

MINUTES of the meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT SELECT COMMITTEE** held at 10.00am on Thursday 10 November 2011 at County Hall, Kingston upon Thames.

These Minutes are subject to confirmation by the Select Committee at its meeting on 12 January 2012.

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)

* = Present

PART 1

IN PUBLIC

40/11 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]**

Apologies were received from Frances King.

41/11 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: 15 September 2011: [Item 2]**

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

42/11 **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS [Item 3]**

None.

43/11 **QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]**

- Five public questions were received. The responses to these are attached as **annexe A**.

- Mr Robert Palgrave submitted the following supplementary question:

“The committee has not commented on the information I provided about the commitments made by other local authorities who have set higher carbon reduction targets which crucially cover ‘whole-area’ and not just ‘own estate’.

I would like to draw the committee’s attention to the recent publication (August 2011) of Greater Manchester’s Climate Strategy where they now target a whole-area carbon reduction figure of 48% by 2020.

Will the committee and the Surrey Climate Change Partnership review Greater Manchester’s Climate Strategy with a view to matching their whole-area carbon reduction target for 2020? Surrey’s own-area target for 2014 is laudable but climate change needs commitment to longer-term action beyond just the next three years”.

The Chairman agreed to answer this question outside of the meeting.

44/11 **RESPONSE BY THE EXECUTIVE TO ISSUES REFERRED BY THE SELECT COMMITTEE [Item 5]**

- The Committee received a response from the Cabinet Member for Transport & Environment regarding the Freight Recommendations referred from the previous meeting.
- A Member asked when recommendation (2) would be implemented. Officers responded that a guidance sheet will be circulated to Members in December which will outline how local groups can limit the encroachment of HGVs on unsuitable roads.
- A Member expressed concern that the recommendations made no reference to conservation areas
- A Member suggested that contrary to recommendation (4), bridge strikes should not be considered by the Drive Smart Campaign. Officers were also asked if the future of Drive Smart would be affected by the appointment of a new Chief Constable.

Actions/further information to be provided:

- Officers to circulate a guidance sheet to Members before the end of 2011 which will outline how local groups can limit the encroachment of HGVs on unsuitable roads.

45/11 **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND RECOMMENDATIONS TRACKER [Item 6]**

- It was suggested that issues surrounding MG number references be addressed in the May Gurney performance update item in January.
- A Member requested that plans for local areas be incorporated into the Flood Risk Management item for January.

Item 2b

- It was suggested that representatives from Surrey First be included as part of a presentation the Surrey Waste Partnership item in March.
- The Committee was informed that consultation had begun on the Guildford & Waverley bus review, and that previous consultations in other areas had been successful.
- It was stated that the work of the Utilities Task Group was not likely to begin until the New Year.

The Committee was informed that the E&I PVR Member Reference Group is close to making its final recommendations. The Chairman suggested the Committee Members consider the recommendations of the PVR.

Resolved:

The Chairman to request that the recommendations of the E&I PVR come to Environment & Transport Committee at the first opportunity.

Recommendations:

None.

Select Committee next steps:

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

46/11 **ENGINEERING DESIGNS FOR HIGHWAYS SCHEMES [Item 7]**

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses: Jason Russell – Assistant Director Highways
Mark Borland – Group Manager, Projects & Contracts

- Officers introduced the report and informed the Committee that all outstanding highways design schemes would be delivered before March 2012, and that funding for schemes that take longer will be taken forward. The proposed recommendations aimed to give Members earlier sight of designs, establish more holistic schemes and improve regional co-operation with the South East Seven.
- Officers were asked whether schemes that are funded by Member allocations are included in current targets. The Committee was informed that they will likely be delivered by March 2012.
- The Chairman suggested that an additional recommendation be put forward that the proposals of the report be incorporated into the work of the prioritisation of highways and highways structures maintenance task group.
- A Member asked why the plans to become a strategic Highways Design Team and create Local Strategic Plans for highways design schemes would not be implemented until post-2013. Officers responded that they would like to deliver the plans earlier but it was dependant upon a number of factors including political support.

Item 2b

- It was acknowledged however that the Committee's CIL and Local Transport Strategy task groups were looking at this issue.
- A Member expressed concerns that the current highways design programme would not be delivered by March 2012. Issue was also raised with the fact that the report does not provide information on the status of funding for schemes that are not completed on time. The view was expressed that choosing schemes for the next 3-4 years could create problems as needs and priorities change over time. It was also suggested that Members have greater involvement in the planning of schemes and are made aware of when funding is available at an earlier stage. Officers responded that an external design team had been appointed in order to ensure that current schemes are completed on time, and that work is taking place in conjunction with the finance department to carry funding forward, though this is a Cabinet decision. The Chairman suggested that the Committee agree an additional recommendation to encourage Cabinet to approve the carry forward of funding. It was also stated that officers are committed to giving Members more input into the process.
- Officers stated that uncertainty surrounding Local Committee approval of schemes had caused problems in the past. It was suggested that this issue be raised by the Local Committee Chairman's group.
- It was suggested that Local Committees have greater influence over how developer contribution funds are spent, and that a move away from individual schemes to those that benefit entire communities be supported.
- A Member expressed concern that a project to improve process & system engineering was due to commence in April 2012, and that it should be implemented sooner. Officers responded that the proposed start date is a result of the need to get resources in place and allow officers ownership of schemes. The Committee was also informed that timescales had been affected by outside factors such as problems with the IT system, details of which would be contained in a January improvement plan.
- Concern was expressed at the current level of communication afforded to local Members with regards to individual schemes. The Chairman stated that a key problem lay between highway managers and engineers reporting, and agreed that Local Committees should be given greater clarity as to the progress of schemes. Officers suggested that work is being done to complete an online tracking scheme which will reduce the need for Members to contact officers.

