

Environmental & Community Services Select Committee

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

Present: Mr Crow (Chairman)

Mrs Arculus	Mrs Hall
Mrs Brunsdon	Mr Quirk
Mr Coomber	Mr Rogers
Dr Dennis	Mr Stevens

In attendance by invitation:

- Mr Barnard (Deputy Leader and portfolio for Communities, Environment and Enterprise)
- Mr Burgess (Deputy Cabinet Member for Public Protection)
- Mr O'Brien (Deputy Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport)
- Mr Blampied (Member of the Minerals and Waste Development framework Task Force)
- Mr Deedman (Chairman of the Minerals and Waste Development framework Task Force)
- Mr Jones (Member of the Fire and Rescue Service Task Force)

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Mr Blake
- Mr Duncton
- Mr M Hall
- Mrs Mockridge
- Mrs Field (Cabinet Member for Public Protection)
- Mr Montyn (Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport)

Declarations of Interest

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

- Mrs Brunsdon in respect of item 6 (Government Consultation on the Draft Aviation Policy Framework) as Chairman of Public Services at East Grinstead Town Council and as a resident who would be affected by proposed changes
- Mrs Brunsdon in respect of item 7 (Proposed Submission Draft of the West Sussex Waste Local Plan (Regulation 19 stage) as Policy Adviser for Planning
- Mr Rogers in respect of item 8 (Thameslink Consultation Task Force Report) as an ex-employee of Intercity West Coast Mainline with a first class rail pass
- Dr Dennis in respect of item 8 (Thameslink Consultation Task Force Report) as an annual season ticket holder on the Horsham to London line

Minutes

59. The minutes of the Environmental & Community Services Select Committee meeting held on 20 June 2012 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

Fire & Rescue Service Task Force Report and Update on West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service's Consultation Exercise over Proposed Savings

60. The Committee considered a report by Mrs Arculus, Chairman of the Fire & Rescue Service Task Force (copy appended to the signed minutes) who told the Committee that the Task Force had looked at the savings proposals and the consultation document, and highlighted the need to minimise the impact on frontline services and allow the Service to plan changes so that it was not rushed.

61. The Committee was also given a verbal update on West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service's (WSFRS) Consultation Exercise over Proposed Savings by Sean Ruth, Deputy County Fire Officer. The update was supported by a presentation (copy appended to the signed minutes) that gave a breakdown of how the proposed savings would be made, details of public engagement events and headlines from the survey results which showed broad support for the proposals. The following points were also made:

- There would be no reduction in the number of fire engines
- One fire engine would move from Horley to Horsham, which would improve performance, especially in rural areas
- Horley town would now be covered by Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS)

62. The following points were covered in discussion:

- Future population/demographic/socio-economic data had been considered when compiling the consultation document – WSFRS needed to be flexible in future about how/where fire stations were built
- Staff had been consulted, and had helped develop some of the proposals e.g. arrangements for Crawley/Horley fire stations and staff structure, and would continue to be involved in the process
- There would be no change to frontline services in Crawley as a result of the proposed changes. WSFRS had looked at other fire service structures and was confident that the one it proposed was sustainable
- As part of the consultation process, WSFRS had offered to attend meetings of all 14 county local committees (and was invited to seven), spoke at meetings of Crawley Borough Council and Worthing Borough Council, and offered to speak to Horley Town Council, which did not take up the offer
- The following trade unions had been involved in the consultation: UNISON, The Retained Fire Fighters' Union and the Fire Brigades' Union.
- The reduction of staff across the Service, including Crawley and Worthing, would mainly be covered by naturally occurring vacancies with redeployment and voluntary redundancy possibilities also available
- There was support for WSFRS to pursue commercial options to raise money for re-investment in the service, and to negotiate more financial input from SFRS towards the running of Horley fire station (previously SFRS input had been £70k per year out of a total of £1m, calculated on the basis of a national formula)
- The decision to move one fire engine from Horley had given impetus to SFRS' plans to reconsider the positioning of its fire stations
- Few Horley residents had responded to the consultation, but local press had queried what SFRS would do in response to the proposed changes
- WSFRS had bid for money from the Department for Communities and Local Government towards building a new fire station at Crawley with training

facilities, and expected to hear the outcome in November – if the bid failed, further investment for training facilities would be sought although investment has been made in safety critical training at Crawley, joint training at Gatwick Airport (for ten years), and co-operation with Hampshire. There were also discussions with East Sussex Fire Authority (ESFA) about a possible Sussex Training Centre.

