

**MINUTES** of the meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE** held at 10.00am on Wednesday 9 March 2011 at County Hall, Kingston upon Thames.

These minutes are to be confirmed by the Select Committee at its next meeting on 18 May 2011.

**Members:**

\*\* Carol Coleman (Chairman)  
\*\* Steve Renshaw (Vice-Chairman)  
\* Mark Brett-Warburton  
\*\* Bill Chapman  
\*\* Will Forster  
\*\* Chris Frost  
\*\* Chris Norman  
\*\* John Orrick  
A Tony Rooth  
\*\* Michael Sydney

**Ex officio Members:**

- Geoff Marlow (Chairman of the Council)
- Lavinia Sealy (Vice-Chairman of the Council)

**In attendance:**

\*\* Lynne Hack, Cabinet Member for Environment

\*\* = Present  
\* = Present for part of the meeting  
A = Apologies

**PART 1**  
**(IN PUBLIC)**

**13/11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Tony Rooth.

**14/11 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: 19 JANUARY 2011 [Item 2]**

- i. Page 1 of 8: Zully Grant-Duff had not been in attendance.
- ii. Page 4 of 8: Item 08/11, viii: Members requested that this bullet point be amended to read: Officers reported that there was general support for the scheme, but that it could potentially become a political issue in the run up to the local elections.
- iii. Page 4 of 8: Item 08/11, viii: Members also requested that the Members view that there was a need for a holistic approach to be taken to avoid displacement and dispersal.
- iv. Page 5 of 8: Item 09/11, iii: It was reported that this was a repair schedule not a replacement schedule.
- v. Page 6 of 8: Resolved b) add “and maintenance schedule” at end of paragraph.

**RESOLVED:** The minutes were agreed as a correct record subject to the above amendments.

**15/11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]**

Michael Sydney declared an interest as he is chairman of the Surrey Hills Board.

**16/11 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]**

No questions or petitions were received.

**17/11 COMMITTEE BULLETIN [Item 5]**

- i. Members noted the Bristol Cycle Scheme and the cautionary note it presented. It was noted that Cycle Woking had far exceeded targets so far.
- ii. The Cabinet Member for Environment informed the Committee that the Council had been contacted by the Department for Environment regarding the Lower Thames Flood Strategy. Now only £100m was being made available and councils were being invited to contribute. Surrey’s contribution was £3m but has been reduced to £1m.
- iii. Members requested that an update on Exercise Watermark be presented to the next meeting.

**RESOLVED:**

- a) That the Bulletin be noted; and
- b) That an update on Exercise Watermark be brought to the next meeting.

**18/11 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME & RECOMMENDATIONS TRACKER [Item 6]**

**Work Programme**

- i. Members noted that the Heathrow Airtrack item had been deferred from Transportation Select Committee's March meeting.
- ii. It was reported that following discussions between the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Officers, the item on Community Recycling Centres (Item 13) would now be presented to the Committee in May.
- iii. It was requested that an item on the Civil Contingencies Fund be presented to the Committee in May.
- iv. It was noted that the Committee was due to consider countywide flooding at its next meeting. It was agreed that the Environment Agency be invited to attend, especially with relation to the Lower Thames Flood Strategy.

**RESOLVED:** That the Work Programme and Recommendations Tracker be updated and noted.

**19/11 RESPONSE FROM THE CABINET ON ISSUES REFERRED BY THE SELECT COMMITTEE [Item 7]**

No responses have been received.

**20/11 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN [Item 8]**

**Declarations of Interest:** None

**Witnesses:**

Tony Orzieri, Finance Manager

Dr Lynne Hack, Cabinet Member for Environment

The Committee considered the draft annexes that are proposed to be included in the Medium Term Financial Plan for the Environment & Infrastructure Directorate.

**Key points raised during the discussion:**

- i. Members were informed that these annexes were based on the budget approved by Cabinet and Council last month. These annexes would be taken to Cabinet at the end of March for overall approval.

