

MINUTES of the meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT SELECT COMMITTEE** held at 10.00 am on 6 March 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 19 July 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
- * Mr Geoff Marlow
- * Mr Chris Norman
- * Mr Tom Phelps-Penry
- * Mr Michael Sydney
- * 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 Lynne Hack (Reserve)

15/13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Mark Brett-Warburton. Lynne Hack acted as a substitute.

16/13 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: 10 JANUARY 2013 & 7 FEBRUARY 2013 [Item 2]

The minutes were agreed as an accurate reflection of the meetings.

17/13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

There were no declarations of interest.

18/13 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

There were no questions or petitions.

19/13 RESPONSES FROM THE CABINET TO ISSUES REFERRED BY THE SELECT COMMITTEE [Item 5]

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses: None.

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee was asked to note the Cabinet response to the recommendations of the Utilities Task Group. This response had been discussed at the Cabinet meeting on 5 February 2013.
2. Members commented that there was anecdotal evidence that indicated the work of the Utilities Task Group had made a positive impact, and notification of major works was showing improvement.

Recommendations:

None.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Committee Next Steps:

None.

20/13 RECOMMENDATION TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME [Item 6]

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses: None.

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee was presented with a list of proposed items for the next municipal year and asked to provide comment.
2. It was highlighted that the proposed item on Surrey's Aviation Strategy should take into account the ongoing government review on aviation. The Chairman also commented that it was recognised by the current portfolio holder for Environment & Transport that the retention of aviation at both Gatwick and Heathrow was vital for Surrey's economy. It was confirmed that the item on aviation strategy would also take helicopters under consideration.

Recommendations:

None.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Committee Next Steps:

None.

21/13 BRIEFING NOTES [Item 7]

(a) HIGHWAYS STRATEGIC PEER REVIEW AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES 2013/14 - BRIEFING NOTE [Item]

Witnesses: Jason Russell, Assistant Director, Highways

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Assistant Director for Highways provided a briefing on the strategic peer review recently undertaken by Highways & Infrastructure. This review had been undertaken in collaboration with the Local Government Association. In November 2012 the peer review had scrutinised the service's improvement plans alongside a range of evidence. Following this a number of recommendations and observations were provided for consideration. The Committee was informed that there had been a delay in scheduling an action planning workshop following the review, but it was anticipated that this action plan would be shared with the Committee at its July 2013 meeting.
2. The Committee was told that the feedback from the strategic peer review had identified that the direction of travel regarding service improvements was positive. There had been a recommendation concerning the clarity of vision regarding the service improvements and whether these had been adequately communicated on every level. It had been also recognised that while the proposed changes were innovative, there were questions regarding whether due consideration had been given to the potential risks involved.
3. The Assistant Director for Highways outlined that a challenge had been presented regarding local communications, and the organisational capability regarding this. The view was expressed that the service would be looking to explore better collective working with both District & Boroughs and Parish Councils. There was work being undertaken with the area teams to address how communication processes worked. The Committee was adamant that in order not to repeat previous mistakes, any direct contact between the service and any lower tier of local government, should have the agreement of both the local member and the Local Area Committee.
4. The Committee was informed that the strategic peer review had identified key performance areas which required improvement, including tree maintenance and gully maintenance. The Committee proposed that an item on gully maintenance and replacement be brought to a future meeting. Members raised concerns that little consideration was given to the long term impacts of poor gully

management, and highlighted the need to move to a more preventative form of maintenance.

