

**Environmental & Community Services Select Committee**

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

Present: Mr Crow (Chairman)

Mrs Arculus	Mrs Mockridge
Mrs Brunsdon	Mr Quirk
Mrs Hall	Mr Rogers
Mr M Hall	Mr Stevens

In attendance by invitation:

- 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 Duncton, Mr Oppler and Mr Barnard (Deputy Leader and portfolio for Communities, Environment and Enterprise)

**Declarations of Interest**

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

- Mrs Mockridge in respect of item 6 (West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service's proposals for efficiency savings and arrangements for public and stakeholder consultation on its plans for reducing risk in the financial year 2013/14) as Policy Adviser for the Fire & Rescue Service (Property) to the Cabinet Member for Public Protection
- Mrs Arculus in respect of item 6 (West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service's proposals for efficiency savings and arrangements for public and stakeholder consultation on its plans for reducing risk in the financial year 2013/14) as Policy Adviser for the Fire & Rescue Service (Property) as an employee of a company that provides fire protection services.
- Mrs Mockridge in respect of item 7 (Budget Monitoring and Performance Outturn Report 2011/12) as Deputy to the Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources, Policy Adviser to the Deputy Leader and portfolio for Communities, Environment and Enterprise, and member of the Southern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee
- Mr Rogers in respect of item 8 (Scrutiny of the County Council Response to the Thameslink Rail Franchise Consultation) as having a rail pension and a free pass for first class travel on trains.

**Minutes**

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

**Responses from Cabinet Members**

38. The Committee was invited to note the responses by the Deputy Leader and Portfolio for Communities, Environment and Enterprise, and the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport to the recommendations it made at its meeting on 20 April 2012.

39. Resolved – That the Committee welcomes and notes the responses.

**The future of Mortuary Provision and Body Removals for West Sussex:  
Supplemental Report with Business Case**

40. The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director for Communities and Infrastructure (copy appended to the signed minutes). The report was introduced by Graeme MacPherson (Waste Management & Regulatory Services Manager) who told the Committee that the financial business case for future mortuary provision showed that a capital option was not viable, so the Cabinet Member was focussing on stabilising the existing provision, and would examine the possibility of a revenue solution in the future.

41. The following points were covered in discussion:

- Outsourcing the service had been considered as part of the market consultation, but this exercise did not involve financial information.
- Work had taken place over the last 18 to 24 months to make existing provision fit for purpose, with more still to be done.
- No decision had been made to commission a purpose-built mortuary.
- It was more important to focus on delivering a good service that was appropriate for the Coroner rather than buildings.
- Working with other local authorities would be considered, but none were pressing for immediate action.
- The new Medical Examiner Service would not affect the decision on the future of mortuary services, but would have an impact on the Coroner's Service.

42. Resolved – That the Committee: -

- a) Recognises the present position with regard to the future of Mortuary Provision and Body Removals for West Sussex
- b) Agrees to carry out further scrutiny of the subject in the most appropriate way at the most appropriate time.

**West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service's proposals for efficiency savings and arrangements for public and stakeholder consultation on its plans for reducing risk in the financial year 2013/14**

43. The Committee considered a report by the County Fire Officer (copy appended to the signed minutes). The report was introduced by Sean Ruth, Deputy County Fire Officer, who made the following points:

- Fire Redesign, which began two and a half to three years ago, had achieved savings of £1.5m and improved performance.
- A further £2.5m was hoped to be saved through a merger with East Sussex Fire Authority (ESFA), but this had not been possible due to a lack of financial information from central government.

- Savings would be made by sharing a control centre, training, learning & development programmes with ESFA.
- Consultation on ways to make the £2.5m savings required would begin on 12 July and run for ten weeks.
- Most proposals would affect the Crawley/Horley area.
- The consultation document would be on the Council's website and be discussed at well publicised, targeted County Local Committee meetings, Parish Council meetings, Public Engagement Forums and staff meetings. Minority groups would be reached via the Council's Customer Insight Team.

