

Environmental & Community Services Select Committee

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

Present: Mr Crow (Chairman)

Mrs Arculus	Mrs Hall	Mr Stevens
Mrs Brunsdon	Mrs Mockridge	
Mr Duncton	Mr Rogers	
Mr M Hall	Mrs Smith	

In attendance by invitation:

- Mr Barnard (Deputy Leader and portfolio for Communities, Environment and Enterprise)
- Mrs Field (Cabinet Member for Public Protection)
- Mr Montyn (Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport)

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Mr Blake
- Mr Coomber
- Dr Dennis
- Mr Quirk

Declarations of Interest

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

- Mrs Mockridge in respect of item 4 (The County Council Draft Budget & Performance Targets 2013 - 2016) as Deputy to the Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources and Adviser to the Cabinet member for Public Protection regarding the Fire & Rescue Service (Property)

Minutes

107. The minutes of the Environmental & Community Services Select Committee meeting held on 21 November 2012 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

The County Council Draft Budget & Performance Targets 2013 - 2016

108. The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director of Finance and Performance and Director of Resources and Performance (copy appended to the signed minutes).

109. The budget aspect of the report was introduced by Andy Thorne, Finance and Performance, who highlighted the following points: -

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- The Council's funding under the business rates system would be £173.3m, which was a 5.7% reduction compared to 2012/13 funding levels (the national average reduction was 3.9%)
- The Council would get funding support of £7.7m over the next two years from government by freezing council tax for a third consecutive year
- Money for Community Safety would be transferred to the Police and Crime Commissioner, but used for the same purpose as at present
- The Communities, Environment and Enterprise budget provided for net spending of £91.234m
- The Highways & Transport budget allowed for net spending of £72.4m, including a one-off sum of £7.492m for works relating to the extreme weather conditions
- The Public Protection budget allowed for net spending of £38.7m
- New efficiencies of £8.9m including £1m from Waste had to be made

110. The performance framework aspect of the report was introduced by Sue Roberts, Finance and Performance, who pointed out that work on anything marked as 'TBC' was on-going.

111. Summary of Members' questions and comments, and answers provided:

- The Committee was informed that the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources had queried why the Council had a larger than average reduction in funding from the Government
- The transfer of Community Safety money to the Police and Crime Commissioner did not affect the Council's responsibilities in this area
- Levies' paid to outside organisations for things such as coastal defences were covered by the precept payment figure of £909k to 'Other Bodies'
- The Council would contribute towards the cost of improvements to the A27, hoping to encourage the Highways Agency to also contribute to these schemes
- The Committee welcomed the additional one-off sum of £7.492m for the Highways and Transport budget for works related to extreme weather conditions and was assured that this would not be to the detriment of long-term work e.g. work in areas of less severe flooding
- Savings of £2.088m were needed from the Highways and Transport budget meaning that the extra £7.492m was effectively £5.404 – these savings would not come from the highways maintenance budget
- Funding for communities would not only go through parish councils – the funding would be discussed and projects prioritised
- Some residents were increasingly hostile to volunteering, having the attitude "we've paid our taxes, now get on with it"
- Work was taking place to arrange for money that would have gone to contractors being devolved to parish councils to carry out some highways maintenance work on behalf of the Council – this would not have any negative effects on the highways maintenance contract
- Some savings would come from the lower cost of electricity, making street lighting less expensive – savings from the new columns had been built into the budget figures
- 90% of both business and private premises to have superfast broadband by 2015
- The introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy was not within this budget period, so any delay to its introduction would not have an impact on this

budget – it was expected that S106 (developer) money would continue till the levy was introduced

- There would be no adverse implications to the Fire & Rescue Service due to the delay in the Sussex Control Centre coming online and the need for additional one-off efficiencies savings to cover this delay
- The Committee was unhappy that some performance framework measure baselines were not known

112. Resolved – That the Committee: -

- i. Endorses the County Council Draft Budget for the Committee's portfolio areas for 2013/14
- ii. Endorses the Performance Framework for the Committee's portfolio areas for 2013/14 with the caveat that more information on baselines be available before County Council on 15 February
- iii. Identifies the following strategic issues for referral to Policy and Resources Select Committee when it considers the Draft Budget and Performance Framework on 24 January:
 - a) Would like to see more information on plans for building on the success of Community Action Pilots
 - b) Would like the missing baseline data in the Performance Framework to be provided.
 - c) Welcomes the extra money for the highways maintenance budget
- iv. Asks the Cabinet to take into account its comments when it considers the Draft Budget and Performance Framework on 29 January 2013

Review of Approved Major Highway Schemes

113. The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director Communities Commissioning and Strategic Planning Manager (copy appended to the signed minutes) which was introduced by Iain Steane, Communities and Infrastructure, who told the Committee that the Council had a number of approved major highway schemes that had been reviewed with the intention of the least deliverable being rescinded to reduce possible blight claims.

