

Environmental & Community Services Select Committee

14 May 2014 – At a meeting of the Select Committee held at 10.30 am at County Hall, Chichester.

Present:

Mr Barrett-Miles	Mr G Jones	Mr J Rogers (Vice Chairman)
Mrs Brunsdon	Mr M Jones	Mr Tyler (Chairman)
Mr Circus	Mr R Oakley	Mr Whittington
Dr Dennis	Mr S Oakley	

In attendance by invitation:

- Mr Barnard (Cabinet Member for Residents Services)
- Mr Montyn (Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport)
- Mr Rae (Deputy Cabinet Member for Residents Services)

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Mrs Phillips

Declarations of Interest

1. The following interests were declared: -

- Mr J Rogers declared a prejudicial interest in respect of item 5 (Public and stakeholder consultation arrangements for the West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service, Future Fire & Rescue Service Programme (Phase 2 - 2015/16)) as a member of the Executive Task & Finish Group that helped develop the proposals in the consultation document
- Mr G Jones declared a prejudicial interest in respect of item 5 (Public and stakeholder consultation arrangements for the West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service, Future Fire & Rescue Service Programme (Phase 2 - 2015/16)) as a member of the Executive Task & Finish Group that helped develop the proposals in the consultation document and personal interests in items 2b (Part I Minutes of joint meeting held on 1 May 2014) and 13 (Part II minutes of joint meeting held on 1 May 2014) as having a family member employed by the waste company in relation to the Waste Strategy and the Materials Resource Management Contract item.
- Mr Barrett-Miles declared a personal interest in item 6 (Strategic Transport Investment Programme – Approval of Prioritised Schemes 2014/15) as a member of the Burgess Hill Strategic Planning Group
- Mr Tyler declared a personal interest in item 6 (Strategic Transport Investment Programme – Approval of Prioritised Schemes 2014/15) as a member of Arun District Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 28 March 2014

2. Duncan Barratt, Community & Economic Development Manager, updated the Committee on the issue raised by Mr Whittington on communication problems between Coast to Capital and town/parish councils telling the Committee that: -

- Coast to Capital had undertaken considerable consultation with a range of partners, including local authorities, on its Strategic Economic Plan. There had been open invitation events and information on the Internet.
 - The draft Strategic Economic Plan included proposals from local authorities
 - There would be further consultation by districts and borough councils, as major growth locations develop
 - Coast to Capital had responded to individual Parish Council requests
3. Mr Whittington reported that Coast to Capital had still not engaged with three parish councils in his area.

ACTION: Duncan Barratt to take this up with Coast to Capital

4. Resolved – That the minutes of the Environmental & Community Services Select Committee meeting held on 28 March 2014 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 1 May 2014

5. Resolved – That the minutes of the joint meeting between the Environmental & Community Services Select Committee and the Performance and Finance Select Committee held on 1 May 2014 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

Cabinet Member Response to the Committee's recommendation on 26 February 2014 on the Review of Parking Charges

6. It was noted that the response incorrectly referred to the Cabinet Member for Policy & Resources instead of the Performance & Finance Select Committee.
7. Resolved – That the Committee notes the response.

Cabinet Member Response to the Committee's recommendation on 28 March 2014 on the Delegation of Decisions on Classification of County Roads

8. Resolved – That the Committee notes the response.

Public and stakeholder consultation arrangements for the West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service, Future Fire & Rescue Service Programme (Phase 2 - 2015/16)

9. The Committee considered a report by the County Fire Officer and Director for Stronger Communities (copy appended to the signed minutes) which was introduced by Gavin Watts, who spoke to the Committee about the proposals. He told the Committee that the West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service (WSFRS) was attending fewer fires and road traffic collisions (RTCs) and needed to adapt and change. The service was being trained to deal with other problems, such as flooding, and wanted to work with partners on other community safety issues. He emphasized that the decrease in fires was partly due to the prevention work carried out by WSFRS. Mr Watts highlighted the following from the proposals: -

10. **Proposal 1:** Removal of 2nd immediate response fire engine from Horsham and upgrade 1st fire engine at Littlehampton to immediate response

- Moving an immediate response fire engine from Horley to Horsham was always known to be an interim measure
- The location of fire engines was based on immediate risk and risk across the whole county taking into account that RTCs were spread more widely than fires
- Littlehampton fire station was being upgraded as its location made it ideally suited to be hold one of the eight immediate response fire engines needed to cover the county

