

MINUTES of the meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT SELECT COMMITTEE** held at 10.00 am on 10 January 2013 at Ashcombe Suite, County Hall, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT1 2DN.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its meeting on Thursday, 7 February 2013.

Elected Members:

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

Ex officio Members:

Mrs Lavinia Sealy, Chairman of the County Council
Mr David Munro, Vice Chairman of the County Council

Substitute Members:

- * Dr Zully Grant-Duff (Reserve)
- * Mr Tim Hall (Reserve)

In attendance

John Furey, Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment

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

1. The Chairman made the following announcement to the Committee:
“It is with great sadness I report that a former Member of the Select Committee, Frances King, passed away on 31 December, following a long illness.

On behalf of the Select Committee I would like to extend our sincere condolences and deepest sympathy to Frances’ friends and family during this difficult time. She made a valuable contribution to the work of the Council and will very much be missed.”

2. Apologies had been received from Geoff Marlow and Chris Norman. Tim Hall and Dr Zully Grant-Duff substituted respectively.

2/13 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS: 8 NOVEMBER 2012 & 10 DECEMBER 2012 [Item 2]

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

3/13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

There were no declarations of interests.

4/13 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

There were no questions or petitions.

5/13 RESPONSES FROM THE CABINET TO ISSUES REFERRED BY THE SELECT COMMITTEE [Item 5]

Declarations of interest: None.

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. One response was received following the call-in of 10 December to consider the Cabinet Member’s decision in relation to the speed limit on Stoke Road, Stoke D’Abernon, taken on 21 November 2012. This was noted by the Select Committee.

6/13 RECOMMENDATION TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME [Item 6]

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses: None.

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. A question was raised about whether a greater number of environmental issues should be considered in the next year. The Committee was informed that it was necessary to find an appropriate balance in relation to the items within its remit and that its resources were being applied to scrutinise and develop on a strategic level. It

was highlighted that the Committee had addressed the water management strategy, recycling units, the cycling strategy, the Community Infrastructure Levy, Surrey Wildlife Trust and was currently awaiting the report of the Countryside Task Group. The Committee was advised that it would now be able to consider matters around waste management, now that planning permission had been given for the Eco Park.

2. Members requested that consideration be given to the Council developing a draft aviation strategy, given the geographic proximity of Gatwick and Heathrow to Surrey. The Cabinet Member informed the Committee that this strategy would be developed following the publication of the findings of the national public consultation currently being undertaken.
3. The Committee was asked to note the progress of its Task Groups. The Countryside Management Task Group would be presenting a report at the Committee meeting on 6 March 2013. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Task Group would present a verbal update on 6 March 2013. Following the development of the Highways Maintenance Five Year Programme there would be no further meetings of the Prioritisation of Highways and Highways Structures Maintenance Task Group. The Improving the Quality and Coordination of the work of Utilities Companies Task Group was presenting its findings to Committee as an agenda item at today's meeting. The Chairman of the Task Group stated that following further discussion with officers a decision would be made regarding how and when the Task Group would reconvene to follow up on its work.

Recommendations:

None

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Select Committee Next Steps:

None.

7/13 SURREY HIGHWAYS - NEW CARRIAGEWAY INVESTMENT PLAN [Item 7]

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses:

Jason Russell (Assistant Director, Highways)
Keith Scott (Planned Maintenance Team Manager)
Jim Harker (General Manager, May Gurney)

John Furey (Cabinet Member for Transport & Environment)

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Chairman of the Select Committee introduced the report and outlined that it was a progress update following the feedback provided by the Environment & Transport Select Committee on 8 November 2012. The report did not cover details of the budget settlement for Highways as these decisions would be taken at the meeting of Cabinet on 5 February 2013. It was proposed that following approval of the budget, the Select Committee hold an extraordinary meeting to consider an updated report.
2. The Assistant Director, Highways outlined the intentions behind the development of the Five Year Investment Plan. It was recognised that Surrey had to take action to address the poor condition of its highways network whilst also meeting its requirements to make greater efficiency savings. The Five Year Investment would set out new internal and contractual arrangements, and ensure that savings could be made without impacting on the work being undertaken to address the condition of the network.
3. The Committee was informed that the Five Year Investment Plan set out a range of changes that ensure that savings could be achieved. The majority of savings would come from the implementation of longer term planning. This would ensure better resource utilisation and allow May Gurney and Highways to co-ordinate their work in a more effective manner. It was emphasised that this would require a more “hands-off” approach from the County Council, as making late changes to the plan would reduce the savings benefits.
4. The Committee had a discussion around the implementation of longer term planning, and raised an issue that the definitions outlined by the Road Condition Index (RCi) might not align with public perception of the condition of a road. Officers confirmed that the RCi definitions were based on technical assessments from both machine and visual inspections, and were also based on evidence of structural failure. It was stated that the public road-shows undertaken in 2012 had been intended to address these issues. Officers stated that they were confident that the roads identified in the five year programme were appropriate and would also improve public perception.
5. Members expressed doubt over the assurances of officers and considered that the roadshows had raised unrealistic levels of expectation which would not be met. It was raised that the roadshows had not been discussed with Members prior to their launch. Members sought the assurances of officers that they would be better consulted prior to any similar initiatives taking place.
6. The Committee discussed the role of the Local Committees in relation to the roads identified by the five year works programme, and emphasised to officers that the programme would need to be set out with the full consultation and agreement of Local Committees. Officers outlined that it was important for any changes to the programme to be implemented in a timely fashion, as this would ensure that any savings benefits could still be achieved. The Committee was informed that one of the benefits of longer term planning was that it allowed for a greater

