

MINUTES of the meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT SELECT COMMITTEE** held at 10.00am on Thursday 15 September 2011 at County Hall, Kingston upon Thames.

These Minutes are subject to confirmation by the Select Committee at its meeting on 10 November 2011.

Members:

- * Steve Renshaw (Chairman)
- * Mark Brett-Warburton (Vice-Chairman)
- * Mike Bennison
- * Stephen Cooksey
- * Will Forster
- * Chris Frost
- * Pat Frost
- * John Furey
- * David Goodwin
- * Simon Gimson
- Frances King
- * Geoff Marlow
- * Chris Norman
- * Tom Phelps-Penry
- Michael Sydney

Ex officio Members:

- Mrs Lavinia Sealy (Chairman of the Council)
- * Mr David Munro (Vice-Chairman of the Council)

Substitute Members:

- * Mr David Munro (for Michael Sydney)

* = Present

PART 1

IN PUBLIC

27/11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Michael Sydney and Frances King. Mr David Munro substituted for Michael Sydney.

28/11 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: 30 JUNE 2011: [Item 2]

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

29/11 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS [Item 3]

The following declarations of interest were made with regard to both agenda item 11 *“Review of Countryside Management Contract 2011/12”* and item 12 *“Countryside Estate: Surrey Wildlife Trust’s Asset Management Plan”*:

- Chris Norman and David Munro declared personal interests as members of the Surrey Wildlife Trust. Chris Frost declared a personal interest because his wife is a member of the Surrey Wildlife Trust. Mark Brett-Warburton declared a personal interest because his business has worked with the Surrey Wildlife Trust, though he had not dealt with them personally.

30/11 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

There were no questions or petitions.

31/11 RESPONSE BY THE EXECUTIVE TO ISSUES REFERRED BY THE SELECT COMMITTEE [Item 5]

- A response was received regarding the Winter Performance Task Group report.
- Members expressed concern that there was still a need for grit bins to remain on certain P1 routes. The Chairman responded that Highways would assess each route individually on a case-by-case basis.
- Members welcomed the response from the Cabinet Member and approved of the reduction in overall costs.
- The Chairman confirmed that grit bins scoring below the 100-point threshold outlined in the report would remain in their current location until they reached the end of their lifespan, at which point they would not be replaced.
- A response was received regarding the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment, which was noted by the Committee.

32/11 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND RECOMMENDATIONS TRACKER [Item 6]

- The Forward Work Programme and Recommendations Tracker were considered by the Committee. The Chairman informed the Committee that the business plan for the Environment and Infrastructure Directorate would be considered at the meeting of the Committee to be held on the 10th November 2011. A Member subsequently requested that details concerning the South East 7 (SE7) be included within this item.
- The Chairman informed the Committee that the item regarding On-street Parking Agency Parking Enforcement Agreements which was listed for November 2011 would need to be delayed until January 2012. It was also suggested that the On Street Parking Task Group should be

reconvened in order to review the business case for On Street Parking Charges, given the differences in implementation across District and Borough Councils. The Committee agreed that the task group would be reconvened.

- The Chairman advised the Committee that he would confirm Membership arrangements for the task groups listed on the Work Programme after the meeting. Several Members felt that clarification was required regarding the PVR MRGs and Task Groups which were underway across the Council.
- Members subsequently requested that they be provided with a list of all the task groups and MRGs involving Members that were underway across the Council. The Chairman requested that he be informed as and when the Members of the Committee are approached to participate in MRGs, in order to be able to gauge Member capacity for participating in Task Groups.

Resolved:

- That the business plan for the Environment and Infrastructure Directorate be considered at the meeting of the Committee to be held on 10 November 2011.
- That the On-street parking task group be reconvened.
- That a summary of all the task groups and Public Value Review Member Reference Groups involving Members across the Council be provided.

Recommendations:

None.

Select Committee next steps:

The Committee will review the Forward Work Programme and Recommendations Tracker at its next meeting.

33/11 **CABINET MEMBER PRIORITIES [Item 7]**

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses: Ian Lake – Cabinet Member for Transport

- A Member suggested that the Council should declare how it was planning to liaise with District, Borough, Town and Parish Councils over local ownership of transport issues.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Recommendations:

None.

