

Environmental & Community Services Select Committee

13 March 2015 – At a meeting of the Select Committee held at 10.30 a.m. at County Hall, Chichester.

Present: Mr Tyler (Chairman)

Mrs Brunsdon
Mr Circus
Dr Dennis

Mr G Jones
Mr M Jones
Mr S Oakley

Mrs Phillips
Mr J Rogers
Mr Whittington

In attendance by invitation: Mr Montyn (Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport)

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Barrett-Miles and Mr Barnard

Declarations of Interests

169. No interests were declared

Minutes of the 25 February Meeting

170. Resolved – that the minutes of the Environmental and Community Services Select Committee held on 25 February 2015 be approved as a correct record, and that they be signed by the Chairman.

Part I minutes of the joint meeting between the Environmental & Community Services Select Committee and the Performance & Finance Select Committee held on 27 February 2015

171. Resolved – That the Part 1 minutes of the joint meeting between the Environmental & Community Services Select Committee and the Performance and Finance Select Committee held on 27 February 2015 be confirmed as a correct record.

Part II minutes of the joint meeting between the Environmental & Community Services Select Committee and the Performance & Finance Select Committee held on 27 February 2015

172. The Committee agreed that as they had no comments on the minutes it was not necessary to enter Part II to discuss their content.

173. Resolved – That the Part II minutes of the joint meeting between the Environmental & Community Services Select Committee and the Performance and Finance Select Committee held on 27 February 2015 be confirmed as a correct record.

Cabinet Member's Response to the Committee's Recommendations on the Draft Response to the Airports Commission Consultation

174. Resolved - That the Committee noted the Cabinet Member's response to the

Committee's recommendations on the Draft Response to the Airports Commission Consultation (copy appended to signed minutes)

Integrated Works Programme 2015/2016

175. The Committee considered a report by the Director of Highways and Transport and Interim Executive Director of Residents' Services (copy appended to signed minutes)

176. Geoff Mee, Interim Executive Director of Residents' Services and Robert McLoughlin, Asset Management Team Manager, introduced the report which gave an overview of the proposed Integrated Works Programme (IWP) 2015/16.

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

- Welcomed the Challenge Fund bid but queried when the outcome would be known, and if the bid, be unsuccessful, where the additional funds to address footway works would come from. An officer advised that the outcome of the bid is due to be announced before the end of this financial year. If unsuccessful, £1.2 million can be diverted from the Better Roads programme towards footpaths; in addition to the £2 million already set aside in the budget for next year.
- Queried the source of the £2.5 million capital funding needed if the bid was successful, noting that only £1.5 million had been set aside in the Better Roads Programme 2015/16 for this use. An officer advised that the additional £1 million can be taken from the 2016/17 and 2017/18 programme and that, as there is no guarantee that the full bid will be successful, the Asset plan can be recast once definite funds have been agreed.
- Raised concerns over West Sussex Highways reinstatement standards, monitoring and whether national standards are being met; as some techniques of patching that many utility companies currently use can cause faster deterioration. An officer advised that although utility companies do have a right to dual use under the road, their methodology is sometimes to a lower standard than other methods that can be used. Highways do acknowledge that this is an issue and that national standards could be taken on board, which can be discussed further with the Director of Highways and Transport. The new inspection regime provides more people on the ground to carry out checks, and fines will be issued where necessary, via the new permit scheme. During the agreed warranty period and where necessary, companies will be required to return and ensure proper repairs. Each Local Highways officer will be held accountable to monitor their respective areas and all types of contractors are now required to display their licenses.