level of detail in the estimation of costs, and that this would benefit the District & Boroughs in making decisions around local prioritisation.

7. The Committee raised a question around the process of agreeing the implementation of the five year work programme. It was stated that the decision to implement the policy would be made by the Cabinet Member; however, the roads identified by members of the public included on the work programme would be taken to the relevant Local Committee for their approval.
8. The Assistant Director, Highways outlined that further savings would be made by improving material design, and improving the tools and techniques currently in use. This would be achieved in part through the use of "Superflex" for low speed residential roads.
9. The Committee asked what sort of contingency was in place if "Superflex" was found not to be appropriate. The General Manager, May Gurney informed the Committee that "Superflex" had been used by a number of London Boroughs and that it had proven highly effective when used appropriately. It had the benefit of a 10 year design warranty which would also reduce the need for regular maintenance repairs.
10. The Committee was informed that further savings were going to be achieved by improving site management productivity. A key change in site management would be the implementation of a "Vehicle Relocation" policy that would allow the removal of parked cars. Officers outlined that this relocation would come at no cost to the owner, and would greatly reduce the costs related to on-site delays caused by parked cars. The Committee was told that relocation would only be undertaken after a series of efforts to inform the owner of the vehicle. This included large warning signs, letter drops and leafleted windscreens. The Committee was informed that any liability for damages lay with the contractors, and there would be no financial risk to the County Council. It was suggested that officers might wish to show the impact this issue had on the cost of works as a way of highlighting it to members of the public.
11. Current legislation allowed for implementation of the "Vehicle Relocation" policy, and it would take effect immediately once approval had been given by the County Council. The Select Committee was supportive of this policy and expressed the view that it should be implemented when possible. It was suggested that the Council consider looking at ways to recover costs for vehicle relocation, though officers informed the Committee that legislation did not allow for this.
12. The Assistant Director, Highways outlined that a further saving would be made by an improvement in waste management. Surrey Highways would explore a number of options with regards to improving how it disposes of its hazardous waste in conjunction with South East 7. The Committee discussed the re-sale of planings and how this could effectively generate new income streams.
13. The Committee queried whether the development of Project Horizon reflected a change in policy away from more preventative work.

Members also commented that it was vital that Surrey Highways continued to think strategically about how different areas of work (local priorities, reactive work and the five year works programme) related to one another. Officers outlined that there was no change in policy and that surface dressing and treatment would be running alongside the five year works programme. The Committee was informed that the intention behind Project Horizon was to focus on addressing the biggest area of spend for Surrey Highways. If its implementation proved successful then long term plans would be developed for all areas of the work undertaken by Surrey Highways.

Recommendations:

None.

Actions/further information to be provided:

- The Committee will receive a progress update on the implementation of recommendations in 12 month's time.
- The Committee will hold further discussions with regards to Project Horizon and the May Gurney 6 month performance update at an extraordinary meeting following the budget settlement by Cabinet in February 2013.

8/13 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE IMPROVING THE QUALITY AND COORDINATION OF THE WORK OF UTILITIES COMPANIES TASK GROUP [Item 8]

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses:

Pat Frost (Chairman of the Task Group)

Lucy Monie (Operations Group Manager)

Matthew Jezzard (Traffic and Street Works Manager)

Kevin Orledge (Street Works Manager)

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Chairman of the Improving the Quality and Coordination of the work of Utilities Companies Task Group introduced the report and its findings. It was emphasised that many of the difficulties around addressing the issues with utilities companies were related to legislation. The proposal to create a permit scheme, as outlined in Item 8a, had been a direct outcome of the Task Group's recommendations.
2. The Chairman of the Task Group praised the Scrutiny Officer, Tom Pooley, who had co-ordinated the Task Group's work and prepared the final report. The Committee was also asked to note the Task Group's thanks for the Surrey Highways officers that had worked with them.