11. **Proposal 2:** Change of shift system at immediate response stations

- Extra staff would cover holidays and sickness in the more flexible 'Group Crewing' model
- Engine availability would not change

12. **Proposal 3:** Removal of 2nd fire engines at Storrington, Midhurst and Petworth

- The three stations were manned by retained staff with two fire engines and a four-wheel drive vehicle each – the 2nd fire engines were under-used due to the general drop in demand and were not available as much as the 1st fire engines
- There would be no reduction in staff

13. **Proposal 4:** Removal of retained unit and 3rd fire engine at Crawley

- There had been very little demand for the 3rd fire engine at Crawley

14. **Proposal 5:** Change in contractual arrangements for full time staff at Shoreham, East Grinstead, Haywards Heath and Burgess Hill

- The reduced amount of time staff at these stations had spent on attending incidents had allowed them to carry out community safety work – this will continue with fewer staff. Engine availability would remain the same
- The staff would be supported by a 'pool' of at least 16 others
- The variable crew allowances would be removed, saving money equivalent to eight full-time posts

15. **Proposal 6:** Increase our resilience and response for flooding and other severe weather events

- There would be improvements to training and equipment so that staff could respond better to incidents

16. **Proposal 7:** Review of support services and managerial levels

- This review would be on-going

17. **Proposal 8:** Utilise additional trained staff to improve operational resilience

- Trained office staff could operate in the frontline if required

18. Francis Bishop, Fire Brigades Union (FBU), made the following points: -

- The FBU supported the upgrade of Littlehampton fire station
- The FBU was concerned that the reduced number of staff per watch might mean there could be times when there were not enough staff available due to sickness, or lead to more overtime (and therefore costs), but it was willing to work with management to find a suitable system using fewer staff
- The FBU felt that it was wrong to remove fire engines from Crawley, Horsham, Storrington, Midhurst and Petworth at the same time
- The FBU felt that the changes in proposal 5 would mean prevention work would suffer
- The FBU did not accept that the proposals would not affect the daily service, but thought gaps would be created
- The FBU urged the Council to think again and make savings elsewhere

19. Tristan Ashby, Retained Fire-fighters Union (RFU), made the following points:-

- The RFU's main concerns were over the removal of fire engines from Storrington, Midhurst and Petworth, and the change to the staffing system in Littlehampton
- The RFU did not support upgrading Littlehampton fire station as the call-outs there had gone down as elsewhere
- The RFU thought that the proposals went against recommendations in the Knight report to increase the use of retained personnel
- The RFU questioned WSFRS' commitment to retained fire-fighters pointing out that recruitment details on the WSFRS website were out of date

20. Summary of responses to Members' questions and comments: -

- There was a system in place that ensured that the nearest fire engines were those sent to incidents
- A network of fire stations covered the county sufficiently and meant that fire engines were put to optimum use
- Cross-border collaboration happened in the case of larger incidents
- In 2012/13, the retained fire engine at Crawley only attended 53 out of 1,406 incidents, full-time fire engines attend the rest
- Population growth had been considered when developing the proposals which were intended to be flexible
- Worthing was the only high risk area in the county – WSFRS targeted higher response times there
- WSFRS was confident that it still had the capacity to deal with any major incidents at Gatwick in conjunction with Gatwick Airport's Fire Service, which it trained
- WSFRS recognised that strong management would be needed to implement the proposed new staffing arrangements that allowed for flexibility whilst retaining a buffer to cover holidays/sickness – the buffer would be helped by the staff pool and off-duty staff who could be called upon to help out
- Interaction between watches already took place so team cohesion should not be a problem
- The WSFRS had a legal duty to respond to fires and RTCs

Agenda Item No. 2

- The WSFRS could charge for attending some incidents, such as chemical spillages and repeat calls to fire alarms, but might not charge for animal rescue
- It was harder to keep retained fire fighters than to recruit them
- WSFRS had taken charge of 64 community development staff which would help develop partnership working and strengthen preventative work

21. Gavin Watts spoke to the Committee about the public consultation saying that: -

- Consultation would take place between 2 June and 22 August
- Six County Local Committees had asked WSFRS to attend one of their meetings
- Open days were planned
- WSFRS would respond to requests for information events from district and borough councils
- An independent body would consult all WSFRS staff