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- Raised concerns about the level of long-term investments in relation to the deterioration of the Highways network and queried the durability of current laying techniques, surface dressings and other materials that do not promote a long life span. Reassurances were also sought that Members' concerns over local roads in their areas would be fed into the on-going survey.
- Queried how Highways inspect and prioritise footways schemes proposed for improvements, and what inspection regime is used in addition to visual inspections. An officer advised that surveys and inspections are carried out both monthly and annually, with the use of machine-based surveys to measure cracking and roughing on roads. The results, along with additional survey data work, are then fed into a strategic plan of priority repairs. Visual inspections will continue to be carried out within the new Highways structure of locally based teams, so there will be clearer accountability.
- Queried to what extent are planned works by other bodies are taken into consideration when scoping the work programme i.e. gas and water utility companies, and liaison with district and borough councils. An officer advised that, in terms of planned works, there is a co-ordinated approach which encourages partnership working with local members and other local authorities. Aside from any emergency work, with regards to resurfacing or reconstruction works, the County Council has the right to specify the time they be carried out. The new permit scheme ensures that utility companies have to apply to open up the road for works.
- Queried what happens when a scheme involves Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) and whether Highways work in conjunction with other bodies, in the event that such a scheme is reliant on other sources of funding i.e. developer funding. An officer advised that as such a scheme would have been generated by a County Local Committee (CLC) or Highways, it is likely that a CPO will be justified and in such instances Property and Legal services will undertake the task. Co-ordination with other funding sources and bodies should be carried out in parallel.
- Welcomed the highlighting of central drainage improvements in the scheme.
- Raised concerns that the CLCs had agreed the priorities, but a number of schemes put forward by the CLCs had not made it onto the list. A breakdown of priorities per CLC was requested and reassurances were sought that Highways can guarantee the work can be delivered from the list of schemes, once funding and approval has been secured. An officer advised that build-ready priority engineering schemes were incorporated within the draft programme for 2015/16 and the supporting draft

programme for 2016/17 and beyond, the latter of which remains subject to on-going review which includes feasibility and engineering assessments. Officers agreed to circulate information indicating programme details for CLC priorities according to the respective CLC areas. This will be provided following approval of the works programme and completion of the on-going review.

- Queried to what extent the list of schemes is complete. An officer advised that the list is considered dynamic and subject to change, as in any given year money may need to be diverted to priorities and emergencies. Extra schemes will be looked at if necessary.
- Queried why the consultation was undertaken over the Christmas and New Year holiday period, resulting in a low response rate. An officer advised that a longer consultation window could have been provided, but not without delaying implementation of the 2015/16 programme.
- Raised concerns that the outcome of the general election taking place this year would affect funding. An officer advised that the Government set out a five-year programme for Highways authorities so the outcome of the election will not affect funding. As West Sussex Highways have a sound asset register and many skilled staff, any bid for further funding from the programme i.e. the innovation fund, is likely to meet the eligibility criteria of the Government of the time.

178. Resolved –

1. That the Committee supports the amended Integrated Works Programme (IWP) 2015/16 to be put forward for approval.
2. That the Committee acknowledges that the Director of Highways and Transport may be authorised to adjust the IWP during 2015/16 to account for any change in priority arising as a result of emergencies or other unforeseen circumstances, in consultation with the Cabinet Member. Local Members and County Local Chairman will be kept informed of any such proposed changes in their area.
3. That the current detail in the 2016/17 IWP future works, its on-going development, and the need for this to be updated as circumstances change, is noted.
4. That the Cabinet Member highlights the authority's concerns around reinstatement at a national level, and keeps the Committee informed of the outcome.

Business Planning Group Report

179. The Committee considered a report by the Chairman of the Business Planning Group (copy appended to the signed minutes).

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180. Resolved – That the Committee endorses the contents of the report and particularly the Committee's Work Programme for 2015/16, revised to reflect the Business Planning Group's (BPG's) discussions.

With a request that the following be considered by the BPG:

- Bus subsidies - A review of impact, community response and of any areas of concern following implementation of the most recent changes.
- Pagham Harbour – A review of the management by the Royal Society for the protection of birds (RSPB) taken over from West Sussex County Council in 2012.

Forward Plan of Key Decisions

181. The Committee considered the Forward Plan April to July 2015 (copy appended to signed minutes).

182. Resolved – That the Forward Plan be noted.

Date of the Next Meeting

183. The Committee noted that its next scheduled meeting will take place on 10 June 2015 at 10.30 a.m. at County Hall, Chichester.

The meeting ended at 11.58am

Chairman