5. The Assistant Director for Highways informed the Committee that there had been discussions around the use of the South East 7 (SE7) as performance peers. This would include looking at how satisfaction, costs and network condition, compared across the South East. There would also be work to collaborate on staff development programmes through the SE7.
6. Members raised a query regarding the proposed changes to the Surrey Priority Network (SPN) and when these would be completed. The Assistant Director for Highways confirmed that these changes were being undertaken in a phased manner, as it was recognised that it would be too great a risk to implement them all in April 2013. It was anticipated that these changes would be completed by September 2014.
7. Members asked whether Highways would be making changes to the reporting systems for road defects. It was confirmed that the changes would be made in the report management processes and not the means by which defects were reported.
8. The Committee queried whether consideration had been given to improving footways. It was confirmed that the strategic peer review had primarily focused on the carriageway, but officers also acknowledged that there was a need to review levels of investment and whether they were appropriate. It was highlighted that there was a possibility of additional funding being assigned to District & Borough Councils for advanced improvement in footways. Members commented that the Utilities Task Group had highlighted some concerns regarding the condition of footways, particularly with regards to sunken metal work.
9. The Assistant Director for Highways commented that footways posed less of a risk in terms of financial liability, so consequently were not always considered a priority. However, it was confirmed that there was an intention to move footways onto a five year investment plan, following the implementation and evaluation of Project Horizon. This would be undertaken in consultation with Local Committees.
10. Members raised concerns about the number of proposed improvements to the service being made in a short time frame. The Assistant Director for Highways expressed confidence that the proposed actions were deliverable in the time specified.
11. It was felt by some Members of the Committee that the priority should be improving the service's communications plan. Reference was made to a number of consultations that had failed to adequately involve Members. These included the consultation on street signs and the Highways Improvement Roadshows in 2012. The Chairman also raised concerns that there had not been suitable consideration given to expectation management with regards to communication and this created problems of the service's own making. It was suggested that more emphasis should be placed on communicating that the new

permit scheme would also be applicable to the County Council and its contractors, as a way of indicating that Surrey County Council was applying its own standards to itself as well as to the utilities companies.

12. The Assistant Director for Highways informed the Committee that communication was now considered a priority by the service. The view was expressed that previous emphasis had been on improving efficiencies in relation to costs, but that there was now a recognition that improvements were required in how the service communicated with Members and residents.
13. The Committee highlighted the proposed increase in funding to Local Committees and asked officers to comment further on this. The Assistant Director for Highways expressed the view that work was required to consider how Local Committees could be used to ensure best value for money. It was recognised that there was currently a delay between decisions being made and work beginning, and this had been highlighted as a key area for future improvement.
14. Members discussed the role of Parish Councils in terms of undertaking tasks. It was confirmed by the Assistant Director for Highways, that there was work being developed with a small group of Parish Councils which could inform a wider implementation. Members raised that this had not been widely communicated to the other Parish Councils and requested that it was circulated through the Local Committees and the local member.
15. It was queried as to what provision had been made for similar localised services in areas of Surrey where there was not a parish council. It was confirmed that consideration was being given to developing such work with residents' associations.
16. The Chairman commented that whilst this Committee had made a number of constructive suggestions on how to further improve the service, it was necessary to recognise that Highways & Infrastructure had made a number of significant improvements in the past two years. He expressed thanks on behalf of the Committee to both officers and May Gurney, in their willingness for an open discussion and for their response to the Committee's scrutiny and recommendations.

Recommendations:

None.

Actions/further information to be provided:

The Assistant Director for Highways to circulate information regarding the current work in development with Parish Councils and localised services to all Local Committees.

Committee Next Steps:

The Committee will review the finalised action plans for the strategic peer review at its meeting in June 2013.

(b) COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) [Item]

Witnesses: Paul Sanderson, Minerals and Waste Team Manager (And CIL project manager)

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee was provided with an update regarding the progress of the introduction of a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). It was confirmed that Elmbridge Borough Council would be introducing its CIL charges from April 2013. It was anticipated that when fully in effect this would generate approximately £2.4 million CIL funding per annum. It was anticipated that there would be CIL charging schedules in place across all Surrey district and boroughs by 2014.
2. The Minerals and Waste Team Manager outlined the key focus was around agreeing infrastructure spending priorities with boroughs and districts to inform the allocation of CIL monies. Surrey Future had been identified as being a key partnership initiative in identifying where infrastructure funding should be spent. The Committee was informed that the County Council would work with each of the District & Boroughs to seek to agree a five year infrastructure delivery programme, that could then form the focus for potential funding including CIL.
3. The Chairman raised a question regarding the impact of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Spaces (SANGS) on CIL funding. It was confirmed that SANGS were legally recognised as having priority with regards to the funding, and that discussions were taking place with the Districts & Borough Councils where this was likely to be a concern.
4. Members queried who held the responsibility for the CIL funding. The Minerals and Waste Team Manager confirmed that the District & Borough Council would be the collecting authority and so would carry the responsibility of assigning the funding. However, it was also recognised that the County Council was a key partner, and officers expected that any decisions would be made with the County Council's views taken into consideration. The Committee commented that making decisions regarding CIL through the Local Committees would help facilitate this partnership working.
5. Members questioned whether the CIL Task Group could explore how the local transport strategies, local committees and CIL funding interacted. It was suggested that the views of Local Committees would be very important when decisions were made regarding infrastructure spending priorities, particularly through the development of transport strategies. Progress on the preparation of local transport strategies could be collated and presented to the Select Committee.
6. Members asked for clarification on what constituted a neighbourhood development plan. It was confirmed that the definition of a neighbourhood development plan was identified in the national regulations (The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012). It had to be developed by a Town or Parish Council or legally