- ii. Members noted that several of these annexes had already been scrutinised by the Transportation Select Committee.
- iii. Questions were asked around the bus subsidies and the fare schemes for crossing county boundaries. It was reported that this would be part of the Children & Learning Directorate. Regarding concessionary fares, this referred the transfer of schemes to the districts and boroughs from the County. Members questioned the Transport for London figure, and how this was tested and challenged. An update on this was provided after the meeting (Annex 1).
- iv. Members questioned why the Waste & Sustainability budget was being cut by £1.5 million. It was reported that this was partly due to team restructures and work now being covered via the Road Safety PVR.
- v. Clarification was sought over why the Minerals costs could not be capitalised. Members were informed that this was not possible as it was only possible to capitalise assets. Concerns remained that there was a risk of double counting.
- vi. It was noted that the developer funded Airtrack was included in the annexes. The Committee had heard earlier that the Heathrow Airtrack item had been deferred and that consequently there was a degree of uncertainty about this funding.
- vii. Members asked to what extent the on-street parking would impact on the budget. It was reported that the full extent was not reflected in the budget and that there might be further savings to be made. Members noted that next year the district and borough councils would absorb forecasted losses.
- viii. Members sought clarity over street lighting costs. It was reported that this cost was mostly the street lighting PFI, which was scheduled to increase over a five-year period as the street lighting was improved. More information on this was provided on this after the meeting (Annex 1).
- ix. It was reported that within inflation costs, some of this related to staff costs, such as increases to the National Insurance contributions paid by the employer.
- x. Members of the Committee's Performance, Risk & Finance Group informed the Committee of the work it had done in the past year. It reported that it had developed good relations with officers and met "electronically" via emails.
- xi. Members noted the steady increase in Transport costs. It was reported that the bulk of this was running the transport co-ordination for schools and adults Directorates. These costs are recharged to these Directorates so do not cost the Environment & Infrastructure Directorate. Other increases are due to increases in demand and inflation.
- xii. The Committee noted that at its next meeting, Cabinet would consider PFI risks relating to the waste PFI contract.
- xiii. Members noted that approximately £10.5 million savings were marked as Amber. Concerns were raised that these might not be achieved. It was reported that these were monitored monthly by management teams and the CLT Board.

**RESOLVED:** That the Committee notes the Medium Term Financial Plan annexes.

**21/11 ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE BUSINESS PLAN 2011 TO 2015**  
[Item 9]

**Declarations of Interest:** None

**Witnesses:**

Geoffrey Delamere, Programme and Commissioning Lead Manager  
Lynne Hack, Cabinet Member for Environment

Consideration was given to the draft Environment & Infrastructure business plan for 2011 to 2015. An updated version was tabled at the meeting and is attached to the Minute Book (Annex 3).

**Key points raised during the discussion:**

- i. Members were informed that this Business Plan combined the Directorate's Strategy and Business Plan in to one document.
- ii. It was noted that the document did not mention several key issues regarding transport and highways, including parking, for example. There was also no mention of a sustainable and integrated transport system, and Members were concerned that the bid for the Local Sustainable Transport Fund was not being taken seriously. Members were informed that the Government was not looking to prioritise transport development in the southeast, and that, consequently, Surrey had a remote chance of succeeding.
- iii. It was also noted that the document made no reference to climate change or community recycling centres. It was acknowledged that the document could be expanded to include reference to these issues.
- iv. The Committee felt that the document ought to refer to the Eco Park and the impact that this would have on how waste was managed. Members were informed that a contract for dealing with waste was in place until 2019, and that options would be considered nearer the time. It was acknowledged that the Olympic Games 2012 would increase the pressures faced by the current waste management system.
- v. Members felt that the Business Plan needed to reflect the work done via the Countryside Service Public Value Review.
- vi. Members also felt that there was not enough reference to the Countryside as valuable landscape.

**RESOLVED:** That the Committee

- (a) The following amendments be made to the draft Environment & Infrastructure Directorate Business Plan 2011 – 2015:
  - i. Include reference to transport and highways;
  - ii. Include reference to climate change and community recycling centres;
  - iii. Include reference to the Eco Park; and
  - iv. Reflect the work done by the Countryside Service Public Value Review.

**RECOMMENDED:**

- (b) Subject to these amendments, the Select committee RECOMMENDS the adoption of the plan by the CABINET.

**22/11 PUBLIC VALUE REVIEW OF THE COUNTRYSIDE SERVICE [Item 10]**

**Declarations of Interest:** None

**Witnesses:**

Mike Dawson, Countryside Group Manager

Lynne Hack, Cabinet Member for Environment

Consideration was given to a report which provided the Committee with an opportunity to consider Countryside Service Public Value Review following its approval by Cabinet.