22. Summary of responses to Members' questions and comments: -

- During the consultation period, the public would be made aware that the service's Integrated Risk Management Plan and risk map would be reviewed to identify any problems arising as a result of the proposed changes
- The consultation document would be available in County Council premises with public access, libraries, GP surgeries, fire stations and online

23. Resolved – That the Committee asks the Cabinet Member for Residents Services to: -

- i. look at the cost-effectiveness of retained fire-fighters and how to retain them
- ii. ensure that the public is made aware of the process for reviewing the Integrated Risk Management Plan
- iii. ensure that the public is made aware that the consultation is on proposals, not decisions
- iv. ensure, as far as possible, that the number of Open Days held are equal in the north and south of the county

Strategic Transport Investment Programme – Approval of Prioritised Schemes 2014/15

- The Strategic Transport Investment Programme (STIP) was the method for identifying and developing strategic highways and transport improvements alongside local development
- Work on nine priority schemes identified in 2013 had helped to secure indicative financial contributions of £10.5m towards two major schemes in West Sussex
- The priority schemes from 2013 were submitted to the Local Economic Partnership for inclusion in its Strategic Economic Plan, which contained transport packages of different sizes
- Consultation had taken place with stakeholders on the long list of schemes, which was then prioritised based on the methodology adopted by the Local Transport Body which is based on Department for Transport Transport scheme appraisal guidance
- The long list had been reduced to ten schemes (in addition to the nine from 2013) for which feasibility studies would be required

25. Summary of responses to Members' questions and comments: -

- Transport packages were a mixture of different size schemes focused on an area or theme
- Schemes would be considered by County Local Committees before implementation
- The needs of cyclists would be considered in all schemes. All schemes were expected to contribute to improving the network of cycle infrastructure - the type of cycle infrastructure provided would depend on the nature of the scheme or package being developed
- The A22 corridor improvement proposed is the 'do minimum' option identified in the 2012 East Grinstead Traffic Management Study stage 3 report by Atkins
- The lack of progress with the Centurion Way extension would be investigated - this work is being led by the South Downs National Park Authority
- The Arundel Chord was included as a result of comments during stakeholder engagement – the rail industry's views on this had not changed and it was unlikely to be taken-up, even as a diversionary route, as the costs are unlikely to outweigh the benefits
- The number of priorities seemed large, but some schemes might slip or be cancelled
- Soft measures were included in transport packages and where this is the case, this would be part of any local consultation
- The amount of money available from the Community Infrastructure Levy would be subject to decisions made by district/borough councils

26. Resolved – That the Committee: -

- i. Supports the prioritisation of schemes
- ii. Agrees that the new priorities should be taken forward for development

Statement by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport in answer to a question from the Chairman of the Committee asking why the Council had not responded to Gatwick Airport's Consultation on Expansion

27. Pieter Montyn, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, explained that the Council had not responded to Gatwick Airport's Consultation as it would be responding to the Howard Davies consultation. The Committee would be able to express its views on the Council's proposed response to this consultation at the appropriate time.

28. There was disappointment from some Committee members that the Council had not responded to the Gatwick Airport's Consultation - Mr Montyn pointed out that it was open to members to respond as individuals.

Business Planning Group Report

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

30. Resolved – That the Committee endorses the contents of the report and particularly the Committee's Work Programme for 2014/15, revised to reflect the Business Planning Group's discussions.

Review of Business Planning group Membership

31. The Committee reviewed the membership of its Business Planning Group.

32. Resolved – That the Committee agrees the membership of its Business Planning Group remains as follows: Dr Dennis, Mr S Oakley, Mrs Phillips, Mr J Rogers and Mr Tyler (Chairman).

Forward Plan of Key Decisions

33. The Committee considered extracts from the Forward Plan for April to July and was updated on the following: -

- No further information was available regarding the arrangements for sustainable drainage systems approving bodies or the Internal Drainage Boards with regard to the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy
- Consultation on Public Rights of Way Inspections would be wider than just the Rural Champion and the West Sussex Local Access Forum

34. Resolved – That the Committee notes the Forward Plan.

Date of Next Meeting

35. The next meeting of the Committee will be on 11 June 2014 at 10.30 a.m. at County Hall, Chichester .

Part II

Exclusion of Press and Public

36. 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.

Minutes (Part II) of the joint meeting with the Performance & Finance Select Committee held on 1 May 2014

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

37. The Minutes (Part II) of the meeting held on 1 May 2014 were agreed.

The meeting ended at 13.15

Chairman.