constituted neighbourhood forum, and then accepted by the relevant District & Borough Council before being put forward for independent examination. A neighbourhood plan could only be adopted if it was supported by over 50% of those voting, determined through a neighbourhood referendum.

7. Members raised concerns that the CIL charging sheets would be different across District & Boroughs, and that there were not set processes about joint working. A question was raised as to how far CIL was driven by central mandate and how much was decided at an individual District & Borough level. Officers commented that there was a general consensus regarding the level of CIL charges, and any differences in charging had to be justified on the basis of economic viability.
8. One Member raised a question as to whether self-build residential dwellings would be considered exempt from CIL. It was confirmed by officers that the current legislation did not give any general exemption to self-build properties, and there would need to be a case made on the basis of economic viability if such exemptions were to be justified in future.

Recommendations:

None.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Committee Next Steps:

The Committee will receive a more detailed officer update with regards to the CIL with proposals for the role of the Task Group in July 2013.

22/13 STREET LIGHTING PFI CONTRACT - PROGRESS REPORT [Item 8]

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses: Paul Wheadon, Commercial and Performance Team Manager
Simon Woodford, Skanska

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee was provided with a progress report of the Street Lighting PFI Contract. Officers informed the Committee that the Street Light replacement programme was anticipated to finish 8-10 months earlier than originally scheduled, with 60,000 columns having been replaced. Officers highlighted a few key areas: the replacement of cast iron lights had not been covered in the contract, and there were occasions when privately owned roads had identified inventory errors. It was also highlighted that the majority of residential roads had now had the street lights replaced.

2. Officers commented that the performance of this contract was considered good when compared to similar local authorities. The Committee was informed that the processes in identifying faults had made significant improvements, with regular light scouting being undertaken. It was the case that when the fault lay with the electrical network it could prove difficult to manage, as ownership lay with the Designated Network Operator (DNO), who had a 30 day target to carry out repairs. However, the view was expressed that Skanska had put in place a process whereby they communicated on a weekly basis with DNOs about outstanding repairs, as well as a post work inspection being undertaken. As a consequence, this had improved performance and shortened the time in which the repairs were being undertaken.
3. The Chairman asked the Commercial and Performance Team Manager to comment on what key elements of learning from the contract and its management would be taken forward. Officers commented that being co-located in the same office had facilitated better joint-working. Highlighted in this instance was the management of conservation areas. It was commented that, despite the contractual risk lying with the Council, a joint approach had been taken to finding an appropriate solution to issues raised by conservation areas. Officers also identified that they were regularly monitoring performance, but doing so in a transparent and positive manner.
4. Members raised concerns that communication with residents had sometimes been misleading. The view was expressed that although communication was good in general, it often failed to identify exemptions within the street lighting replacement program to residents. Officers commented that they had reviewed communications recently, as an issue had arisen regarding confusion over the lights being tested after installation. The letter sent to residents now included a more detailed explanation of what happens to test the lights post installation. Officers also confirmed that a different letter was being used to offer additional design options to private residential roads.
5. The Committee raised a question regarding the willingness of District & Borough councils to pay additional costs where specific designs had been requested. Officers commented that the designs had been identified in advance and this had helped in such cases. In most instances it had been the case that lights were able to be replaced on a like-for-like basis, but there had been a few occasions where a new design had been requested as part of a civic improvement plan.
6. The Committee asked officers to comment on the timescale between a light column being taken down and a new one being installed. It was explained that the 6 day response target was used for the implementation of a repair, with a further 10 days for the installation of a new column. The removal of the old column was dependent on the DNO disconnecting it from the network. However, officers indicated that Skanska's contractors carried out the removal of the damaged column at the same time as the disconnection. It was confirmed that approximately 70% of these were like for like replacements, and the remainder were matched as closely as possible to existing designs.