Select Committee next steps:

The Priorities of the Cabinet Member for Environment will be considered at the next meeting of the Committee.

34/11 **UPDATE ON FREIGHT INITIATIVES [Item 8]**

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses: Iain Reeve – Assistant Director Strategy, Transport and Planning,
Peter Hitchings – Freight Officer

- Officers advised that strategies to deal with freight needed to balance the economic need for the free flow of goods and materials against the impact of freight on roads and communities.
- The Assistant Director for Strategy, Transport and Planning advised that each mineral extraction site designated within the Surrey Minerals Plan also had a transport plan which would include freight routing and requirements for measures such as wheel washing on site.
- Members were informed that there had been over 70 'rail over road bridge' strikes in the past five years, with one bridge being struck nine times in one year. Officers advised it was understood that bridge strikes were mostly caused by driver error, rather than deficiencies in signing. Members were advised that research undertaken nationally had indicated that HGV specific Satellite Navigation Systems (HGV Sat Nav) were the most effective (and also most cost effective) means of reducing bridge strikes, providing that the drivers updated their devices on a regular basis.
- While exploring the potential causes of bridge strikes, Members queried the accuracy of the height restriction signage on bridges and suggested that a survey be conducted of Surrey's bridges to ascertain their height limits for vehicles, in order to be sure that all the signed height restrictions on Surrey's bridges are appropriate and also in metric.
- As bridge striking by vehicles is a road safety issue, Members felt that the Police and the Council could combine their efforts in tackling the problem by asking the Drive Smart Campaign to consider pursuing the issue.
- The cost of repairing bridges, roads and signage after a bridge strike was an area of concern for the Committee. Members felt that where the Council was faced with costs arising from a bridge strike, the Council should ensure that where possible, costs were recovered from the driver or HGV operator responsible for the incident, or the appropriate insurance company.

- Several Members commented that they had experienced problems with HGVs using inappropriate routes within their communities and requested clarification as to what action could be taken to address this. Furthermore, the Committee agreed that it would be useful for Members to be given a set of guidelines which outline what they can do to support communities facing problems with HGVs, and what powers the Council has with regard to HGV access.
- Officers advised that the Council had been in discussion with the largest HGV Sat Nav producers across Europe to agree a process to report HGV incidents in Surrey, with the aim of filtering out inappropriate HGV routes through the County from their systems. In addition to the benefits of reducing the risk of bridge strikes, Members felt that encouraging the use of HGV Sat Nav devices would help to reduce the problem of HGVs being routed through inappropriate roads in Surrey.
- As an alternative to HGV Sat Navs, some large haulage firms use their own bespoke tracking and guidance systems. It was agreed therefore, to ask the Cabinet to make representations to the Government to require the use of either HGV specific Sat Navs or bespoke HGV guidance systems by HGV operators, and to ensure that they are kept up to date with the latest maps.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Recommendations (to Cabinet):

- a) That representations be made to Government to require HGV operators to use either HGV specific satellite navigation systems or bespoke HGV guidance systems, and that they are kept up to date.
- b) That guidelines be provided to Members outlining what they can do to support communities with regard to freight problems, and in particular, access issues for HGVs.
- c) To ensure that the costs to the Council associated with repairs following bridge strikes are recovered from the driver or HGV operator responsible for the incident, or the appropriate insurance company.
- d) To request that bridge strikes be considered by the Drive Smart Campaign.
- e) To survey the height of bridges in Surrey to ensure their markings are accurate.

Select Committee next steps:

The Select Committee will receive a Cabinet response to its recommendations at its next meeting.