Actions/further information to be provided:

Pat Frost to raise the issue of highway scheme approval with Local Committee Chairman's group.

Resolved:

- The Select Committee is supportive in principle of the need to move to longer term planning of local transport schemes, and agreed to work with officers to scrutinise the options surrounding how the commissioning of local schemes could be improved, subject to indicative timescales for the process being supplied.

- To consider the issue of design prioritisation as part of the Prioritisation of Highways and Highways Structures Maintenance Task Group.

Recommendations:

- a) To support the Management Review recommendations in relation to new organisational structure; stakeholder engagement; process engineering and new culture of performance management to improve overall strategic delivery of the Highways Design function, and prioritise this as an urgent matter.
- b) Any moneys which are committed to scheduled design schemes but are unspent by the end of the 2011/2012 financial year due to delays in the process should be rolled over into the 2012/2013 financial year and not be lost.

Select Committee next steps:

The Committee will continue to monitor the progress of proposals and work with officers to scrutinise their development. .

47/11 **UPDATE REPORT OF THE ON-STREET PARKING TASK GROUP [Item 8]**

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses: Dave Curl - Parking Strategy and Implementation Team Manager

- Officers informed the Committee that SCC is currently negotiating with partners regarding agency enforcement agreements. Historically the County's on street parking enforcement has operated at a loss but the process has now been changed so that the financial risk is shared between the County and its District and Borough partners. It has been agreed that there will be no deficit for the County this year, as the 'historic' figure of £500,000 was a result of an old process whereby the County gave Districts and Boroughs significant funding to cover the cost of enforcement.
- A Member expressed concern that the report did not contain enough detail with regards to an equalities impact assessment. Officers responded that the proposed charges will have the greatest impact upon low-income motorists, though in this case equalities assessments are challenging to undertake in Surrey because the County is not as diverse a region as London, and parking charges are not as widespread. The Committee was also informed that in Woking there will be a voucher system run in parallel with pay by phone, and that one company in the tender process has offered a service that enables the purchase of permits in local shops.
- A Member suggested that previous parking consultation undertaken in Guildford had been successful and could prove a good example for other areas. The Chairman stated that Local Committees would be able to decide how to co-ordinate the consultation in their area.

Item 2b

- The Chairman stated that if Local Committees can guarantee cost neutrality for SCC, they should be able to place machines where they see fit, and that there will be prudence for losses for external factors such as roadworks.
- A Member expressed concern that the impact of installing charging machines in conservation areas was not addressed in the report.
- The overarching contract for pay by phone was commended, though Members expressed the need for phone charges to not be more expensive than cash payments.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Recommendations:

- a) The decision to implement, or not implement, on street parking charges should be taken solely by Local Committees without the possibility of call in from the Cabinet.
- b) Local Committees are allowed to set on street parking charges, and also the prices of on street parking permits, where and at what cost they consider appropriate.
- c) The introduction of any such scheme should be cost neutral to Surrey County Council.
- d) It should be at the discretion of the Local Committees whether they wish to insist that the cost of enforcement following the introduction of on street parking charges in individual towns, or locations within their District or Borough, should also be cost neutral.
- e) Local Committees should liaise with SCC Officers and Enforcement Partners and then decide upon the required levels of enforcement and provision of payment methods and machines, subject to legal compliance and recommendation 2 that the schemes must be cost neutral to Surrey County Council.
- f) Any surpluses remaining from on street parking charging revenues within a particular District or Borough, after enforcement, administration and servicing charges have been deducted, should be allocated to the respective Local Committee to decide how they should be spent. Surpluses must only be spent in accordance with Section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act.
- g) Any surplus arising and spent as permitted by the Local Committees should be additional to the 'normal' allocation from the Highways budget i.e. Pay and Display should not subsidise conventional, required expenditure.
- h) SCC Officers to provide breakdowns of cost estimates for enforcement and servicing charges for the introduction of on street parking charging schemes within each area.

Item 2b

- i) Any proposed enforcement authority must produce a standardised financial report as determined by SCC, detailing all expenditure and costs associated with on street parking enforcement, prior to any contract being signed.
- j) Any 'body' is entitled to be considered as a potential enforcement authority providing that they are cost neutral to SCC, and they complete the standardised cost spreadsheet and it is accepted by the relevant Local Committee.
- k) These financial reports are to be agreed and accepted by the Local Committee of any area that will be enforced by an authority other than the respective local authority.
- l) The profit or any incentive for any enforcement authority has to be balanced opposite the risks being taken and then agreed by SCC, the Local Committee and where applicable, any enforced authority.
- m) SCC should ensure that where on street charges are introduced the benefits of a more efficient enforcement practice are demonstrated immediately.
- n) SCC should also use their best endeavours to implement permitted improvements within 12 months, should any surpluses arise in areas where Local Committees have agreed to introduce on street charging.

Select Committee next steps:

None.

48/11 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING [Item 9]**

The next meeting of the Committee will be on 12 January 2011.

[Meeting Ended: 12.00pm]

Chairman