

Environmental & Community Services Select Committee

22 June 2016 – At a meeting of the Select Committee held at 10.00 a.m. at County Hall, Chichester.

Present: Mr Tyler (Chairman)

Mr Barrett-Miles
Mrs Brunsdon*
Mr Circus

Mr G Jones
Mr M Jones**
Mr S Oakley

Mr J Rogers
Mr Whittington

In attendance by invitation: Ms Goldsmith (Leader), Mr O'Brien (Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport) and Mr Barling (Cabinet Member for Residents' Services)

*Arrived at 10.20am

**Arrived at 11.10am

Apologies for absence were received from Dr Dennis, Mrs Phillips and Mr Whittington.

Declarations of Interests

30. In accordance with the Code of Conduct, the following personal interests were declared:

31. Mr G Jones as a Member of the Executive Task and Finish Group for the Future of Fire and Rescue in relation to Impact of Future Fire and Rescue 2.

32. Mr Rae as a Member of the Executive Task and Finish Group for the Future of Fire and Rescue in relation to Impact of Future Fire and Rescue 2.

Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee

33. The Committee considered the minutes of the last meeting and agreed that: -

Mr Circus gave his apologies and was not absent on 11 May 2016.

34. Resolved – that subject to the amendment above, the minutes of the Environmental and Community Services Select Committee held on 11 May 2016 be approved as a correct record, and that they be signed by the Chairman.

Cabinet Member's Response to the Committee's Recommendations on the Review of Community Highways Volunteers Scheme.

35. The Committee noted the Cabinet Member's response to the Committee's recommendations on the Review of Community Highways Volunteers Scheme (copy appended to signed minutes).

Impact of Future Fire and Rescue 2

36. The Committee considered a report by Executive Director of Communities

& Public Protection and Chief Fire Officer and Director of Public Protection and Assistant Chief Fire Officer (copy appended to signed minutes) which outlined the 'actual' outcomes against the 'expected' outcomes for each of the 8 FFR2 proposals post implementation on the 1st April 2015.

37. Lee Neale, Executive Director of Communities and Public Protection and Chief Fire Officer; Steve Harrod, Strategic Group Manager, Fire & Rescue Service and Fiona Hargreaves, Strategic Risk Team, Fire & Rescue Service, introduced the report.

38. The Committee made comments including those that follow. It:

- Gave thanks to the West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service for an overall positive outcome to the implementations and welcomed that the effect on operations hadn't been significant and that public safety continued to be maintained.
- Questioned if the reduction in pay for some staff had affected morale or performance. An officer advised that some staff had been affected by low morale where an allowance had been removed resulting in a reduction in pay. Principal leadership teams have been visiting stations to get feedback on the new system and although boosting morale is challenging, there has been no detriment to the service provided.
- Queried whether operational support services can still offer the same level of support after the loss of 7.6 posts through redundancies. An officer advised that the biggest impact has been on station administrators, with the onus now on fire officers to deal with enquiries to the stations.
- Welcomed the flooding support for communities but queried what was being done to future proof for weather related incidents and how training of the new recruits was progressing. An officer advised that there has been investment in training, kit and appliances to deal with such issues. Two new specialist vehicles for both Midhurst and Storrington were being deployed next month. These have greater carrying capacity and will also allow better access to off road sites. In- house training has also been provided for the first time for new recruits and is due to be completed by the end of August.

39. Resolved – That the report be noted and commended.

Highways Transition Fund – Prioritisation Criteria

40. The Committee considered a report by the Interim Executive Director Residents' Services and Interim Director Highways and Transport (copy appended to signed minutes) which outlined the development and delivery of a £5m 2 year package 'Footway Improvement Programme' allocated as part of the Transitional Fund.