7. A question was raised regarding the seven designs available to residents and how these choices had been communicated to them. Officers confirmed that the seven designs had been presented to Local Committees for consideration.
8. Members raised a question as to where the funding for additional lights was identified. It was confirmed that this was being managed through Local Committees, or members' individual allocations.
9. One Member expressed concern regarding the absence of communication to local members during a major town improvement work, in particular when lights had been installed due to regulatory necessity. It was acknowledged by officers that this was still an area requiring improvement.
10. The Committee asked how the cost of new lighting was recouped in the case of new developments, and whether this was covered under the new Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Officers commented that this levy was normally applied to the developer through the development control team. It was confirmed that this levy also included an allowance for future maintenance of lighting. Officers agreed to clarify the relationship to street lighting funding and monies received through CIL.
11. The Chairman summarised the agenda item by commenting that there had been significant achievements made in the preceding 3 years. However, it was also highlighted that there was a need to improve communication to both residents and Members in the future.

Recommendations:

None.

Actions/further information to be provided:

Officers to clarify the position on street lighting funding in relation to CIL.

Committee Next Steps:

None.

23/13 HIGHWAY TREE MAINTENANCE [Item 9]

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses: Lucy Monie, Operations Group Manager

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee was informed that 90% of the current Tree Maintenance work undertaken was focused on risk management. It was reported that current budget pressures meant the priority was managing risk rather than eradicating defects. The Committee heard that the current demand exceeded capacity and that Highways &

Infrastructure had responded by increasing the resources assigned to tree maintenance. The intention was to resolve the outstanding backlog by April 2013.

2. Officers confirmed that conversations were still being undertaken with District & Borough Councils, regarding tree maintenance being undertaken on a more localised level. There was work being undertaken to explore how this option could be made more attractive as it is not sensible that such decisions are made at county level.
3. Members expressed disappointment at the progress made in devolving tree maintenance to a District & Borough level. It was highlighted that Surrey Priority Network (SPN) surveys would assist in this, and allow the District & Borough Councils to identify areas where additional work could be funded. It was confirmed that some areas had been identified where this was being considered and offers were currently being constructed. where only around 1,600 trees across the county are affected, from more routine tree maintenance, in discussions with the Districts and Boroughs.
4. One Member raised a question regarding the management of small scale pruning and the means by which these issues could be identified. it was confirmed by Officers that such matters could be raised through the relevant County Highways Officer, but also noted that such work was on an ad hoc basis and outside the work programme. It was noted that there was potential to do such work in the current contractual arrangements, but there was currently no funding in place with which to do so.
5. The Chairman commented that Highway Tree Maintenance needed to be devolved to a local level, and that it would be beneficial for Highways & Infrastructure to begin working with a small number of Local Committees with some funding allocated to a local level. It should also be possible to separate entirely the cosmetic work of pollarding, where only around 1,600 trees across the county are affected, from routine maintenance, in discussions with the Districts and Boroughs. It was also suggested that once individual, successful examples could be provided, then more District & Boroughs Councils would consider taking on the responsibility for Highway Tree Maintenance.

Recommendations:

That the Committee receive a further progress report on Highway Tree Maintenance in autumn 2013, where they would expect to see examples of the progress made in devolving the work and funding to a local level.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Committee Next Steps:

None.

24/13 SURREY LOCAL FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY & SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE APPROVING BODY [Item 10]

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses:

Deborah Fox, Strategy and Commissioning Team Manager
Bava Sathan, Strategy and Commissioning Manager, Sustainable Drainage Approval Body (SAB)

