

METROPOLITAN AREA SPATIAL WORKING GROUP MEETING (MASWG)

Monday 11th March 2019

10am – 12:30pm

Venue: 9 Adelaide, Belfast City Council

Minutes

Attending: Cllr Matt Garrett **Chair** (BCC), Keith Sutherland (BCC), Dermot O’Kane (BCC) Una Lappin **Minutes** (BCC), Leona Maginn (Ards & NDBC), Sharon Mossman (ANBC), Lois Jackson (LCCC), Conor Hughes (LCCC), Donal Rogan (LCCC), Michael Francey (MEABC), Mark Latimer (DfE), Paul Tinney (DfE), Catherine Blease (NIHE), Stephen Semple (NIHE), Suzanne Bagnall (DfI), Alistair Beggs (DfI), Susan Wilkin (DfI), Stephen Wood (SWT) (DfI-Roads) and Robin Totten (Translink).

Apologies: Cllr Cushinan (ANBC), Alderman Leathem (LCCC), Graham Cardwell (Invest NI), Alan McDowell (Ards & NDBC), Alderman Gibson (Ards & NDBC) and Ann McCullough (Ards & NDBC).

| No. | Minutes | Action |
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| 1 | The Chair, Cllr Matt Garrett welcomed everyone and noted the apologies. | |
| 2 | <p>Minutes of the previous meeting on 3rd of December 2018 were noted and agreed.</p> <p><u>Action Points from Previous Meeting</u></p> <p>DfI draft BMTS – exact date for publication of the draft BMTS to be determined</p> <p>SWT discussed the Strategy Publication date is still to be confirmed. He highlighted a number of key elements of the strategy approach and suggested potential dates for different elements with dates; <u>Individual Town Plans – April 2019</u>, <u>BMTS Modelling Report – end of July 2019</u>; <u>Draft BMTS – end of September 2019</u>. He acknowledged some timescales are not completely workable in terms of their relationship to the emerging plans and offered individual face to face meetings to clarify and minimise risks. He indicated that Tom Reid had agreed to contact LCCC and Belfast. KS enquired regarding the governance and the process of consulting and moving the proposed strategies to adoption, In response SWT indicated that there was still to be confirmed and SWT then left the meeting.</p> <p>MASWG ToR – Governance arrangements to be reviewed. Any recommended amendment/update to be tabled for discussion at the next MASWG meeting in March 2019</p> <p>An item on the Agenda to be discussed later.</p> <p>NIHE (a) DfC response to NIHE position on Affordable Housing, once received, to be provided to the group (b) Outworking’s of the Householder Statistics research paper to be distributed to the group once published</p> <p>CB outlined that the statistics had not changed significantly. The Practice Note was discussed and the group was informed that a draft had been sent to DfC. CB discussed whether it would be useful for the Council to contact DfC for clarity on behalf of the group.</p> <p>DfI – Each Council to provide DfI with a copy of their LDP ‘working timetable’</p> <p>An item on the Agenda to be discussed later.</p> | |
| 3 | <p><u>Updates from Councils</u></p> <p><u>BCC</u></p> <p>KS outlined the approach to publication of the comments on the draft Plan Strategy with a standard form, which is ongoing with the website publication and Citizenspace. He updated that BCC is summarising the responses and preparing the necessary papers to submit to DfI and PAC as the next stage in the LDP process. He noted the summaries are all now complete but the more complex initial responses to Housing and other submissions are ongoing. He confirmed the number of submissions being 109 with DfI and others comprising of different elements and the breakdown of the type of reference with 50% online. SM queried the time and resource implications and questioned whether it was a major piece of work to respond to comments and the PAC influence on the format of the information to be provided. DO’K confirmed, the PAC</p> | |

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| | <p>approval emphasised their guidance and requirements in regulations. It was confirmed that there would be 5 months of PAC consideration before the process will move forward. MF queried the number of site specific submissions and was informed there were 3.</p> <p><u>LCCC</u></p> <p>LJ confirmed LCCC are having a final planning policy workshop with elected members, are meeting with key consultees and have had pre-engagement with neighbouring councils. It was noted they have drafted a Consultation and Engagement Strategy (CES) in light of a Sustainable Assessment and it is hoped the Draft Plan Strategy would be published at the end of September. It was further discussed that the CES has been based in engagement with various stakeholders and they would like to engage with Dfl as they see a role for joint engagement with key consultees. A workshop has been arranged to discuss the approach and plan process as a part of the LDP.</p> <p><u>ANDBC</u></p> <p>LM stated their position is still the same. Their Preferred Options Paper sits within the latter half of the time table and they will be publishing soon and bringing forward a new timetable working with PAC and Dfl.</p> <p><u>Ards & NDBC</u></p> <p>SM confirmed they are working with members to get agreement then assessments. The date has not been confirmed yet for Draft Plan Strategy launch but if necessary and, there will need to be a new timetable.</p> <p><u>MEABC</u></p> <p>MF highlighted the impact of the elections. He mentioned they will be engaging with consultees at the end of the month and propose third quarter of 2019.</p> | |
| 4 | <p><u>Updates from Consultees</u></p> <p><u>NIHE</u></p> <p>It was highlighted that one team in NIHE looking at all of the plans across NI. They are currently working on the response to Mid-Ulster. Their priority is to look at the Practice Note once they get the information from DfC.</p> <p><u>Dfl</u></p> <p>SW updated a number of issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The EFDF Act and legislation at the end of March and it is anticipated that there will be an extension for a further 5 - There was a meeting with the PAC to discuss the programme and process prior to the IE and were awaiting a response to a letter that was seeking some clarification. It was noted that once Dfl receive any information/documents they will be circulated for clarification - PAC have offered to hold information sessions for individual councils on general processes. Dfl internally are mapping the whole process to ensure all parties have the same understanding of the approach to consideration of the Plan documents. <p>SM then clarified that the letter to PAC queried the options and potential further information to be introduced in response to representations received and the need for amendments. It was confirmed that once Dfl clarify, they will meet with the councils.</p> <p>DO’K added that the PAC on their role and their focus on the existing guidance for the process. In relation to the Dfl role SW added there ongoing consideration of how it might work and once there is clarity, it will be shared.</p> <p>SB then spoke of the general procedure – submission and IE stage, time for hearing/write up and exploring flexibility. The example of the approach in Wales where additional information may be required without the need for another consultation, and if the steps are not necessary the process can keep moving forward.</p> <p>SM posed a question regarding the potential for streamlining the process of involving PAC at the start of the submission as PAC report back to Dfl and Councils.</p> | |

