

Environmental & Community Services Select Committee

20 April 2012 – At a meeting of the Select Committee held at 10.30 am at County Hall, Chichester.

Present: Mr Crow (Chairman)

Mr Blake	Mr M Hall	Mr Rogers
Mr Coomber	Mrs Mockridge	Mr Stevens
Mr Duncton	Mr Oppler (left after item 10b)	
Mrs Hall	Mr Quirk	

In attendance by invitation:

- Mr Barnard (Deputy Leader and portfolio for Communities, Environment and Enterprise)
- Mr Blampied (Member of the Minerals & Waste Development Framework Task Force)
- Mr Deedman (Chairman of the Minerals & Waste Development Framework Task Force)
- Mr Montyn (Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport)

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Arculus, Mrs Brunsdon and Dr Dennis

Declarations of Interest

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

- Mr Hall in respect of item 10b (Approval of draft West Sussex Waste Local Plan (Regulation 18 stage)) as an objector to the non-shortlisted or alternative site at Slindon Bottom
- Mr Hall in respect of item 11 (Changes to County Council Financial Support for the Non-Commercial Bus Network – Phase Three) as a member of the Bus Review Working Group

Minutes

2. The minutes of the Strategic Environmental Services Select Committee meeting held on 14 March 2012 be amended to record that Mr Duncton attended the meeting and that Mr Doyle was absent.

3. Resolved –

- i) That the minutes of the meeting of the Strategic Environmental Services Select Committee held on 14 March 2012 be approved, subject to the amendment above, as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.
- ii) That the minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Select Committee held on 21 March 2012 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

Committee Membership

4. The Committee was invited to note its membership of Mrs Arculus, Mr Blake, Mrs Brunsdon, Mr Coomber, Mr Crow, Dr Dennis, Mr Duncton, Mrs Hall, Mr M Hall, Mrs Mockridge, Mr Oppler, Mr Quirk, Mr Rogers and Mr Stevens.
5. Resolved – That the Committee notes its membership.

Terms of Reference

6. The Committee considered its terms of reference (copy appended to the signed minutes).
7. Resolved – That the Committee notes its terms of reference.

Appointment of Business Planning Group Members

8. The Chairman called for nominations to its Business Planning Group.
9. Nominations were received for Mrs Arculus, Mr Crow, Dr Dennis, Mr M Hall and Mr Rogers.
10. Resolved – That the Committee appointed the following members to its Business Planning Group: Mrs Arculus, Mr Crow, Dr Dennis, Mr M Hall and Mr Rogers.

West Sussex Economic Strategy

11. The Committee considered a report by the Director Communities and Infrastructure and Community and Economic Development Manager (copy appended to the signed minutes).
12. Scott Marshall, Managing Director, This is Regeneration Ltd, informed the Committee that consultation had taken place with over 70 organisations, individuals (including senior county council officers, and chief executives, leaders and elected members of district and borough councils) businesses and area partnerships; the findings of which helped form the draft priorities in the report.
13. Bruce Nairne, Director, Step Ahead Research, added that this was a high level county strategy where the County Council's role was to promote growth. He reported that there was a need for greater clarity in dialog between the Council and businesses. The area partnership model was strongly supported, and many small businesses wished to remain in the county. The strategy had to recognise the influence of neighbouring economic areas and explore how revenue could be brought into the county.
14. The following points were covered in discussion:
 - Possible partnership and joint venture working and delivery arrangements with the private sector would be covered in the next stage of developing the strategy.
 - A three-year action plan would be developed with measurable targets.

- The aim was not to duplicate existing strategies, but to complement them by finding ways the Council could add value e.g. through influence and encouragement of entry level jobs and apprenticeships.
- The Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) was focussing on influencing providers to give people the enterprise education businesses needed, as the right skill bases would help attract businesses.
- Partnership discussions via the Local Enterprise Partnership had identified routes to access intelligence from other agencies that could be shared with district and borough councils to understand and address businesses concerns, with the aim of retaining businesses within the county.
- Work was taking place to attract foreign direct investment in the LEP area, and this would also provide a framework for a focus on inward investment generally.
- The development of local infrastructure plans by county local committees (and strategic infrastructure plans with district and borough councils) could help address some transport / infrastructure problems. Ensuring that planning decisions supported economic growth, and the delivery of key infrastructure would also help.
- Rather than focussing too strongly on attracting revenue through the proposed changes in business rates arrangements, the draft strategy had adopted a balanced approach.