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee was informed that the report outlined the results of the consultation, and details on the proposed Sustainable Drainage Approval Body (SAB). It was noted that there had been a positive public response with regards to the consultation. Officers also highlighted that there had been a number of positive conversations with key risk management partners such as the Highways Agency. The Committee was informed there had been a low response from local businesses.
2. Officers outlined that residents had expressed a number of concerns around heavy rainfall and flash floods. A significant number of comments had also been received regarding road drainage and Surrey County Council's need to address this.
3. The Committee was informed that the Surrey Flood Risk Partnership Board was making efforts to ensure that it was engaging with all District & Borough Councils. The intention would be to work together with all partners in setting up the SAB; the main function of which would be to approve drainage systems for planning. Officers outlined work being undertaken with the South East 7 (SE7) to develop guidance on Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDS). The Committee was informed that the current timescales for implementation was for the SAB to be fully operational by April 2014, with a six month lead-in time in advance of this.
4. Members highlighted the role of the Environment Agency as a statutory consultee in planning, and suggested that the SAB could fulfil some of this statutory function in providing its views in relation to planning decisions. The view was expressed that little consideration was being given to the impact of building works on drainage and flooding. It was felt by some Members that the Environment Agency failed to take into account historical local issues around flooding when providing advice to planning authorities. It was suggested that Parish Council flood forums would also be useful in providing input, and this could be managed in part through Local Committees.
5. It was suggested by the Committee that that the District & Borough Councils should be required to seek comment and approval from Surrey County Council in its capacity as lead flood risk authority. Officers clarified that current legislation did not require this to be the case. It was also confirmed that the lead flood risk authority were only

required to look at planning with reference to surface drainage and not specific issues around rivers or other waterways. Members pointed out that 'not required' did not mean that it could not be done and as SCC is the Lead Authority; they should therefore lead.

6. The Chairman raised concerns that there was a greater need to take the initiative in defining the role of the SAB, particularly in relation to its position as a statutory body in the planning authority process. Members commented that this could be achieved in part by working with partners in the SE7 to influence central government policy.
7. Members highlighted concerns that the agricultural community and other key land owners such as Network Rail had not been consulted. The view was expressed that there were occasions when issues pertaining to land management had an impact on highways drainage. Officers clarified that efforts had been made to consult with more bodies than responded and efforts would continue to engage with them, for example Network Rail. It was also confirmed that the responsibilities of land owners would be reflected in the final strategy, which would go to Cabinet.

Recommendations:

None.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Committee Next Steps:

None.

[The Committee adjourned for lunch from 12.35pm until 1.05pm. Stephen Cooksey and Geoff Marlow were absent from the afternoon session.]

25/13 DRAFT SURREY RAIL STRATEGY [Item 11]

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses:

Paul Millin, Travel and Transport Group Manager
Stephen Bennett, Arup

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee was given a presentation on the work being undertaken to develop a rail strategy for Surrey County Council. A copy of this presentation is included as an additional supplement to these minutes. Officers informed the Committee that an opportunity to take a more proactive approach to developing a rail strategy than in previous years. It was recognised that Surrey had a comparatively small amount of influence, but that there would be long-term benefits

for Surrey's economy and residents. These considerations would inform a key part of the work related to Surrey Future.

2. The Committee was informed that Network Rail's control periods worked in five year cycles. The current period 2014-2019 was largely committed and agreed in the main part, but there was an opportunity to have strategic input in the 2019-2024 control period. It was highlighted that the franchise renewal of South West Trains was due in 2017.
3. The Committee was told that four objectives had been identified in developing the rail strategy – these were global competitiveness, economic growth, the environment and population growth. Officers informed the Committee that the first part of the study had investigated key issues and presented its findings in December 2012. Amongst these was overcrowding on the South West mainline into Waterloo, and access to stations within local employment area.
4. An options paper was presented in February 2013, outlining 30-40 options. Each was provided with a rationale, the changes that would be required, the costs, benefits and timescale in which this option would take place.
5. The view was expressed by officers that rail was not always the best option for resolving transport and infrastructure pressures, and that any strategy would need to take a number of other solutions into consideration.
6. The Committee was then given a detailed overview of a number of the possible options Surrey could choose to explore as part of its rail strategy. Included in these were an orbital service link between Gatwick and Guildford, an increase in services to and from Waterloo, improved access to airports and station improvements. The Committee was informed that there were ongoing discussions with Network Rail about an increase in services going into Waterloo, and there had been the suggestion that there was the possibility of this as a medium term upgrade. The draft Rail Strategy would be finalised upon clarification of this point in the following weeks.
7. Officers outlined to the Committee that the public consultation period would take place following Surrey County Council guidance, with a 3 month public consultation period on the draft Rail Strategy. The Council would also seek to work closely with partners such as the District & Borough Councils, Transport for London and other rail providers.
8. Members raised a question regarding cross-border working and development. Officers confirmed that there had been efforts made to engage other local authorities in order to improve cross border working. They commented that representatives from Hampshire County Council had attended the latest Rail Strategy Workshop. Members suggested drop-in sessions within key areas would be an important means of engaging the public.