- The Firebreak Scheme would not be affected by the proposed changes
- The Committee thanked WSFRS and the Fire and Rescue Service Task Force for their work throughout the process

63. Resolved – That the Committee: -

- I. Welcomes the fact that staff had been involved in the whole process
- II. Is pleased there will be no reduction in frontline appliances
- III. Welcomes the moving of one fire engine from Horley to Horsham

And

- IV. Supports the recommendations of the Fire and Rescue Service Task Force as listed below:
 - That fire safety enforcement work is considered a priority when planning service delivery from April 2013
 - That the Cabinet Member ensures sufficient time and resources are allocated to developing the savings proposals, to help ensure that implementation does not yield unforeseen consequences
 - That training facilities be considered a priority for future capital investment.
 - That West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service ensures it is prepared for the opportunities presented by the new funding arrangements, and that the savings proposals are developed with regard to any identified opportunities

Future of the County's Gypsy and Traveller Sites

64. The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director Health & Social Care (copy appended to the signed minutes) which was introduced by Sam Tearle (Joint Commissioning Unit) and Esther Quarm (Gypsy & Travellers Team Manager) who told the Committee that the market had been explored and the Cabinet Member was proposing that the sites either be sold or let on long-term leases with clauses to protect Gypsy and Traveller communities. Residents had been consulted and preferred the sites to be run by Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) or local authorities.

65. The following points were covered in discussion:

- The views of two travellers' organisations had been sought
- Other local authorities had been visited to see how they ran Gypsy and Travellers sites
- The County Council had no statutory duty to provide sites – this was the responsibility of district/borough councils
- Prospective buyers would have to meet criteria that would satisfy the Council that they would treat vulnerable/disadvantaged groups fairly
- If sites were sold, there would be covenants dictating future land use, but these might be hard to enforce and may be at risk if the sites were sold again

- If sites were leased, restraints on future land use would be easier to apply
- Capital receipts could be 25% less if sites were leased as opposed to sold although little precedent to act as a guide in this area
- If sites were badly managed in future, problems such as fly-tipping on land not part of the sites could be a problem that had to be resolved by the owner of the affected land (which could be the County Council)
- Any proposed leasing arrangements could be previewed by the Policy and Resources Select Committee
- The Council had not pursued the possibility of setting-up a commercial company to manage the sites
- Outsourcing the management of the sites would require on-going work for the Council in terms of cyclical procurement, performance monitoring of the commissioned provider and on-going capital investment. If the provider was found to be unsatisfactory then the Council could be forced to re-provide the management of the sites
- There was no specialist panel of RSLs to consult over Gypsy and Traveller sites
- Three members of staff would be affected by the decision
- If the sites were sold, the new owners would manage the waiting lists – families usually only requested to be on the waiting list of one particular site each
- Those needing emergency placement were allocated space wherever available – this would be harder to manage with multiple site owners
- The Committee felt that securing the future rights of Gypsies and Travellers on sites was more important than raising money from the sale of sites
- Mrs Brunsdon proposed recommendation II that was seconded by Mrs Arculus and agreed by the Committee:

66. Resolved – That the Committee: -

- I. Agrees that the commitments outlined in the report are adequate and wishes the Cabinet Member to ensure that these are reflected in any future legal agreement.
- II. Asks the Cabinet Member to explore other options, not excluding a commercial operation by the County Council, and management of the sites by registered social landlords.
- III. Recommends long-term leases for the sites as opposed to outright sales from the two options with which it was presented.

Government Consultation on the Draft Aviation Policy Framework

67. The Committee considered a report by the Director of Communities and Infrastructure and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (copy appended to the signed minutes). The report was introduced by Neil Border (Legal & Democratic Services) who reminded the Committee that the Policy Framework concentrated on noise/air pollution and consultative committees – capacity would be dealt with at a later date. He pointed out that where the draft response to the consultation stated no comment, this was because the Council either had no view at this time or the subject was not within the Council's scope.

68. The following points were covered in discussion:

Agenda Item No. 2

- The Fifth Freedom could be beneficial to Gatwick Airport as more long-haul services would, perhaps, stopover there providing opportunities for local air travellers to join flights to additional destinations. Foreign airlines were the ones most likely to profit from the additional opportunity, unless British airlines were inspired to start-up routes to places such as New York, which might benefit the UK's national economy and allow Gatwick Airport to better compete with other airports
- Noise might be regarded as a temporary impact of flights, to be balanced with longer term effects such as the emission of carbon dioxide
- Introducing noise to areas that have not previously been affected by aircraft noise could be perceived as affecting the quality of life more than increasing the regularity of noise in those areas that are already affected
- The Gatwick Airport Consultative Committee (GATCOM), serviced and supported by the Council, was cited as an example of best practice of its kind. The Draft Aviation Policy Framework encourages consultative committees, and other forms of collaborative working. However, only ministers had the power make decisions
- A wider range of industrial sectors should be included in the response covering the importance of aviation to the local economy
- The Gatwick Airport Master Plan and the Preferred Navigation System for more precise routes should be taken into account by the Council in finalising its response
- Airport throughput was affected by both passenger and freight services – freight was carried on passenger services, but it was harder to do this on airlines that operated low budget flights with quick turnaround times which do not allow for cargo handling, of which there were a substantial number at Gatwick Airport
- Responses had to be submitted by 31 October 2012
- The response might suggest that, in terms of utilising differential landing fees to improve the noise environment around airports, landing fees might be used to the benefit of local communities