15. Resolved – That the Committee: -

- i) Endorses the emerging themes and priorities for the new Economic Strategy.
- ii) Endorses the degree to which the Strategy proposes a focus on new and additional Business Rate generation in the light of the changes to Local Government Funding.
- iii) Endorses the proposal of taking a whole organisation approach to the delivery of economic development.

Chingford Pond Restoration

16. The Committee considered a report by the Director Communities and Infrastructure and the Transport Commissioning Service Manager (copy appended to the signed minutes).

17. The following points were covered in discussion:

- A girls' school previously owned the pond and lowered the water level. Petworth Management Company then took over the pond and created the outflow structure before the County Council took on the lease of the pond in 1997 as apart of a section 106 agreement.
- The Council would face a legal challenge if it did not meet the terms of the lease.
- The restoration work had not been included in the Council's capital programme in the past, but action had to be taken now under terms of the lease.
- The Council's share of the cost of restoration (£348k) would have to be approved by the Cabinet Member – the balance (£560k) would come from Natural England.
- As the Council has been responsible for the maintenance of the pond since 1997 there was no opportunity to make an insurance claim against anyone else.

- The pond would not need to be dredged if the water level was raised to 18.4m Ordnance Datum, nor would it be likely to be the Council's responsibility to dredge the pond after the lease was renewed.
- It would take two years for water to reach the new level by natural means.
- Full restoration would include a footpath along the pond providing increased access for the public.
- The design for restoration would ensure that the pond meets the requirements of current reservoir legislation.

18. Resolved – That the Committee recommends that: -

- i) On the basis that Petworth Management Company indicates a willingness to contribute all of its Stewardship funds to the delivery of Option 2 (Raising the water levels to 18.4m Ordnance Datum), therefore contributing to the full historic restoration of the site, that the Council contributes the value of Option 1 (Raising the water levels to 16.6m Ordnance Datum, (1997 levels) towards the delivery of Option 2, therefore meeting lease requirements. Implicit in this is that any shortfall is met through external funding which should be identified and sourced by Petworth Management Company
- ii) The Council provides project management support to the project and delivers the detailed design as an additional cost to the Council

Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF) and Compost-Like Output (CLO) Procurement

19. The Committee considered a report by the Director Communities and Infrastructure and the Waste Management and Regulatory Services Manager (copy appended to the signed minutes), which was introduced by Tony Toynton, Director Communities and Infrastructure, who told the Committee that all recyclable material went to the Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) where it was sorted then sold. Non-recyclable material currently went mainly to landfill. A Mechanical Biological Treatment (MBT) plant was being built to take non-recyclable material. Bi-products of this process are CLO and RDF which would go to landfill unless an off take solution is provided

20. Graeme MacPherson, Waste Management & Regulatory Services Manager, told the Committee that the strategy to sell RDF and CLO needed to be in place by the time the MBT plant was ready, or the bi-products would be sent to landfill. A short-term contract would provide flexibility, but not the security on price that would be gained from a mid to long-term contract. The maximum contract length was set at 22 years so that it would tie in with the end of the Materials Resource Management Contract (MRMC). He explained that CLO was similar to soil, but contained inorganic components, so was unsuitable for compost.

21. The following points were covered in discussion:

- RDF was solid and could be burnt.
- The MRMC could be modified to allow for changing demands from the market.
- CLO could be used to cap and restore landfill sites.
- Mixed waste could not go to the MRF as this would mean the quality of the product produced would be below the standard required.

22. Resolved – That the Committee recommends: -

- i) A mid to long-term contract.
- ii) That Compost Like Output is not included in the procurement process at present, but that provision is made for reconsideration at a later date.
- iii) That commercial and industrial outputs are not included in the procurement process at present, but that a watching brief keeps options open

Draft Waste Plan – Report by the Minerals and Waste Development Framework Task Force

23. The Committee considered a report by the Chairman of the Minerals and Waste Development Framework Task Force (copy appended to the signed minutes), which was introduced by Derek Deedman, Task Force Chairman, who told the Committee that at this stage strategic sites only had been identified as suitable as sites for waste management facilities related to commercial or industrial waste (not household waste, for which the County Council had already made provision). The County Council would not be purchasing or developing any of these sites - that would be a decision made by landowners/developers with planning permission (or not) decided by the County Council Planning Committee.