9. The Committee also heard that officers were mindful of the terminus points in the rail network, such as Portsmouth and Brighton, and discussions were taking place with the relevant local authorities. However, it was also highlighted that the Rail Strategy was considered a Surrey focussed piece of work.
10. One Member questioned the absence of work identified in Oxshott, Claygate and Esher. Officers recognised these areas were important, but confirmed that there were already a number of committed schemes in the area. As consequence, Surrey County Council would have less of an opportunity to input into strategic development.
11. The Committee discussed the potential benefits of the Crossrail 2 development. Some Members expressed concerns that the scheme had not been designed with the intention of benefiting Surrey residents, and that the County Council should be cautious in supporting it. Officers commented that there were a number of variants on the proposed scheme, and that Surrey could benefit from the "regional scheme." This would have the advantage of improving capacity at Waterloo. It was confirmed that conversations were ongoing with Transport for London, and that Surrey would be seeking to have an active presence on the development board for Crossrail 2.
12. The Committee discussed the improvement of station access and parking. Members commented that, in order to see the full benefits, any improvements would need to be in coordination with rail infrastructure developments. Concern was also expressed that an increase in station parking, could lead to larger catchments areas for commuters at certain stations, which could lead to further strain of the road infrastructure and hence needed careful consideration.
13. Officers outlined the next steps for developing the Rail Strategy. It was confirmed that the final document would be presented to Cabinet in July 2013 for approval. The Committee queried when Members would be provided an opportunity to provide input into the strategy, and whether the consultation would be directed through Local Committees. Officers expressed the view that the Rail Strategy was not orientated towards individual, local schemes but intended to take a Surrey-wide view. However, it was confirmed that the Rail Strategy would be brought to the Committee in June 2013 for further comments, following the consultation period. Officers also agreed that the Rail Strategy would be shared through the Local Committees once agreed.
14. Members expressed concerns regarding the communication and engagement of Members and residents in advance of the Rail Strategy being agreed. It was highlighted that the Strategy could benefit from being shared with the Chairman's Group. It was also commented that officers needed to take into consideration how the proposals would impact on the public's levels of expectation, and how the consultation period could be used to manage these expectations. The Committee highlighted that Member involvement should be considered integral, and that any proposals should be shared in advance of the Rail Strategy being agreed.

Recommendations:

None.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Committee Next Steps:

The Committee will review the draft Railway Strategy prior to its final approval at Cabinet in July 2013.

26/13 TASK GROUP REPORT: COUNTRYSIDE MANAGEMENT [Item 12]

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses:

Simon Gimson, Task Group Chairman

Lisa Creaye-Griffin, Countryside Group Manager

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee was asked to note that there were two factual errors in the report:
 - In appendix 4, (p. 100) the SCC contribution to the Surrey Biodiversity Partnership should be £5,000 and not £18,000. The £18,000 is a combined figure for contributions to both the Surrey Biodiversity Records Centre and the Surrey Biodiversity Partnership.
 - In appendix 2, (p. 95) Janet Barton should read as Jill Barton.
2. The Task Group Chairman introduced the report on Countryside Management, and thanked the working group and external witnesses, as well as the officers who had supported the group. The Chairman of the Task Group outlined that the intention of the report was to highlight the key areas for review with reference to countryside management. The Committee was informed that there had not been an opportunity to consult with every stakeholder in the time available, but the first two recommendations had been formulated that would implement a closer and detailed review of countryside management in the near future.
3. The Committee was told that there was a further recommendation that a parallel review be undertaken regarding the County Council's policy in relation to land-holding and identifying how to get the best value out of this area. The report had identified a number of areas where partnership working could be improved. A key element of the review was proposals to encourage joint working between smaller landowners. At present there are a number of 'small' operations taking place in the Surrey countryside and it was felt that this did not encourage efficiency. The Select Committee expressed the view that the encouragement of joint working between these parties would improve biodiversity and create new job opportunities.

