

Environmental & Community Services Select Committee

20 November 2013 – At a meeting of the Select Committee held at 10.30 am at County Hall, Chichester.

Present:

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

In attendance by invitation:

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

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Mr Whittington

At the start of the meeting, a minute's silence was observed in memory of the Committee's former Chairman, Mr De Mierre.

Part I

Declarations of Interest

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

- Mr A Barrett-Miles in respect of item 6 (Future West Sussex Commissioning Intentions and Plans) as a member of the Burgess Hill Strategic Planning Group
- Mr P Montyn in respect of item 8 (Review Parking Charges) as a member of Chichester District Council
- Mr R Oakley in respect of item 6 (Future West Sussex Commissioning Intentions and Plans) as an employee of Network Rail and item 8 (Review Parking Charges) as a member of Worthing Borough Council
- Mr S Oakley in respect of item 7 (Review of the West Sussex Local Flood Risk Management Strategy Consultation) and item 8 (Review Parking Charges) as a member of Chichester District Council and Tangmere Parish Council
- Mr J Rogers in respect of item 8 (Review Parking Charges) as a member of Worthing Borough Council

Minutes

69. At the meeting on 25 September, it was requested that the Committee consider bus subsidies and the performance figures for the number of people killed or seriously injured on the county's roads. This was discussed at the Business Planning Group meeting on 15 October. The group decided that Bus subsidies would be dealt with at the January meeting under the item on Public and Concessionary Transport Policy and that performance on Killed and Seriously Injured (KSIs) would be added to the Committee's Work Programme to be dealt with at a date to be confirmed.

70. Resolved – That the minutes of the Environmental & Community Services Select Committee meeting held on 25 September 2013 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

Responses from the Cabinet Member for Highways & Transport

71. The Committee considered responses from the Cabinet Member for Highways & Transport (copies appended to the signed minutes) regarding the response from E.ON to the Committee's recommendations at the 12 July meeting, and the Committee's recommendations regarding Aviation and Gatwick Airport: Comments for the Airports Commission, made at its 25 September meeting.

72. The Cabinet Member for Highways & Transport said if a further response from E.ON did not arrive before Christmas, he would remind E.ON that one was due.

73. Resolved – That the Committee notes the responses of the Cabinet Member for Highways & Transport.

Future West Sussex Commissioning Intentions and Plans

74. The Committee considered a report by the Director of Communities Commissioning (copy appended to the signed minutes) which was introduced by Duncan Barratt, Community & Economic Development Manager, who gave a PowerPoint presentation (copy appended to the signed minutes) making the following points: -

- Performance indicators had been updated in the presentation following comments at Members sessions
- The commissioning intentions would have a big impact on the economy of West Sussex and would involve working with many partners to achieve outcomes

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

- The commissioning intentions and plans aimed to put into place a framework for priorities to be developed where the biggest difference could be made with the resources available
- The ambition was to help build a strong and diverse economy to reflect the nature of the county
- There were many other documents behind the report that contained the detail of how the proposed activities could be progressed
- Train journey times from the county into London would be looked at in conjunction with the Local Economic Partnership (LEP), but faster services might lead to more people working outside of the county
- The Council had a key role to play in the transport issues that affected all organisations in the county
- When census data became available, it would provide more information on the business destinations people wanted to travel to from Gatwick
- The Local Transport Body had identified high priority issues to the department of Transport and worked closely with the LEPs to discuss further priorities for the area. **ACTION:** The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport agreed to circulate the list of priorities to the Committee when it had been finalised

- The Council was working with the Learning Service on extending apprenticeships, but funding was an issue – some came from a national grant, but this was not enough to cover all costs
- The council was investing in broadband across the county and the need for this investment would be identified in the Strategic Economic Plan. £6m had come from the Government and had been used to pay for a contract with BT that should deliver the required service
- The Council had many partners with similar agendas, so work aligned – the challenge was to work together in the most effective way
- Engaging with planning authorities over new housing sites would be key to ensure adequate infrastructure was included in developments
- New developments should include affordable housing so that people could live near where they work.
- The Committee had the following concerns: -
 - There appeared to be too much dependency on jobs relating to Gatwick airport
 - The standard of roads and public transport in the county was not high enough
 - That the report did not fully identify commissioning priorities but, at present, represents a list of aspirations
 - There was no plan B if national economic growth faltered
 - The report lacked detail on commuter movements in and out of the county, how the intentions would be achieved, how strategic sites would be progressed, a time frame, quick wins, and prioritisation
 - That the Plans contained little detail

76. Resolved – That the Committee suggests that

- i. 'Commissioning Intentions' should read 'Commissioning Aspirations'
- ii. The document should not state that the County is currently "well connected", as this is not the case
- iii. Greater emphasis is placed on creating more affordable housing, and the associated infrastructure.
- iv. Too much reliance is placed upon Gatwick for future economic growth
- v. The document fails to adequately demonstrate the Council's leadership role.

Review of the West Sussex Local Flood Risk Management Strategy Consultation

77. The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director Communities and Service Manager for Highways Services (copy appended to the signed minutes).