69. Resolved – That the Committee: -

- I. Broadly endorses the Council's draft response to the Government's consultation on the draft Aviation Policy Framework
- II. Asks the Council to reflect the position of the Gatwick Airport Consultative Committee in its response to the consultation with regard to the question, 'How could differential landing fees be better utilised to improve the noise environment around airports, particularly at night?'
- III. Asks the Cabinet Member to seek clarification from the Government on who holds ultimate responsibility for decisions on noise and environmental concerns, when local priorities are balanced against national priorities.
- IV. Asks the Cabinet Member to have regard to the points raised in the debate.
- V. Asks the Cabinet Member to support the proposal to extend the UK's fifth freedom policy to Gatwick, Stansted and Luton to encourage the development of more long-haul flights from Gatwick, enabling it to better compete with Heathrow. The potential for new entry to the market may also spur British carriers into launching more long-haul services from Gatwick.

- VI. Asks the Cabinet Member to ensure that West Sussex residents, especially those in areas where noise disturbance is an existing problem, should not be disadvantaged by changes to flight paths designed to reduce noise for communities in Surrey (or elsewhere).

Minerals & Waste Development Framework Task Force Report and Proposed Submission Draft of the West Sussex Waste Local Plan (Regulation 19 stage)

70. The Committee considered reports by Mr Deedman, Chairman of the Minerals & Waste Development Framework Task Force, and the Director for Communities and Infrastructure and Strategic Planning Manager (copies appended to the signed minutes) the latter was introduced by Mike Elkington (Strategic Planning) who highlighted several matters including the following: -

- There was strong support for the vision and objectives of the Plan
- The County Council (and the South Downs National Park Authority) had to plan for the management of all waste arising in the county
- Technical work had been carried out around waste forecasts and transport assessments
- Decoy Farm, Worthing, had been removed from the list of allocated sites at the request of the landowner, Worthing Borough Council, but this did not mean that capacity shortfall would not be addressed
- The Plan had been approved by the South Downs National Park Authority

71. The following points were covered in discussion:

- There would be cross-border travel of some waste where it made sense for waste to travel a shorter distance to a neighbouring area, when authorities did not have the right facilities themselves to dispose of certain types, or did not have landfill space left
- The Council would not be able to dictate what took place on the sites as technology was constantly changing, but certain types of development, such as chimney stacks, might not be acceptable in certain locations
- Goddards Green was the only greenfield site in the Plan – there was no suitable brownfield site in the area
- The Plan needed to be clear and flexible to respond to changing circumstances/new technologies – it would be monitored and adapted where and when necessary
- The Plan allowed for new sites to come forward which would be judged against the criteria-based policies in the Plan.
- The Committee thanked the Task Force and officers for their work on developing the Plan

72. Resolved – That the Committee supports the Proposed Submission Draft of the West Sussex Waste Local Plan (Regulation 19 stage).

Thameslink Consultation Task Force Report

73. The Committee considered a report by Dr Dennis, Chairman of the Thameslink Consultation Task Force (copy appended to the signed minutes) who introduced the report and highlighted the following views of the Task Force:

- Spare line capacity should be used to minimise disruption that would be caused by work at London Bridge
- Ticketing should be simplified
- Car park charges should be standardised
- The current franchise had been successful and should be built upon

74. The following points were covered in discussion:

- The Committee thanked the Task Force and officers for their work on developing the Council's response to the consultation

75. Resolved – That the Committee supports the recommendations of the Task Force.

Environmental and Community Services Select Committee Business Planning Group

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

77. Resolved – That the Committee endorses the report and the updated work programme.

Forward Plan of Key Decisions

78. The Committee considered extracts from the Forward Plan for October to January and made the following comment:

- The new Committee should review impact of the 20 mph speed limit in Chichester if it was adopted by the South Chichester County local Committee, after an appropriate period.

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

Date of Next Meeting

80. The next meeting of the Committee will be on 21 November at 10.30am in County Hall, Chichester.

The meeting ended at 13.36

Chairman.