4. It was suggested that a review of the Countryside Estate take into account the issue of damage to bridleways. It was noted that the recommendations of the report sought to manage access to the countryside on a broad basis.
5. Concern was expressed that the Member Asset Group had already considered a review of the contract between Surrey Wildlife Trust and Surrey County Council (recommendation 1). It was clarified that the proposals of the Task Group aimed to review a strategic vision as opposed to adopting a more piecemeal approach.
6. It was noted by the Committee that an asset management plan was still outstanding following a review of the existing Surrey Wildlife Trust contract in July 2011. It was requested that the current asset management plan be considered by the Committee following the 2013 elections.
7. Members were keen to stress that ensuring the retention of 'value' from the Council's Small Holdings and Farm Estate (recommendation 2) did not just refer to financial aspects.
8. The Committee felt that proposals to review and refresh the Council's approach to rural and countryside partnership working should clearly emphasise the fact that the County was not seeking to 'take control' but rather, facilitate an open dialogue with stakeholders.
9. Members expressed their disappointment at the fact that an update report on the Surrey Hills Enterprises Trademark had not been presented to the Select Committee, prior to its submission to Cabinet. Officers apologised for this oversight and agreed to consult with the Committee on such issues in the future.
10. The Committee agreed that the Task Group should reconvene following the elections to continue in a policy advisory role and to monitor the implementation of recommendations.
11. Subject to the amendments reflected in the final recommendations, the Select Committee endorsed the recommendations of the Task Group.

Recommendations:

Recommendation 1 – The Strategic Director for Environment & Infrastructure reviews the contract between Surrey Wildlife Trust and Surrey County Council. This review should include:

- All aspects of the contract;
- The development and measurement of more clearly defined outputs that ensure value for money;
- A review of the governance arrangements;
- The development of a communication strategy to promote the benefit of the partnership arrangements to Members of the County Council and Surrey residents and;
- That the Environment & Transport Select Committee reviews the Countryside Estate's asset management plan at a future meeting.

Timescale: report to Environment & Transport Select Committee – October 2013.

Recommendation 2 - The Strategic Director for Change & Efficiency reviews the management arrangements for the Council's Small Holdings and Farm Estate to ensure that they retain value and maximise economic returns.

Timescale: report to Environment & Transport Select Committee – October 2013.

Recommendation 3 – The Strategic Director for Environment & Infrastructure reviews and refreshes the approach to rural and countryside partnership working. This review should include:

- A revised register of all partnerships within the County, setting out the purpose of each organisation and financial contributions and representation from the County;
- That this register is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it continues to be relevant;
- That a culture of partnership (rather than direction) is encouraged and fostered within the County, to encourage dialogue and facilitation between the Council and stakeholders and;
- That Surrey County Council actively engages with the (new) Surrey Nature Partnership, with the County representative on this body being the Cabinet Member for Transport & Environment.

Timescale: report to Environment & Transport Select Committee – July 2013.

Recommendation 4 – The Strategic Director for Environment & Infrastructure reviews and refreshes the approach to the rural economy. This review should consider that:

- The County Council maintains policies which enable residents to live and work in the rural community. This will require working with partners to facilitate both affordable housing and job opportunities (including apprentices);
- The County Council supports the development of the wood fuel industry in Surrey and encourages co-operation between the owners of smaller woods; and
- The County Council prioritises the use of wood fuel in its own buildings, subject to approval of a business case.

Timescale: report to Environment & Transport Select Committee – July 2013.

Recommendation 5 – The Strategic Director for Environment & Infrastructure reviews and refreshes the approach to tourism. This review should consider that:

- Specific management plans are created for iconic locations in Surrey;
- The Olympic Legacy is used as a catalyst for key decisions; and
- Objectives are agreed with the AONB to reflect the strength and potential brand for Surrey.

Timescale: report to Environment & Transport Select Committee – July 2013.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Committee Next Steps:

None.

27/13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING [Item 13]

The Committee noted that this would be the last Committee meeting before the Local Elections in May 2013. Members expressed thanks to the Chairman for his contribution to the Select Committee.

It was noted that the next meeting of the Environment & Transport Select Committee would be a private induction meeting on 19 June 2013 at 10am. There would be a public meeting of the Committee on 19 July 2013 at 10am.

Meeting ended at: 2.45pm

Chairman