78. The report was introduced by Kevin Macknay, Drainage Strategy Team Leader, who told the Committee: -

- The report was an update on the report that came to the previous Committee meeting and summarised the consultation feedback into six themes (the full list

of comments would be made available on the Internet and a link circulated to the Committee)

- A priority process for the order of works was to be agreed with partners
- More work would be done on identifying locations of recent and historic flooding
- Gaps in partnership funding would be dealt with in the strategy
- On-going work was taking place to explain to landowners their responsibilities
- The National Flood Forum was establishing Local Flooding groups
- The Strategy would be adopted by full Council

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

- The County Council could force landowners to clear ditches – letters from the Legal Department had achieved positive results in cases in Arun and Chichester
- Regular meetings were held with the Environment Agency (EA) and Southern Water where the Council could raise any concerns it had with these organisations
- There were three Internal Drainage Boards covering West Sussex (plus a fourth which covered a small part of the county near the Surrey border) – these were managed by the EA, whereas in other areas they were independent. The management issue was being looked at by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
- Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) approval bodies (SABS) would be established in April 2014 – the County Council, as Lead Local Flood Authority would be the SAB for West Sussex
- Developers would have to apply to the relevant planning authority and SAB for approval of plans
- No modern sewers were dual purpose, but there was a possibility that illegal connections existed that allowed surface water to enter the sewer system and, potentially, cause flooding – Southern Water had the power to disconnect such connections
- The EU Flood Directive and the Water Framework Directive required different things and placed new burdens on the Council including a Flood Risk Assessment
- The launch of the Strategy would be publicised
- It would be useful to meet parish councils to learn from their local knowledge regarding planning applications
- SuDS and the SAB would be responsible for the maintenance of flood prevention measures, aiding sustainability
- There would need to be a change in statutes for the Council to become a statutory consultee on flood risk in planning applications
- Emergency Planning was trying to engage with all parish and town councils to help them develop flood action plans

80. Resolved – That the Committee supports the consultation and is aware of the issues relating to the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy

Review of Parking Charges

81. The Committee considered a report by the Director of Communities Commissioning and Service Manager for Transport and Countryside Services (copy appended to the signed minutes). The report, which included five options for consideration by the Committee, was introduced by Chris Barrett, Lead Professional, Parking Strategy Team who made the following points: -

- Taking into account inflationary pressures, prices would be raised or lowered to the nearest price point
- The aim of the price changes was not to make a surplus, but to try to manage traffic by getting the right vehicles in the right places for the right time, in accordance with the Parking Strategy recently scrutinised by the Committee.

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

- A few payment machines accepted five pence coins, but the minimum denomination accepted in the majority was a ten pence coin. This constraint limited the parking charges that could be imposed.
- Non-residents' permits were not marketed – if roads were empty, limited non-residents' parking could be introduced with heavy regulation
- If no changes were made to charging, revenue would be £155k per year less than if option four was implemented.
- Parking charges were reviewed annually, but only raised when cumulative inflation meant that a reasonable price point was reached
- Each time there was a change in pricing, it cost around £60k to re-programme all the pay machines
- Non-resident and trader permit prices would be standardised as presently they were different prices in different areas, but could be used across controlled parking zone areas
- Prices charged by district and borough councils had been checked, but on street charges would not rise to match these if the increase was deemed too great
- Option four would raise income by £155k per year
- The parking account had been diminishing over the last few years, but despite a current surplus of around £746k, it was felt that it would come under pressure in the future
- The Committee felt that: -
 - Car clubs might not be used or be effective and might lead to cars left unused on the roadside
 - The report did not provide enough detail, especially on income, expenditure and net profit, both currently and forecast for the future
 - That future increases should be implemented as soon as soon as the minimum denomination accepted by the payment machines allowed.

83. Resolved – That the Committee requests that the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport takes no further action until a more robust report containing more detailed financial information comes before the Committee

Business Planning Group Report

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

85. Resolved – That the Committee endorses the contents of the report and the revised Work Programme.

Lead Members

86. The Committee considered a report by the Chairman of the Business Planning Group (copy appended to the signed minutes) which was introduced by Ninesh

Edwards, Senior Advisor, who told the Committee that the Business Planning Group had discussed the possibility of Lead Members for the Committee covering various subject areas. This was intended to be a 'light touch' role with Lead Members deciding their own time commitment.

87. The Committee discussed the idea of Lead Members and decided not to pursue it in a formal manner.

88. Resolved – That the Committee agrees not to appoint Lead Members, but each member to make their areas of particular interest (from the Committee's portfolio) known to the Senior Adviser for future reference.

Forward Plan of Key Decisions

89. The Committee considered extracts from the Forward Plan for October to January - the following clarifications were made: -

- **Community Right to Challenge** - Tony Kershaw, Head of Law and Governance, explained that this included bids by employees to form staff mutuals, and allowed members of the community to bid for property that the Council no longer used
- **Delegation of Decisions on Classification of County Roads to the West Sussex County Council Traffic Manager** – Darryl Hemmings, Planning and Transport Policy Manager, told the Committee that historically, the Department for Transport had decided road classifications. This power was devolved down to Highways Authorities in 2012. This power was not used as a policy tool, but was used to classify new roads and reclassify ones that these might replace. The Cabinet Member will decide to establish a process for the Highways Department to make these decisions which delegates the decisions to the Traffic Manager

90. Resolved –

- i. That the Committee wishes a report on the Delegation of Decisions on Classification of County Roads to the West Sussex County Council Traffic Manager to come to a future meeting
- ii. That the Committee notes the Forward Plan.

Date of Next Meeting

91. The next meeting of the Committee will be on 15 January 2014 at 10.30 a.m. at County Hall, Chichester. Items likely to be on the agenda include:

- Public and Concessionary Transport Policy
- Performance and commissioning budgets and plans/Future Council
- Review of On-Street Parking Charges
- Future Commissioning Plans to Support the Waste Strategy

Exclusion of Press and Public

92. 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

Future Commissioning Plans to Support the Waste Strategy

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

93. The Committee considered a verbal update by the Head of Law and Governance on developments regarding the Waste Strategy. A further update would come to the Committee's next meeting.

The meeting ended at 13.19

Chairman.