44. The following points were covered in discussion:

- It was not expected that attendance times would be affected by changes arising from the new savings proposals.
- The new Fire Station at Crawley would not be part of the proposed savings plan, so would not be part of the consultation.
- Liaison with Surrey Fire & Rescue Service would take place over the provision from Horley Fire Station.
- The Fire & Rescue Service was able to charge for commercial fire safety training, but was not allowed to make a profit – it wanted to set-up a trading company that would allow it to generate income from such activities.

45. Resolved – That the Committee: -

- a) Approves the arrangements for consultation and engagement with the public and key stakeholders on the Fire and Rescue Service's proposals for reducing risk in the community in 2013/14 and proposals for saving £2.5m.
- b) Asks its Business Planning Group to consider and agree the proposed arrangements for scrutiny at the Committee's meeting of 27 September.
- c) Agrees that the Fire and Rescue Service Task Force can report its recommendations on the savings proposals directly to the Cabinet Member for Public Protection, provided its report is shared with Committee at its meeting of 27 September.

### **Budget Monitoring and Performance Outturn Report 2011/12**

46. The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director Finance and Performance, Director Communities and Infrastructure and County Fire Officer (copy appended to the signed minutes). The report was introduced by Tony Toynton, Director Communities and Infrastructure, who told the Committee that this was an end of year report with emphasis on the budget outturn. The portfolio was on budget and savings targets had been met. There was nothing new to report on performance.

47. The following points were covered in discussion:

- Response rates for reactive maintenance were improving and should reach the 95% target (for action within the agreed timescales of two hours, five days or 28 days, depending on seriousness) by the end of June.
- Extra gangs were still being used to fill potholes, and there was no backlog.

- Of the three highways depots, the one at Drayton (near Chichester) was performing least well on reactive maintenance for work needing to be carried out within 28 days – steps were being undertaken to address this.
- A smart phone application was being developed that would allow people to report defects directly to Balfour Beatty and track developments – this system would also be available through the Council's website.
- Footpaths were covered by the Council's system of highway inspections (Safety Plus) but were not included in the Performance Monitor.
- New money would be sought to repair footpaths and rural lanes.
- The target for street lights working had been met and the programme of replacing columns was on target.
- The underspend on street lighting was not expected to be repeated in the near future.

48. Resolved – That the Committee: -

- a) Notes the data and supporting commentary showing the outturn position for 2011/12
- b) Agrees that there are no issues for further scrutiny by this Committee
- c) Agrees that there are no strategic issues for referral to Policy and Resources Select Committee

### **Scrutiny of the County Council Response to the Thameslink Rail Franchise Consultation**

49. The Committee considered a report by the Head of Legal & Democratic Services (copy appended to the signed minutes).

50. The following points were covered in discussion:

- A further consultation would have to take place when Southern Rail joined the Franchise.

51. Resolved – That the Committee agrees: -

- a) That a Task Force of the Committee is appointed to meet once on behalf of the Committee, to scrutinise the County Council Response to the Thameslink Rail Franchise Consultation.
- b) That membership of the Task Force is Mrs Brunsdon, Dr Dennis, Mr Quirk and Mr Rogers. Mr Whittington is also invited to become a member.
- c) That the Task Force can report its recommendations directly to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport.

### **Environmental and Community Services Select Committee Business Planning Group**

52. The Committee considered a report by the Business Planning Group (copy appended to the signed minutes) and agreed the following:

53. Resolved – That the Committee.

- a) Agrees that the topics allocated for inclusion in the work programme represent the top priorities for scrutiny by the Environmental and

Community Services Select Committee, based on information available at this time.

- b) Agrees the cross cutting topics and indicates the following priorities:
- Young people not in education or employment – **High**
  - Gypsies & Travellers access to public services including health & education - **Medium**

### **Forward Plan of Key Decisions**

54. The Committee considered extracts from the Forward Plans for May to September and June to October.

55. Resolved – That the Committee notes the Forward Plans.

### **Members Items**

56. Members had concerns over the difference in water use restrictions around the county and were advised that water resources and future water supply and conservation were in the Committee's work programme.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

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

The meeting ended at 12.20pm.

Chairman.