

Environmental & Community Services Select Committee

7 September 2017 – At a meeting of the Select Committee held at 10.30 a.m. at County Hall, Chichester.

Present: Mr Barret-Miles (Chairman)

Mr Baldwin	Mr S Oakley
Mrs Brunsdon	Mr Patel
Mr Jones	Mrs Purnell
Mr McDonald	Mrs Russell

In attendance by invitation: Mrs Duncton (Senior Advisor to the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Highways) and Mrs Urquhart (Cabinet Member for Environment).

Apologies for absence were received from Lt Col Barton, Mrs Milson and Mr Purchase

Declarations of Interests

35. In accordance with the Code of Conduct, the following personal interests were declared, all in relation to the Response to Highways England's Consultation on Proposals for A27 at Worthing – Lancing Improvement Scheme.

- Mr Marshall as a member of the Storrington Air Quality Management Group
- Mr Walsh as a member of Arun District Council and Littlehampton Town Council
- Mr Waight as a member of Worthing Borough Council

Minutes of the 10 July Meeting

36. Resolved – that the minutes of the Environmental and Community Services Select Committee held on 10 July 2017 be approved as a correct record, and that they be signed by the Chairman.

Response to the Highways England Consultation on plans for the A27 at Worthing and Lancing

37. The Committee considered a report by Executive Director for Economy, Infrastructure and Environment and Director for Highways and Transport (copy appended to signed minutes).

38. Darryl Hemmings, Planning and Transport Policy Manager introduced the report giving an overview of the County Council's draft response to the consultation plans for the A27 at Worthing and Lancing. The draft response had taken into account the areas of transport, economy, environment, construction

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and other matters. Once all consultation responses had been analysed by Highways England a preferred route will be announced by the Secretary of State later in 2017. Further consultation will then take place as part of the Development Consent Order process, and following examination, a decision to grant development consent will then be taken by the Secretary of State.

39. The Committee invited the following non-committee local Members to address the Committee for five minutes and give comment:

- Mr Turner – Recognised the need for improvements at Worthing but believed that the one option proposed was minimal and did not go far enough to improve congestion. He also raised concerns that residential roads would be put under pressure by an increase in HGV traffic and suggested that more substantial junction improvements could improve traffic flow. Also believed that the benefits offered were only short term, not worth the disruption and that local residents and businesses would like to see a better scheme delivered.
- Mrs Sparkes - Queried how the addition of traffic lights in the proposals were helpful to traffic flow, when there was existing evidence that traffic lights at junctions can cause queuing. She also raised concerns over the impact of traffic on air quality both in the long and short term and suggested that the County Council request a bypass option to be investigated by Highways England to divert traffic away from Worthing. Also suggested that the cost of a bypass using A283 should be investigated, along with replacing the traffic lights at Grove Lodge junction with a footbridge.
- Mr Marshall – Understood that there needed to be improvements made and didn't want to undermine them, but raised concerns over the diversion of traffic and the subsequent impact that further congestion would have on the air quality around Storrington, already high and above the legal limit. He also raised concerns over the economic impact on local villages and believed there could be better and more significant improvements in the area.
- Mrs Urquhart – Believed that the proposed scheme was disappointing and would have little effect on reducing air quality. Highlighted the danger of HGV's diverted onto residential roads and questioned the lack of HGV routing in the consultation document. Along with residents surrounding the A280, she was strongly opposed to a northern bypass and its potential damaging effects if it were to cut through ancient villages and disturb sensitive geology within the South Downs National Park (SDNP). Also raised concerns that the County Council could incur additional costs over mitigation measures, (such as re-routing, parking restrictions etc) with a request that the Cabinet Member continues to pressure Highways England for more funding.
- Mr Waight – Suggested that the County Council's response would be improved by an executive summary giving more clarity on its position. He believed the proposed scheme's benefits would be modest and erode over time. He also questioned whether the scheme was a first step towards a

future-proofed solution otherwise it could be money wasted; and suggested that grade separated junctions along the route would improve the traffic flow.