35/11 **UPDATE ON ROAD MARKING MAINTENANCE [Item 9]**

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses: Lucy Monie – Operations Group Manager
Tony Casey – Highways Maintenance Team Manager

- Concern was expressed at the fact that May Gurney has been issuing sub-contacts in order to deal with a backlog of work. Officers responded these contracts were at no additional cost to SCC and that they go through the same procedures that apply to May Gurney. It was suggested that the situation be reviewed by Internal Audit, but officers advised that they felt the actions that had been taken in response to the problems associated with the backlog had been sufficient, and the problems had been addressed.
- The Vice-Chairman queried how long it took for lines to be replaced following different types of road maintenance works. Officers agreed to circulate a note confirming this to Members outside of the meeting.
- A Member queried whether the Council faced liabilities where its road markings fell below the recommended retro reflectivity level. In response, Officers advised that levels of retro reflectivity were advisory rather than obligatory, and that it was felt that the efforts to improve road markings would reduce any liability in this area. The Chairman pointed out that members of the public considered that markings on pedestrian crossings were a safety concern that should receive priority consideration by the Council, and as such SCC should review their criteria for remarking pedestrian crossings.
- Officers were asked to confirm whether Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) money could be used to pay for lining schemes. Specific issues were also raised in relation to the process for the removal of out of date lining, as Members had experienced problems with the enforcement of certain markings when they had not been applied correctly. Officers agreed to provide a response outside of the meeting.
- Officers advised that a survey of road markings in Surrey had been conducted which had identified that 68% of the road network's markings were below the recommended standard of retro reflectivity. In order to address this, a trial of longer life road marking material was being conducted. In response, the Chairman requested clarification of the criteria for the trial, and whether there were plans for implementation of the longer life material if the trial proved to be a success. Officers agreed to revert on this matter.
- The Chairman emphasised the importance of removing old road markings when traffic or parking arrangements changed, especially as this had implications for the enforcement of on street parking.
- Members of the Committee congratulated officers for their recent work on road marking maintenance, as a number of areas had seen significant improvements.

Actions/further information to be provided:

- That a note be circulated to Members via email giving more information on the trial of longer life road marking material, specifically outlining the criteria being used to determine its suitability, and plans for implementing the use of such lining, should the trial prove successful.
- That a note be circulated to Members via email explaining the specified restoration times for road markings following different types of roads maintenance.
- Officers to provide Members with a response regarding issues surrounding the use of CIL money for lining schemes, and the removal of inaccurate lining.

Resolved:

- a) That the requirement for ongoing funding to carry out regular maintenance to ensure that road markings are fit for purpose, be endorsed.
- b) That the area based programme approach for 2011/12 and subsequent development of prioritisation criteria for future programmes be noted.

Recommendations:

None.

Select Committee next steps:

None.

36/11 **BUSINESS TRAVEL IMPACTS – SCOPING REPORT [Item 10]**

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses: Ian Boast – Head of Waste and Sustainability
Lesley Harding – Sustainability Team Manager

- It was suggested that SCC follow the policy of the Inland Revenue and increase the business mileage rate from 40p to 45p, for both staff and Members.
- It was suggested that mileage allowances may be raised by Trade Unions as part of pay and benefit negotiations.
- The Vice-Chairman commented that personal circumstances meant people may not have complete freedom of choice when purchasing a car. As such, it was suggested that there be a single rate for everyone, to include both employees and members, regardless of vehicle size and emission levels.

- Despite this, members felt that a differential rate would have more support, were there to be an obvious and comprehensive rationale. However, there was unease that the manufacturing and lifetime costs of a vehicle were not considered. Officers confirmed that they did not know why the 150g/kg CO₂ emissions had been selected as the threshold for the member's differential mileage rate. It was noted that the least 'green' action that members could undertake would be for them all to purchase a hybrid vehicle. There was a concern that the mileage rate policy may not support the objective. As these were not matters for officers to answer, the Chairman agreed to raise these concerns with the Cabinet.
- It was asked whether any work had been carried out with regard to basing employees at locations near to where they live so as to reduce travel costs. Officers responded that this had been considered, along with the possibility of encouraging more people to work from home. However, this was not possible in all cases.
- As reported, officers confirmed that the vast majority of claimed mileage was from employees, particularly in Adult Social Services. However, they had not calculated the costs of County Hall not being in the county where these services were to be delivered.
- The Committee noted the report and agreed that a further report be brought to the committee within six months once more detailed work had been undertaken to develop a programme of activity to reduce business travel impacts.