**Key points raised during the discussion:**

- i. Members were informed that Cabinet had made one amendment to the recommendations. Recommendation 4 now read: That the review of partnerships set out in Annex 2 to the submitted report should be issued for consultation with partner bodies and that Members are kept informed, prior to a decision on the County Council's involvement by the Cabinet Member for Environment in consultation with the Assistant Director Operations, Highways and Countryside. It was reported that the Steering Board and Member Reference Group would receive quarterly reports on progress against these recommendations.
- ii. It was reported that there had been a 20% reduction in the number of staff working on Rights of Way. These would now be managed by colleagues from Highways. New GIS systems enabled these staff to prioritise work and contact contractors more effectively. It was reported that there was a concern that there would be increased legal pressures. Work was underway with district, borough and parish councils to see if they were able to do some inspections and small-scale maintenance.
- iii. The PVR also proposed to increase the income generated by accessing the land, for instance, car-parking schemes would be introduced at major sites, with options for people to buy annual tickets. It was reported that this would be introduced inline with the on street-parking scheme.
- iv. Surrey Wildlife Trust (SWT) had been asked to provide an asset management plan for cost of maintaining its buildings. This had now been drafted and indicated the cost of maintenance and potential income. The cost of repair is significantly higher than potential income, so SWT came to the view that it will return some properties to the Council.
- v. The Member Reference Group informed the Committee that it felt the PVR had been conducted very well and that it was happy to sign off the report.
- vi. Members requested to what extent the Basingstoke Canal had been considered, and what EU funding was available for its maintenance. It was reported that Hampshire and Surrey County Council had agreed

capital programmes for maintaining the canal over the next three years. It was reported that EU funding was being pursued for conservation purposes, and that funding from the Heritage Lottery Grant was also being investigated. It was also possible that a social enterprise could be established to look at running parts of the canal. Members suggested that increasing moorings would be a good idea to raise capital.

- vii. It was reported that, due to the financial pressures the Council found itself facing, it was necessary for the Council to do its statutory obligations first.
- viii. Members were assured that the Council was already in the top 25% for service, and hoped to stay there.

**RESOLVED:** That the Committee welcomed the work done by the Countryside Service Public Value Review and received updates from the Member Reference Group as appropriate.

### **23/11 STREET SCENE COLLABORATION WITH DISTRICTS AND BOROUGHES** [Item 11]

**Declarations of Interest:** None

**Witnesses:**

Geoffrey Delamere, Programme and Commissioning Lead Manager  
Lynne Hack, Cabinet Member for Environment

Consideration was given to a report which updated the Environment and Economy Select Committee on ditch maintenance issues within the County Council's street scene initiative with Districts and Boroughs. An updated report was tabled at the meeting and attached to the Minute Book (Annex 4).

**Key points raised during the discussion:**

- i. Members were informed that a key area of concern was that there was not currently any planned maintenance for ditch/gully work. There was no overall system that mapped and showed ownership, current data was inconsistent and incomplete. Work is underway with districts and borough councils and private landowners to improve the data held.
- ii. Members questioned whether tree work was included in the street scene collaboration. It was reported that a contract had been agreed by Cabinet last year with nine of the eleven boroughs for tree work. Members felt that this could be looked at again in future.
- iii. It was noted that several district and borough council's were not signed up to street scene. It was noted that these tended to be the more rural councils. Work was ongoing to get tender prices for all district and borough work. It was felt that more could be done to increase advertising revenue, from roundabout maintenance, for example.
- iv. A concern was raised that there was a risk that the county could become a two-tier county, with different levels of service provided, due to the lack of resources and staff that some of the more rural districts and borough's had.

- v. It was suggested that more could be done to maximise local knowledge. Member Allocations could be used, for instance.

**RESOLVED:** That the Committee

- (a) Note the position on ditch maintenance; and follow the progress on the drainage repair programme.
- (b) Highlight the corporate theme of personal responsibility and encourage landowners to fulfil their responsibilities to maintain ditches that they own;
- (c) Support further steps by Highways officers to obtain funding for improving information on ditch location, condition and maintenance; and
- (d) That additional funding be pursued through the Local Committees.

**24/11 UPDATE ON COMMUNITY RECYCLING CENTRE PERFORMANCE** [Item 12]

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

**25/11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING** [Item 13]

The next scheduled meeting of the Committee will be held on Friday 18 May 2011 at 10am in the Ashcombe.

[The meeting concluded at 12.41pm]

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**Chairman**