- Mr Walsh – Highlighted that the A27 was a major trunk road and needed completion to a dual standard throughout its entire length. He supported the need for a Worthing bypass but believed the County Council shouldn't allow a request for further studies to delay the approval of the Arundel bypass, or cause the scheme to be withdrawn. He is of the belief that the proposals were not a long term solution and was underwhelmed and disappointed with them.
- Lt Cl Barton – A statement was read by the Chairman on behalf of Lt Cl Barton, in summary: He believed the proposals were too rigid and localised and lacking in alternative options; failing to address the only major option of a bypass. He also highlighted the average travel time savings per vehicle on the route and the additional increase in the volume of traffic in the event that local planned developments were approved; adding that Highways England had failed to consider the implications of some emerging proposals for development.

40. The Senior Adviser to the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Highways welcomed the comments from local members and expressed that she would like to see the progression of all three of the improvement schemes along the A27 corridor at Chichester, Worthing and Lancing and Arundel.

41. The Committee made comments including those that follow. It:

- Expressed disappointment at only 1 option being proposed, which would deliver only modest improvements, and requested that Highways England consider a northern bypass or relief road as an option.
- Highlighted that the increase in traffic signals & pedestrian crossings was likely to cause an increase in congestion, as demonstrated by the effect of the existing signals and crossings. Grade separated or wider junctions along the route were suggested to improve the traffic flow. The reduction of peak travel time by only 4 mins was also not seen as a significant improvement. An officer advised that existing pedestrian crossings would be incorporated into the design of signalised junctions rather than being in addition. The travel time savings that had been quoted were average travel times per vehicle during an average peak hour rather than the maximum travel time that could potentially be achieved.
- Raised concerns over the increase in poor air quality and pollution, especially caused by standing traffic. There was a need to highlight other options to reduce pollution such as electric vehicles and reducing transmissions. Also raised concerns that additional pressure on local roads could create 'rat runs', especially for HGVs.

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- That cycle bridges, provisions for foot/cycle movement and drainage infrastructure, with the need to cater for storm event capacity, be highlighted as important issues.
- Requested more work and technical judgement on local journeys to understand the impact and mitigation i.e. an analysis of each individual junction. Further clarity is needed on the time reduction/congestion analysis that takes into account other roads as well as the A27. An officer advised that conclusions in the draft response had been drawn from detailed evidence and analysis, but that the response itself was intended to be presented from a strategic viewpoint.
- Concerns over poor value for money, the economic impact on surrounding villages, including sensitive geology being disturbed within the South Downs National Park (SDNP) and how the proposal fits in with planned local developments which, without coordination, would give rise to separate/incompatible schemes.
- Concerns that the benefit cost ratio had been underestimated to justify the lower spend and that the County Council could incur additional costs over mitigation measures, (such as re-routing, parking restrictions etc) with a request that the Cabinet Member continues to pressure Highways England for more funding.
- Concerns over pedestrian safety around Worthing College as it is necessary for many students to cross the A27.
- Concerns that if this option was rejected in its entirety then funding could be withdrawn altogether or that the scheme could be held up by additional demands or requests for further studies.

42. Mrs Brunsdon made the following proposal, seconded by Mr Patel which the Committee considered: -

- 1) In guiding the Cabinet Member's response the Committee asks that he writes to broadly support the measures and improvements proposed within the context of the Highway England's objectives; and that the response acknowledges through the use of an Executive Summary the positive and negative benefits that this local improvement scheme delivers to the Worthing and Lancing residents, against the balance of what remains a number of unresolved issues and elements of the Government's Road Investment Strategy that the County Council holds to be a risk, if not considered or addressed as part of the future refinement of proposals.

43. A vote was held and the proposal was carried.

44. Resolved – That the Committee recommends that:

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- 1) In guiding the Cabinet Member's response the Committee asks that he writes to broadly support the measures and improvements proposed within the context of the Highway England's objectives; and that the response acknowledges through the use of an Executive Summary the positive and negative benefits that this local improvement scheme delivers to the Worthing and Lancing residents, against the balance of what remains a number of unresolved issues and elements of the Government's Road Investment Strategy that the County Council holds to be a risk, if not considered or addressed as part of the future refinement of proposals.
- 2) The schemes for the A27 (including the Worthing/Lancing scheme) should be assessed and progressed independently, but that a cumulative assessment should be carried out. The assessment should not be described as "vital", and there should be fewer references to it within the consultation response. In particular the Cabinet Member should address the references made in points: 6,9,25,42,78,80,84 of the draft response.
- 3) The Executive summary challenges Highways England as to whether the money spent on the present proposals would be wasted if a future proofed scheme was to subsequently be implemented.
- 4) The other areas of concern raised by the Committee are spelt out in bullet points in the executive summary.