Resolved:

- That the Committee consider further information on this item at a later stage, to include:
 - i) Information on 20% reduction on rail fares for services operated by Southern Rail.
 - ii) Information on level of expenses paid out.
 - iii) Full year of CO₂ emissions and mileage figures for member travel expenses.
 - iv) Information on journey mapping, office locations, and use of ICT.
 - v) Details of insurance claims benchmarked against other similar authorities.
- The Chairman agreed to discuss the specific issue of the 39p member mileage rate with the Cabinet, particularly with regard to clarification over Member unease that the policy was irrational, along with the 150g/kg CO₂ differentiation and differing vehicle types.

Recommendations:

None.

Select Committee next steps:

The Select Committee will review Council Business Travel at a future meeting.

37/11 **REVIEW OF COUNTRYSIDE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT 2011/12**

Declarations of interest: Mark Brett-Warburton, Chris Frost, Chris Norman, David Munro.

Witnesses:

Sue Lewry-Jones – Chief Internal Auditor
Brianna Luscombe – Lead Auditor

- Officers clarified that the attached Audit report was undertaken as a scheduled investigation, and that a separate audit had been undertaken in response to allegations that had been made regarding Swanworth Farm and the Norbury Park Sawmill.
- A Member suggested that the governance structure for the partnership committee might benefit from Member involvement. In response, Officers confirmed that there is member representation on the partnership committee and agreed to clarify their role.
- The Chairman stated that he felt the recommendations of the audit were helpful, though acknowledged that SWT would have to learn from its previous experiences and agreed with the suggestion that SWT required greater internal scrutiny.
- Members emphasised importance of ensuring that the Action Management Plan was adhered to and the new Partnership Committee should make this a priority.

Resolved:

- That the existing role of Members, currently on the Partnership Committee be clarified.
- That the Committee be informed of proposals to review the role of the Partnership Committee, which would be brought back to the January meeting of the Committee, prior to confirmation.

Recommendations:

None.

Select Committee next steps:

None.

38/11 **COUNTRYSIDE ESTATE: SURREY WILDLIFE TRUST'S ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN [Item 12]**

Declarations of interest: Mark Brett-Warburton, Chris Frost, Chris Norman, David Munro.

Witnesses: Lisa Creaye-Griffin – Countryside Group Manager
Steve Evans – Asset Plan Delivery Manager

- Officers advised that the principle behind the Asset Management Plan (AMP) was to ensure that the income generated from SWT's property assets would be used primarily to maintain those assets, and then any surplus income be used to support SWT's service delivery.
- A Member commented that they felt that the financial strategy for SWT was high risk, as it was not yet known what the maintenance shortfall for SWT's assets would be. In response, Officers advised that SWT had been asked to produce Maintenance Plans for its properties that would then be used to assess whether the Sinking Fund would be sufficient to cover the cost of property maintenance.
- The Committee was informed that the Asset Management Plan and production of maintenance schedules would be monitored by officers, and that it could be referred to the Select Committee for further scrutiny should any major issues arise.
- The Chairman requested that an interim report be submitted to the Committee for its January meeting, including details on how a supervisory body would be set up and the timescales involved.
- Members felt that the business plan should look beyond a three/five year period because the service contract is for a period of fifty years. In addition, Members requested that a three to five year income generation plan be drawn up for SWT's finances and be brought back to the March meeting of the Committee.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Recommendations:

- a) That the Select Committee approve the AMP and a response be sent to SWT once the Members Asset Panel has made its comments. This should also release the additional income as set out in the Cabinet Report of 30 March 2010.
- b) That SWT be required to set up the Sinking Fund by December 2011
- c) That the County Council and SWT work together to identify the assets that are a financial liability, or are no longer required to fulfil a public service role, or do not provide a return on capital, and ensure the potential to let out buildings is maximised, and that a three to five year income generation plan is created.
- d) Governance arrangements need to be put in place for the Sinking Fund to ensure that money is appropriately applied to the fund and that any issues are highlighted at an early stage.

- e) The AMP needs to be regularly reported to SCC with annual reports to the Partnership Committee, including a regular update on the proposed use of income from property to support management of the Estate supported by relevant performance indicators.
- f) That the size and constitution of the Partnership Committee be reviewed as noted in 37/11.

Select Committee next steps:

The Select Committee will receive an interim report outlining progress to date at its January meeting.

39/11 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING [Item 13]**

The next meeting of the Committee will be on 10 November 2011.

[Meeting Ended: 2.00pm]

Chairman