
	Claire Mitchell	- Vision 21
	Amanda Stevenson	- City Resident
	Brian Furniss	- Tuffley Resident
	Terry Stevenson	- Hempsted Resident
	Jackie Cave	- Friends of Robinswood Hill
	David Chipperfield	- Gloucester Citizen
	Alan Bently	- Glos County Council
<b><u>Apologies:</u></b>	Cllr Jim Porter	- Gloucester City Council
	Cllr Phil McLellan	- Gloucester City Council
	Katherine Cole	- Glos County Council

## ACTION

1. Minutes of previous meeting 14<sup>th</sup> January 2016 were agreed.
2. **Matters Arising**  
None
3. **Jo Martin: The Environment Agency – Update on Flood Relief Plans for Gloucester**

Jo gave a resume of the initial assessment being undertaken by the Environment Agency's consultants to highlight any scenarios which may be effective in reducing River Severn flood risk and to show whether these scenarios could potentially attract a funding contribution from government Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Grant in Aid. The work has involved modelling of scenarios to assess their impact on River Severn water levels in Gloucester and the surrounding area (from Longford to Elmore and Minsterworth), and a high level assessment of the potential economic benefits and costs.

Originally, approximately ten scenarios were to be looked at. Working with suggestions from some local residents and testing variations of scenarios has resulted in a total of 44 scenarios being modelled. Due to the complexity of the model, (modelling of each takes a number of days). The assessment therefore has taken longer than first envisaged though provides us all with an increased understanding of what may be effective in reducing flood levels and what may attract public funding.

Jo ran through a few of the scenarios that had been modelled. This included scenarios to improve the conveyance of floodwater through the area – including flood relief channels, setting back or creating gaps in existing agricultural defences, and widening the River Severn channel. Other scenarios focussed on providing a barrier to flood water, and included constructing new or raised embankments or walls in a number of locations.

She mentioned that the situation in Gloucester is complex as Severn floods can be fluvial, tidal or a combination of both – modelling shows that carrying out works which may be beneficial in conveying fluvial flow through the area could result in increased flood risk from tidal waters travelling more easily upstream.

Various bypass channels were looked at. Jo suggested that these would be expensive as they would require significant changes to land use to allow for their construction, and they would need significant ongoing maintenance to keep them at their designed capacity.

Overall it appeared as though the raised defence scenarios would offer the strongest benefit cost ratios and have the strongest potential to attract a contribution from government funding.

Jo made clear that no decisions will be made resulting from the Initial Assessment as to whether there is a scheme to reduce River Severn flood risk at any locations in Gloucester – the assessment will provide information at a level of detail suitable to inform discussion going forward. The consultants' final reports will soon be made available to interested parties and the Environment Agency will be providing a briefing note which explains the work, the conclusions and the next steps, together with a link to the reports. (Post meeting note: the reports are now available, and the briefing note is attached).

A number of points were raised and responded to in particular;

1 in 100 events etc is confusing and confidence in it is wearing thin with so many significant events.

Jo accepted that presenting the results based on theoretical floods could be confusing. Using theoretical floods of different flood frequency (return periods) in the modelling is a standard approach to assessment across the country. This gives a consistent way of assessing risk and economic benefits so that comparisons can be made between schemes and funding focussed on where it will provide the greatest benefit.

Had 'what if' scenarios been run, for example if the football club was built? The modelling takes into account the existing situation as its baseline. Developers would carry out their own modelling if required as part of the planning process.

Were any more early warning gauges proposed – they have been useful.

Yes there is a gauge programme but this does not include any more gauges on the Severn currently. Jo can supply more information on request.

Was using the Sharpness Canal looked into to relieve flood waters?

No –The River Severn floodplain is over a mile wide in its lower reaches and a vast volume of water passes through Gloucester in major floods. It is unlikely using the canal would provide significant benefit as the canal already carries water and there would be little extra capacity available during flooding.

Do we know how much money has been saved by schemes built of late?

Jo did not have a figure for this, but such schemes in Gloucester city have protected properties in 2012, 2014 and again recently, for example the Horsbere flood management scheme protects approximately 350 properties, Daniels Brook approximately 200, and Alney Island 60.

Does farming practice influence levels?

Farming practice and land use can affect levels. Discussions are ongoing across the country to encourage good agricultural practice to reduce run-off, so to reduce both pollution and flood risk.

Jo was thanked for her presentation.