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| | <p><u>DfE – Invest NI</u></p> <p>ML outlined the DfE continue to engage and had no specific updates at this stage.</p> <p><u>Translink</u></p> <p>RT spoke of the Regional Transport Strategy being Translink’s main focus at the moment. He added the Park and Ride, Rail Link and Goldline and connectivity to major towns and Belfast. He highlighted their aim, this side of the summer, is BMTS however the impact of Brexit and pressure on resource was a challenge.</p> | |
| 5 | <p><u>Role of Group</u></p> <p>There was a detailed discussion of the Terms of Reference of the Group, covering a number of points:</p> <p>KS summarised the process leading up to, the plan going out and the limited scope for change and thematic areas presently within a set process. He added what will be driving the change going forward will be the need to focus the LDP site specific issues and overlapping designations. Dfl queried the role of the group in terms of securing co-operation and agreed areas; CH spoke of the number of groups being set up and being invited to, including Belfast, in LCCC but the boundaries go further. He highlighted the importance regarding site specific stage and going forward.</p> <p>DO’K said that the TOR was now in place for over two years and we had received any request to amend them despite them being on the agenda at the previous meeting. He suggested that the TOR were aligned to the statutory requirements but would be happy to discuss any areas where the group feel that they could be improved. He reminded the group that it does not have decision making authority and any changes of significance would need committee approval by each respective authority.</p> <p>LJ suggested it had become more of a liaison forum with a less formal approach to joint work through issues rather than informing agreements DR spoke of it being a framework for collaboration and Belfast being best placed to comment on its success KS added there is a duty/aim to engage to identify common issues with transparency which was the basis for setting up the group. Furthermore there is no decision making role within the group but solely for engagement purposes, which may be possible later for site specific issues crossing many boundaries.</p> <p>It was noted that all Councils are at different stages and some have more strategic issues from Community Plans to adopt which needs to be reflected and form an important basis for future consideration.</p> <p>SW referred to soundness and levels of engagement and the requirements to consult on a practical level and what can be demonstrated on a practical level when at an IE in front of the PAC.</p> <p>LM suggested another form of engagement not just an update forum</p> <p>DO’K spoke of the duty to cooperate in England and Wales where authorities are often tasked with producing statements of common ground. Very often these document administratively highlight areas where there is no dispute but very often they also highlight large areas of disagreement but are helpful procedurally to identify areas for debate at respective examinations. He advised that this goes over and beyond the requirement in Northern Ireland. He added that individually all teams engage informally at officers level in different councils.</p> <p>The Chair highlighted that the Committee supported engagement with other Councils. He outlined the group has the ability of show that it is working in collaboration with each other and if it sees gaps there is scope to and make recommendations.</p> <p>SW suggested the Dfl could host a session to move this forward. CH suggested it could be dealt with at the SPG as all Councils are all at different stages and it is hard to get agreement. He added the aim and objectives are key. (The next SPG meeting is 21st March.)</p> <p>The capacity of PAC was discussed and the challenge of what was becoming an ever evolving process for the development of new LDPs</p> | Dfl |
| 6 | <p><u>Transport Plans</u></p> <p>SWT provided an update of the BMTS at the beginning of the meeting.</p> | |

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| | <p>KS highlighted the challenges of the continual slippage of the time frames and his concern on the governance side as the BMTS Board have not met in January 2019, as planned.</p> <p>It was noted that Fermanagh had intended to include the Transport Strategy as part of their LDP but this had not been possible.</p> <p>DR stated he is keen and anxious to see an Engagement Strategy coming forward with the Transport Strategy and to have this tabled as soon as possible with realistic timetables.</p> <p>The group discussed the Guidance Dfl paper for Transport within the LDP and whether it was draft or not with the option of providing feedback. LJ queried whether comments can be added and if this is a final document. KS also queried the guidance and the feedback process for engagement before publication. SB confirmed it was the Dfl's understanding that it is the final version with a purpose to assist/advise council.</p> | |
| 7 | <p><u>Timetables</u></p> <p>KS spoke of the timetable being increasingly beyond Council control. He highlighted the cost implications to all council's in relation to the formal changes of timetables.</p> | All |
| 8 | <p><u>AOB</u></p> <p>Nothing added</p> | |
| | <p><u>Action Points</u></p> <p>Based on discussions-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Timetable for different Transport Strategy element, the governance arrangements and proposals for consultations to be confirmed by Dfl. - Update from Dfl in relation to the request to PAC for clarification on IE process. - Councils to confirm Timetables to Dfl - Joint working group to be raised at SPG. | |
| <p>The Chair closed the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance. The next meeting will be in LCCC at the end of June – date to be arranged.</p> | | |