3. The Select Committee fully endorsed the recommendations and actions proposed by the Task Group and welcomed its findings, expressing the view that they offered a number of viable options to improve the co-ordination of works on Surrey's Highways.
4. The Chairman of the Task Group suggested it would be important for the Select Committee to monitor implementation of the report's recommendations, and that the method and timescales for this would be determined following further discussions with officers.

Recommendations:

1. That a clear and accessible internal and external communications policy with regards to the publicising of street works be developed.
2. That the process for monitoring and reporting the quality of street works be made more cost effective and efficient for the County Council, and have greater incentive for utilities companies to complete their works on time and to a high standard.
3. That proposals to introduce a 'common' permitting scheme with East Sussex County Council, to co-ordinate all works on the Surrey County Council Highway, be endorsed.
4. That the processes around the planning, monitoring and execution of street works, particularly including areas with special conditions such as Conservation Areas, be made more effective and robust.

Actions/Further Information to be Provided:

None.

Select Committee Next Steps:

Pending discussions with officers, the Task Group will decide how to monitor implementation of its recommendations and will present its findings at a future meeting of the Select Committee.

(a) SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL PERMIT SCHEME [Item 8a]

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses:

Pat Frost (Chairman of the Task Group)

Lucy Monie (Operations Group Manager)

Matthew Jezzard (Traffic and Street Works Manager)

Kevin Orledge (Street Works Manager)

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee was presented with the proposal for the introduction of a Permit Scheme. Officers informed the Committee that the Task Group's work had been a useful exercise in identifying how Surrey Highways could ensure it was able to implement improvements within

current legislation. It was felt that the Permit Scheme would offer practical improvements in how street works were communicated with residents and how work was coordinated on a regional level.

2. The Committee raised a question as to why the proposal was for a new scheme when two were already in effect in London and Kent. Officers outlined that the Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA) specified three different kinds of scheme: a common scheme, a joint scheme and an independent scheme. Kent operated under an independent scheme that prevented any other local authority from joining it, whilst the wording of the 'Common' London scheme prevented Surrey from joining this scheme. The Committee was informed that the common permit scheme under development for Surrey (with East Sussex) would give other South East local authorities the opportunity to join it at a later stage. It was suggested that this information be included in the final Cabinet report.
3. The Committee asked officers what further work could be done to provide greater accountability to utilities companies, and what efforts were in place to ensure they were financially incentivised. Officers stated that monitoring was being undertaken and improvement plans could be taken out against companies; however there was not considerable scope to alter the financial incentives in place as these were outlined in current legislation. Fines for over-running work could be pursued by the local authority, but there were no means by which to directly fine utility companies for poor quality reinstatements.
4. The Committee discussed the possibility of encouraging local groups to monitor the progress and quality of street works being undertaken by utilities companies. A question was raised as to whether a percentage of any fines accrued could be paid to the groups who had taken responsibility for monitoring works. This was noted by officers as an area for possible future development.
5. It was raised that the permit scheme would provide a greater level of detail about what kinds of works were being undertaken, and the Committee asked whether this would ensure that Surrey Highways would be able to ensure their post-works inspections were appropriate to the specific types of work.
6. The Committee was asked to note that a permit scheme would be applicable not only to private contractors, but to works undertaken on behalf of or by Surrey Highways as well. This would ensure that local residents would be able to receive notice of major works 3 months in advance of the work being undertaken. Members welcomed this and stated that they felt it was important that Surrey Highways applied the same standards to its own work in order to lead by example.
7. The Committee queried whether the predicted levels of saving were based on comparative savings made by London or Kent. Officers outlined that the savings had been based uniquely on the Surrey highways network; however the savings figures made by other permit schemes would be included in the final Cabinet paper.

8. The Committee raised a question about emergency works and the potential for these to be abused by utilities companies as a way of carrying out work outside the scope of the permit scheme. Officers stated that there was no evidence of such abuses, but Surrey Highways would continue to monitor emergency works in order to effectively challenge utilities companies if necessary. The Committee was asked to note that the conditions stipulated in the permit scheme would still be applicable to emergency works, even if it might be necessary to implement them after the works had begun.

Recommendation:

That the proposal to introduce a permit scheme for Surrey, subject to a successful consultation outcome and successful application to the Department for Transport is endorsed.

Actions/Further Information to be Provided:

Officers to include further detail of different types of permit schemes in the final report that will be submitted to Cabinet.

Select Committee Next Steps:

None.

9/13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING [Item 9]

The next meeting of the Select Committee will be held on 7 February 2013.

Meeting ended at: 11.50 am

Chairman