Cabinet Member's Response to the Committee's Recommendations on the Highway Maintenance Term Contract 2018

45. The Committee noted the Cabinet Member's Response to the Committee's Recommendations on the Highway Maintenance Term Contract 2018 (copy appended to signed minutes).

46. The Committee requested that: -

- A clause be built into the final contract obliging the chosen contractor to attend future meetings of the Committee as and when requested.

Annual Sustainability Report

47. The Committee considered a report by Director for Energy, Waste and Environment and Sustainability Team Leader (copy appended to signed minutes).

48. Ruth O'Brien, Advisor, Sustainability Team and Catherine Cannon Sustainability Team Leader introduced the report which provided an update on the performance of the County Council in reducing costs and its direct impact against five key indicators: Carbon, Energy, Water, Waste and Travel. This included the Sustainability Report 2016/17 which set out the County Council's

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financial performance alongside a summary of the work done during that period to reduce costs and the direct impacts in those areas.

49. The Cabinet Member for Environment added that it had been a good year for performance and that future improvements still needed to be made.

50. The Committee made comments including those that follow. It:

- Welcomed the overall improvements to performance and questioned whether there was now an optimised programme in place for installing solar panels on schools and whether there was further scope for improvement. Also whether the use of solar power contributed to the County Council's carbon reduction footprint and if the Cabinet Member for Environment would be happy to write to the Secretary of State regarding the CRC (formerly the Carbon Reduction Commitment) carbon tax and the way in which it is calculated, to enable off site renewable generation to be beneficially reflected. An officer advised that solar panel opportunities were dealt with by the Your Energy Sussex Team (YES) but that currently 12 schools had already signed up to the programme, with a further 50 showing interest. The calculation methodology for the CRC carbon tax meant that where energy is taken directly from renewables such as solar panels, then the use of energy from the grid is reduced by the equivalent amount, subsequently reducing grid consumption, carbon emissions and the CRC payment. For renewables where the energy isn't taken directly, i.e. solar farms, the energy goes straight into the grid. The same amount of grid energy is then used, so energy use doesn't fall for CRC purposes, nor do the carbon emissions. *The Cabinet Member added that she would be happy to write to the Secretary of State to ask for off-site renewable generation efforts to be positively reflected in the new arrangements when the CRC finishes in 2019.*
- Congratulated everyone involved in achieving the good progress and queried how many contractors for the collection of internal waste had been procured for 2016/17 and the current length of the contract. Also whether there were any plans for action regarding the disposal of food waste. An officer advised that two contractors had been procured and information would be provided to the Committee over the contract length. Food waste collections had already been trialled in County Council buildings. *The Cabinet Member also advised that there were currently on-going discussions regarding food waste.*
- Questioned if the County Council was looking at replacing fleet cars/vans with electric and low carbon vehicles, including the installation of charging points. An officer advised that this would be introduced when feasible, during the next turnover of vehicles. Charging points would also be installed on sites for pool cars.
- Questioned the proposals for the procurement of a water supplier and whether it would be just one supplier across all of the county sites. An officer advised that this information would be provided to the Committee.

51. Resolved – That the Committee:

- Endorses the Annual Sustainability Report 2016/17
- Requests that the Cabinet Member for Environment write to the Secretary of State regarding the CRC carbon tax and the way in which it is calculated, to enable off-site renewable generation to be beneficially reflected

Forward Plan of Key Decisions

52. The Committee considered the Forward Plan September to December 2017 (copy appended to signed minutes).

53. The Committee made the following comment:

- Questioned whether there were any plans to appoint an Executive Director for Communities and Public Protection. An officer advised that this information would be provided to the Committee.

54. Resolved – That the Forward Plan be noted.

Date of the Next Meeting

55. The Committee noted that its next scheduled meeting will take place on 28 September 2017 at 10.30am at County Hall, Chichester.

The meeting ended at 1.27pm

Chairman