41. Peter Smith, Better Roads Programme and Guy Bell, Head of Highway Engineering introduced the report.

42. The Committee made comments including those that follow. It:

- Welcomed the investment in footways and the value for money sought in delivery of Year 1 of the programme; and noted the importance of engagement with members, customers and representative groups in shaping the programme delivery for Year 2.
- Queried how the new Footway Network Structure (FNS) will feed into the delivery of the programme. An officer advised the new FNS will be a more proactive and detailed analysis of condition, set up and structure. The emphasis is about improving the network whilst ensuring the balance of accident hotspots with overall network improvements.
- Queried if spending of allocated funds for the programme was subject to a time limit. An officer advised that there is currently a 2 year window for spend with yet no indication that there will be slippage to go beyond that; but the expectation is that the programme will be delivered within the 2 year period.
- Queried the cost of administration and consultation research against the spend for executing works. An officer advised the administration, communications and project management costs would account for no more than £100,000 each year. The public communication and method of customer feedback postcards used will be similar to the Better Roads Programme.

43. Resolved – That the Committee supports the criteria and strategic approach to investing the Transitional Grant funding in the Footway Improvement Programme.

Review of Community Support Teams

44. The Committee considered a report by Report by Executive Director Residents' Services and Director of Highways and Transport (copy appended to signed minutes) which outlined the withdrawal of funding to support the finance of the Community Support Teams and the proposal to pursue other arrangements for the provision of the activities currently undertaken by them.

45. Jonathan Ullmer, Head of Highways Operations, introduced the report.

46. The Committee made comments including those that follow. It:

- Welcomed the active engagement with communities, but queried what level of collaborative working and financial support would be offered by the County Council to local communities and groups encouraged to take up the responsibility of works. An officer advised that the intention is to empower local communities by actively working with parishes, district and borough councils and community groups with the use of training,

equipment provision and joint working. The amount of financial funding will be determined once there are expressions of interest.

- Raised concerns over the sustainability and continuity of volunteers and whether Health and Safety regulations may impact their involvement. An officer advised that due to safety issues any work carried out on high speed roads would always be subject to traffic management and therefore not carried out by volunteers. The expectation is that their work will contribute towards the aesthetics of a community's neighbourhood, while the County Council will still carry out its statutory responsibilities towards standard works and continue with any enforcement required towards landowners or other accountable parties.
- Raised concerns that there could be inconsistency if resource issues prevented some communities from taking up the offer. An officer advised that there isn't a one size fits all approach and the aspiration is to have proactive involvement with all parties. Any works classed as being a safety defect will always be acted upon by the County Council and where necessary enforcement will be part of the process.

47. Mr Circus made the following proposal, seconded by Mr M Jones which the Committee considered: -

That the Committee does not support the proposal to pursue alternative arrangements for the provision of the activities currently being undertaken by the Community Support Teams.

48. A vote was held and the proposal was lost.

49. Resolved – That the Committee supports the proposal to pursue alternative arrangements for the provision of the activities currently being undertaken by the Community Support Teams with a request that a report be brought back to the Committee in 12 months' time to see the effects of the proposal.

Review of the 3in1 Card Young Persons Travel Scheme

50. The Committee Report by Executive Director, Residents' Services and Director of Highways & Transport (copy appended to signed minutes) which outlined the proposed way forward for the 3in1 scheme, following the recent consultation.

51. Bill Leath, Transport Bureau Manager and David Crockford, Team Leader, Mainstream and Passenger Transport introduced the report.

52. The Committee made comments including those that follow. It:

- Queried what products the bus companies propose to offer in relation to fare discounts and what they deemed to be reasonable notice to deliver these. An officer advised that bus companies have been made aware of the proposal since last year, some larger companies already offer their

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own products, but time will be needed to put new products in place after the decision has been made.

- Raised concerns over the proposed timings of the cessation of the card, as many post-16 students already signed up for colleges in September may have done so on the basis that they will get financial help with transport for the full academic year. Students at free schools and faith schools were also thought to be at risk from financial impact. An officer advised that the cost of running the scheme until the end of the academic year would be £500,000 and if more students took up the scheme the cost to the County Council would increase. Although there will be a degree of impact on these students, free schools are still protected by the same statutory duties regarding school transport.
- Raised concerns over transitional arrangements and that the risks, mitigations and proposals had not been fully investigated. An officer advised that specifics about the transition arrangements had not been made in order to have flexible and local arrangements as appropriate. The County Council is currently engaged with schools and headteachers to gain clarity over potential figures.
- Expressed disappointment that the proposals go against the previous recommendations of the Committee, including the risk to low income families. John O'Brien, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport advised that the County Council has had to review affordability and value for money and that now the consultation had ended and the facts presented, a decision could be made.