#### 4 **Gloucester Bus and Rail Station – highways update.**

Alan Bently from Gloucestershire County Council talked us through the proposals for the bus and rail station. The former has been split from the overall Kings Quarter development as a Phase 1 and is going ahead with the City Council as lead, with funding from the LEP and Infrastructure Fund borrowing. Planning Permission has been secured and work will start later this year. The Kings Quarter Bus Station work is split into two parts – the actual Bus Station which will be let as a Design and Build contract, and the Highways work which will be undertaken through the county council's term contractor.

Alan showed us extracts from the planning application. He confirmed it would be a high quality building with high levels of energy efficiency. It would host a Stagecoach office, toilets and real time information screen.

A new junction at Station Road/Bruton Way (near Asda) will take bus traffic out of the Station Approach junction. Other junctions would be reconfigured and the existing NCP car park will have its vehicle access and exit reversed. The existing Bus Station will continue to operate until the new bus station is available, though Grosvenor House is due to be demolished to free up land for the new building.

The whole project should be complete by the end of 2017 barring any unexpected problems.

Questions were invited.

The opportunity for a better pedestrian route from Great Western Road should be exploited. Plus a route over from Asda

Alan agreed the subway was substandard and made clear that better access from the hospital was being looked at by Network Rail but would be subject to a funding

bid.

The impact of extra traffic along Station Road was raised and whether or not the residents has been consulted. What was the impact of the new traffic light junction and would the levels at the new junction allow it to work. Would cars coming out of Kings walk car park be allowed to go down Clarence street?

Alan informed the Forum that the junction traffic had been modelled and that they hoped to improve signalling all along Bruton way (Bruton Way, Metz way, Station road would function as one junction). Yes there would be consultation prior to the changes coming in for the TRO required, though Alan pointed out before Bruton Way was built it was a main road). The team are also aware of levels and anticipate that detailed design can get around it, and he did expect that private vehicles would be able to go down Clarence Street.

The need for a proper integrated interchange was raised. It was considered that an opportunity had been missed in creating one. The inner ring road was the problem and some sort of flyover or something had to be looked at.

Alan was sympathetic but at this moment in time the money was just not available. He was confident that there would be improvements.

Was there provision for a drop off facility? For example the railway station has short term parking for this as well as taxi provision?

Yes Alan said there was provision for this in the design

Again it was pointed out the junction between the Rail and Bus Stations was the main issue, what had not been raised was how dangerous it was. Are there any figures as to accident rate.

It was re-iterated that there would be improvements for pedestrians though not as radical as many would have liked, but there may be further changes as part of the wider Kings Quarter development.

Will the new Bus Station be open and clean or will it be like some bus stations choked with Diesel fumes. Will bus routes change, will other bus drop off/pick up points change?

It was suggested that the detail could be brought forward for the next meeting. But generally it is the longer distance less frequent services that had more down time use the existing and future bus station. Other services would remain generally as before. The waiting area would be indoors and therefore not affected to any degree by diesel fumes.

## 5 **Future of the Forum**

Meyrick reminded the Forum that Stephen McDonnell was no longer at the authority and that he had not been replaced. As such in future it would become increasingly difficult to provide executive support. A number of options were put forward from closing it down to carrying on with community rather than Council support. It was made clear that the City Council would be able to supply accommodation etc and that Meyrick would for now be able to supply knowledge

**MB to  
set up**

**ACTION**

**meeting**

and understanding as to what was happening at the City and could still liaise with the Chair. It was pointed out that for a number of years it had been an 'outside body' and not a formal forum.

Members of the Forum generally supported the continuation. Stagecoach kindly offered to provide the secretariat for the meeting. Meyrick suggested that he called a small informal meeting to talk through any proposals.

6. **Information Exchange**

Meyrick briefly talked through the Gloucester Air Quality Report.

It was pointed out by Members of the Forum that they believed air quality Gloucester was failing national standards especially in the vicinity of St Oswald's. There was a general discussion about what this meant and how it impacted upon the lives of those living there and what could be done about it.

Meyrick pointed out that the author of the report had now left the authority. Her replacement had only recently started and was not yet qualified. Meyrick made clear it was not within his normal competences but did point out that the report did conclude that there was no need to proceed to a more detailed assessment and the NO2 in particular was a national problems and not one restricted to Gloucester. As he was not competent on these matters he suggested a further discussion with Chair/Vice Chair when more about the issue could be understood.

**MB to  
talk to  
chair**

7. **Dates of Next Meetings**

7<sup>th</sup> July 2016 at 18.00hrs