114. Summary of Members' questions and comments, and answers provided:

- Some schemes were to be retained as they were borderline cases, others because they linked to proposed developments
- Rescinded schemes would not appear in land searches when people were buying properties, but the schemes could be resurrected in the future
- The list of approved major highway schemes had diminished over time to 22 and related to the Infrastructure Priority Lists drawn up by County Local Committees, which contained numerous other schemes such as the A259 Goring crossways
- The A264 scheme would cost approximately £500k to implement – local Members supported the rescinding of the scheme
- The A24 scheme had cost £2-3m to develop and although it was to be rescinded, other ways of preventing accidents on the road would be investigated
- The southern section of the A286 scheme was to be retained as there was a possibility of development in the area, but it was likely that the scheme would be on a smaller scale, not a relief road

- There was concern that safety issues needed to be addressed in a number of schemes e.g. the A280, C37 and A24 – the Committee was assured that smaller schemes could still come forward to deal with accident hotspots/dangerous stretches of road, but was informed that landowners had right of way over the crossing points on the A24, so the closure of gaps was not a simple issue
- The A259 Shoreham-Southwick - this scheme would be designed to modern standards and all the land highlighted might not be required - the Council was working with partners to deliver the Shoreham Harbour regeneration project
- Schemes that were to be retained would not have priority over other schemes – the only priority scheme in the county was the A27
- Land that the Council owned that was within the highway boundary would be kept as it had no commercial value and could be used for small improvement schemes
- The Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources would decide whether the few properties the Council owned in areas where schemes were to be rescinded should be sold with the money from sales going to capital receipts

115. Mr Rogers proposed that the A280 Long Furlong scheme and the C37 Titnore Lane, Worthing scheme be retained. The proposal was seconded by Mrs Hall. The proposal fell.

116. Mr Duncton proposed that the A24 Dial Post Junction scheme be retained. The proposal was seconded by Mr Rogers. The proposal fell.

117. Resolved – That the Committee: -

- i. Endorses the list of approved major highways to be rescinded, while encouraging schemes delivering safety improvements to the A24 to be brought forward.
- ii. Endorses the list of approved major highways to be retained

Rampion Offshore Wind Farm Task Force

118. Ninesh Edwards, Scrutiny Officer, told the Committee that E.On had withdrawn its application for Rampion Windfarm, but would be resubmitting it in February. Therefore the Committee was recommended to adopt its Business Planning Group's request that a Task Force should be appointed to scrutinise the authority's draft response to the consultation, and report its recommendations directly back to the Cabinet Member.

119. Resolved – That the Committee agrees to appoint a Task Force to scrutinise the authority's draft response to the consultation, and report its recommendations directly back to the Cabinet Member and agrees the Task Force membership of Mrs Arculus, Mr Coomber, Mr Deedman and Mrs Mockridge.

Business Planning Group Report

120. The Committee considered a report by the Chairman of the Business Planning Group (copy appended to the signed minutes) and asked that the Business Planning Group examine the Community Infrastructure Levy at its next meeting to see if there were opportunities to add value through scrutiny.

121. Resolved – That the Committee endorses the content of the Business Planning Group report.

Forward Plan of Key Decisions

122. The Committee considered extracts from the Forward Plan for February to May.

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

Members' Items

124. Members requested that all County Local Committee Infrastructure Priority Lists be shared with the Committee.

125. Resolved – That Sue Hawker, Director of Business Change, forwards all County Local Committee Infrastructure Priority Lists to Ninesh Edwards, Scrutiny Officer, for distribution to the Committee by email.

Date of Next Meeting

126. The next meeting of the Committee will be on 27 February at 10.30am in County Hall, Chichester.

The meeting ended at 13.04pm

Chairman.