24. Resolved – That the Committee thanks the Task Force members and officers for their work on the project to date and notes the report.

Approval of Draft West Sussex Waste Local Plan (Regulation 18 stage)

25. The Committee considered a report by the Director for Communities and Infrastructure and Strategic Planning Manager (Copy appended to the signed minutes), which was introduced by Darryl Hemmings, Planning & Transport Policy Manager, who told the Committee that:

- The Waste Plan was about planning for waste, not managing it.
- The draft Plan had been developed in conjunction with the South Downs National Park (for a consistent approach with neighbouring authorities) building on previous work, and would run till 2031.
- The draft Plan included strategies for waste planning, objectives and policies to deliver strategies for assessing applications and site allocations.
- Waste produced was expected to fall from 2.29 million tonnes per annum (mtpa) to 2.25 mtpa by 2031.
- There were currently approximately 50 sites in the county which deal with waste.
- 47% of waste would be recycled or composted, 13% managed by e.g. thermal treatment and 37% was currently sent to landfill.
- Most imported waste went to landfill – this amount was expected to decline due to reduced capacity for landfill in the county.
- The draft Plan identifies capacity shortfalls and allocates sites to deal with the shortfall.
- It was intended that there be no landfill requirement beyond 2031.

26. The following points were covered in discussion:

- Market forces determined the amount of waste imported into the county and it was not possible to restrict where waste came from.
- Waste planning authorities were planning for net self-sufficiency, but accepted that waste would always flow across municipal boundaries.
- Mobile units, not static sites, would largely deal with construction and development waste.
- Scrap metal was either recycled or dealt with through transfer sites where it was bulked for exporting.

27. Resolved – That the Committee recommends the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Communities, Environment and Enterprise to approve the draft Plan and go ahead with public consultation.

Changes to County Council Financial Support for the Non Commercial Bus Network – Phase Three

28. The Committee considered a report by the Director Communities and Infrastructure and Transport and Countryside Services Manager (copy appended to the signed minutes), which was introduced by Pieter Montyn, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, who told the Committee that:

- £1.1m subsidy reductions of the £2m required had been found through phases one and two, which focussed on Sunday and evening services, non-eligible children travelling to school, reduced frequency and low usage.
- In the third phase, over 8,200 people responded to a survey of 35 bus routes that were assessed for time of day used, age of user, purpose of journey and frequency of use.
- Consideration had been given to the needs of the elderly and disabled.
- The option to taper the reduction in subsidies would give operators the chance to develop solutions in some cases regarding timetables and commercially supportable routes.
- Just under £800k would be found in phase three, leaving a little over £100k that would come from savings from renegotiated bus contracts and from the overall Highways and Transport budget.

29. The following points were covered in discussion:

- The Committee thanked the Bus Review Working Group for the work it had done on the subject
- As an alternative to bus travel, rail vouchers were promoted where suitable, but taxi vouchers were not – the situation would be reviewed regularly
- Each route had been examined for its user profile – the future of each route would be negotiated separately with the operator to minimise the impact on groups such as the young and the elderly and disabled.
- Operators chose what size of bus to use on which route based on peak demand, and would decide fares and whether routes were commercially viable.
- Out of 80 bus routes supported at the outset of the phased reductions in subsidy, 27 would experience no change, 31 would have minor changes and 22 would have major changes.

30. Resolved that the Committee: -

- i) Supports the recommendations of the Bus Review Working Group to implement option 2 (the tapering of subsidy reductions) from September 2012.
- ii) Considers that further savings to achieve a balanced budget are achieved through efficiency savings, re-tendering existing bus services and the development and provision of lower cost alternatives.

Forward Plan of Key Decisions

31. The Committee considered an extract from the Forward Plan for April to July. No matters were raised.

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

Nomination for Chairman and Vice Chairman

33. Nominations were received for Mr Crow as Chairman and Mr M Hall as Vice Chairman.

34. Resolved – That the Committee nominates Mr Crow as its Chairman and Mr M Hall as its Vice Chairman for approval by the County Council at its meeting on 18 May.

Date of Next Meeting

35. The next meeting of the Committee would be on 20 June at 10.30am in County Hall, Chichester.

The meeting ended at 2.15pm.

Chairman.