

MINUTES of the meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT SELECT COMMITTEE** held at 10.00am on Thursday 19 July 2012 at County Hall, Kingston upon Thames.

These Minutes are subject to confirmation by the Select Committee at its meeting on 19 September 2012.

Members:

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

Ex officio Members:

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

Substitute Members:

- * Tim Hall
- * Nick Harrison
- * David Ivison

- * = present
- A = apologies

PART 1

IN PUBLIC

40/12 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]**

Apologies were received from Chris Frost, Michael Sydney and Alan Young. Nick Harrison, David Ivison and Tim Hall substituted respectively.

41/12 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (31 MAY 2012) [Item 2]**

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

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

There were no declarations of interests.

43/12 **QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]**

There were no questions or petitions.

44/12 **RESPONSE BY THE EXECUTIVE TO ISSUES REFERRED BY THE SELECT COMMITTEE [Item 5]**

Key points raised during the discussion:

- A response from the Cabinet was received on the subject of Tree Maintenance.
- The Chairman informed Members that a further item on Tree Maintenance would be submitted to the Committee at its September meeting.
- Officers acknowledged that the 'Community Right to Challenge' policy would have an impact on tree maintenance in Districts and Boroughs. Concern was expressed that this process was too bureaucratic, though officers expressed a commitment to make proactive offers to community groups.
- The Committee noted the response from the Cabinet.

45/12 **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND RECOMMENDATIONS TRACKER [Item 6]**

Key points raised during the discussion:

- It was suggested that a clear method of obtaining CIL monies from Boroughs and Districts be established, as there had been instances of local areas being reluctant to transfer funding to the County level.
- It was agreed that the work of the CIL Task Group would remain ongoing and specifically address any issues that could arise from the co-ordination of CIL across the County.
- It was suggested that Officers share details of the new Highways communications plan with Members of the Committee.

- The Chairman informed the Committee that the work of the on-street parking Task Group had been completed, and that all reports on the subject of on-street parking would in future be submitted direct to the Committee.
- The Committee was informed that a response had yet to be received from Central Government, relating to the Committee's concerns regarding a reduction in Surrey's funding for management of flood risk.
- The Committee was informed that the work of the Utilities Task Group would commence shortly and this would include a survey of residents' and Members' views. It was suggested that the reporting dates of the Task Group be aligned with those of the Cabinet.
- Officers were commended for their work on the Passenger Transport Task Group.

Actions/further information to be provided:

Officers to circulate details of the new Highways communications plan with Members of the Committee.

Resolved:

That the Passenger Transport, On-street Parking and Local Transport Plan Task Groups be dissolved, owing to their work having been completed.

Select Committee next steps:

The Committee will review the Forward Work Programme and Recommendations Tracker at its next meeting on 19 September 2012.

46/12 **INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT: HIGHWAYS MANAGEMENT CONTRACT [Item 7]**

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses: Mark Borland (Group Manager, Projects and Contracts)
Jim Harker (May Gurney General Manager)
Steve Jennings (May Gurney Operations Director)
Jason Russell (Assistant Director, Highways)

Diane Mackay (Audit Performance Manager)

John Furey (Cabinet Member for Transport & Environment)

Key points raised during the discussion:

- It was suggested that the recommendation contained in point 5.28 state that the Council will liaise with utilities companies. Officers agreed that this was an important issue, though the level of interaction between these companies and the Council was restricted by legislation.

- Concern was expressed regarding issues around salt storage and distribution. Officers responded that real time information updates would be available from May Gurney in 2013.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Recommendations:

None.

Select Committee next steps:

None.

47/12 **SURREY HIGHWAYS – MAY GURNEY ANNUAL REPORT [Item 8]**

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses: Mark Borland (Group Manager, Projects and Contracts)

Jim Harker (May Gurney General Manager)

Steve Jennings (May Gurney Operations Director)

Jason Russell (Assistant Director, Highways)

John Furey (Cabinet Member for Transport & Environment)

Key points raised during the discussion:

- Officers expressed the view that the Council's contract with May Gurney had been successful, with savings of £7.3 million having been made. It was clarified that the contract focused on six key activities, including emergency repair, potholes, planned maintenance, minor works, integrated transport, and winter maintenance.
- Officers informed the Committee that there had been a number of key learning points from the first fifteen months of the contract, including maintaining and improving assets and making planned maintenance more efficient. It was acknowledged that approximately 10% of the County network was not in an ideal condition and needed to be improved. It was also stated that communication would be improved in the near future with the development of a Member's portal.
- The view was expressed that ICT was a key area for improvement, with concerns having been highlighted in a recent audit report. Officers informed Members that the Maximo system had been sufficiently tested prior to its implementation, though issues with it had arisen as a result of a need to interface with mobile devices and SAP.
- It was acknowledged that emergency repairs had improved, though this was a result of additional resources being made available. Officers stated that although May Gurney had been contracted to supply eleven gangs,

they were currently employing eighteen at no additional cost to the Council and that twice as many potholes were being repaired as under the previous contract.

- Concern was expressed at the fact that crews would often not repair all potholes within a certain area at the same time. It was suggested that this was inefficient and a need to return to the same area at a later date increased costs. Officers responded that the contract stipulated that potholes under a certain depth would not be repaired owing to a need to prioritise the repair of larger potholes on the County network. It was suggested that communication with the public be improved regarding this matter. Officers acknowledged that there were issues around repairing certain potholes and not dealing with those nearby, and agreed that in areas where there were a large number of potholes it would sometimes be appropriate to repair the entire road in order to avoid additional costs in the future.
- The Committee was informed that a five day response time to Members setting out when works are to be completed would be in place by October 2012, following the recruitment of additional staff.
- It was suggested that the Members portal be accessible to the public at a future date. Officers responded that they would roll out the accessibility in stages, with County Members being given access first, followed by District Councillors, Town and Parish Councillors and members of the public.
- The Committee was informed that the Council benchmarked its pothole repairs against other Local Authorities with targets that were defensible in court.
- Officers stated that May Gurney was meeting planned maintenance repair targets, though the rate of pothole repairs had been affected by flooding in May 2012.
- It was noted that overall, the new highways contract had brought about a number of improvements to the maintenance of Surrey's road network.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Recommendations:

That the Members of Environment & Transport Select Committee receive formal bi-monthly updates from the Surrey Highways Group Manager on progress against Improvement Action Plans for the Website, Minor Works Programme and Improving Programme Co-ordination. Where improvements are not sufficiently demonstrated to the Chairman, he be authorised to issue a formal letter on behalf of the Committee to the Strategic Director for Environment & Infrastructure and the Cabinet Member, advising concerns and proposed remedial action to deliver the specified Improvement Plans.

Select Committee next steps:

The Committee will receive a report on the subject of progress against performance improvement plans at a future meeting.

48/12 **HIGHWAYS MAINTENANCE EFFICIENCY PROGRAMME [Item 9]**

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses: Jason Russell (Assistant Director, Highways)

John Furey (Cabinet Member for Transport & the Environment)

Key points raised during the discussion:

The Committee received a briefing on the Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme. Although the Assistant Director, Highways was not paid for time spent working on the programme, the view was expressed that the project produced a number of benefits for Surrey, including the funding of initiatives with South East 7 Partners, reputational gains, greater influence with Central Government and the development of staff in the programme.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Recommendations:

None.

Select Committee next steps:

None.

49/12 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING [Item 10]**

Noted that the next meeting of the Committee will be on 19 September 2012.

[Meeting Ended: 12.46pm]

Chairman