53. Mrs Brunsdon made the following proposal, seconded by Mr Barrett-Miles which the Committee considered: -

54. The committee remain unconvinced by the evidence provided that the cessation of the 3in1 card would be in the best interests of West Sussex residents. The Committee recommends that the item is deferred to allow officers to work up reports to bring back to Committee:

- 1). To consider in more detail the transitional arrangement that will be put in place and the type and level of mitigation possible with bus companies, and draw up proposals to form part of the ongoing negotiation;
- 2). To provide a more detailed report on the risk/benefit analysis on the financial impact to withdraw the service from residents.
- 3). To provide more detail on alternative services provided by other county council run services.

55. A vote was held and the proposal was carried.

56. Resolved – That the Committee recommends that the item is deferred to allow officers to work up more reports to bring back to the Committee:

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- 1). To consider in more detail the transitional arrangement that will be put in place and the type and level of mitigation possible with bus companies, and draw up proposals to form part of the ongoing negotiation;
- 2). To provide a more detailed report on the risk/benefit analysis on the financial impact to withdraw the service from residents.
- 3). To Provide more detail on alternative services provided by other county council run services.

Appointment of Business Planning Group Members

57. The Committee agreed that as all members of the BPG were not present, that the reappointment of the BPG be deferred until the next meeting.

58. Resolved - The Committee agreed to defer the appointment of five members to the Business Planning Group (BPG) for 2016-17, until the next meeting of the Committee on 8 July 2016.

Forward Plan of Key Decisions

59. The Committee considered the Forward Plan July to October 2016 (copy appended to signed minutes).

60. Resolved – That the Forward Plan be noted.

Date of the Next Meeting

61. The Committee noted that its next scheduled meeting will take place on 8 July 2016 at 10.30am at County Hall, Chichester.

Bold Ideas Update

62. The Committee considered a report by Executive Director Residents' Services (copy appended to signed minutes) which provided an update on progress on the Bold Ideas, and previewed the forthcoming decision for the Bognor Regis Bold Idea.

63. Carolyn Carr, Team Lead, Economic Growth Team, John Stevens, Programme Director, Charlotte Weller, Countryside Services Manager and Anne De Sausmarez, Lead professional introduced the report.

64. The Committee made comments including those that follow. It:

- Requested a review of bye laws where cycling is restricted in some coastal areas in respect of the Beautiful Outdoors campaign. An officer offered to discuss specific locations with members. Any access over and above those permitted on the Public Rights of Way would be at the landowner's discretion.

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- Questioned the approach to evidence of an increase in visitor numbers to West Sussex following on from the media campaign. An officer advised that as the Committee had been previously informed, a range of measures of the impact of the campaign will be applied, including a campaign economic impact assessment by Tourism South East, with results available in the autumn.
- Raised concerns over investment costs for the skills and workforce activities of the 'Health and Life Sciences' Bold Idea as the benefit won't be seen for at least 2 or 3 years, and how the County Council will help former residents now studying outside of West Sussex to gain internships or work experience back within the County. An officer advised that investment costs mostly compromise officer time, but that direct evidence such as placements, internships and opportunities are expected to be produced through higher education establishments and businesses.
- Queried how much we are spending on bidding for EU funding in regards to the 'Do More with Gatwick' Bold Idea. An officer advised the expectation is that an additional officer resource will be brought in for European level funding, 70% funded from pooled business rates and that the role would be wide reaching across the County Council and available European funding from the current programme to 2019.

Exclusion of Press and Public

65. Resolved - That under Section 100(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I, of Schedule 12A, of the Act by virtue of the paragraph specified under the item and that, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption of that information outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Summary of Matters discussed in the absence of the Press and Public

Bold Ideas Update

(Exempt, paragraph 3, Financial or business affairs of any person (including the authority))

The Committee scrutinised the Bognor Regis Bold Idea and the Health and Life Sciences Bold Idea and made recommendations to the Cabinet Member.