

MINUTES of the meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT SELECT COMMITTEE** held at 10.00 am on 11 September 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 Wednesday, 23 October 2013.

Elected Members:

- * Mr David Harmer (Chairman)
- * Mr Mike Bennison (Vice-Chairman)
- * Mr John Beckett
- Mrs Natalie Bramhall
- Mr Mark Brett-Warburton
- * Mr Stephen Cooksey
- Mrs Pat Frost
- Mr David Goodwin
- * Mr Ken Gulati
- * Mr Peter Hickman
- * Mr George Johnson
- * Mr Adrian Page
- * Mr Michael Sydney
- * Mr Richard Wilson
- * Mrs Victoria Young
- * Mr Ian Beardsmore

Ex officio Members:

Mr David Munro, Chairman of the County Council
Mrs Sally Ann B Marks, Vice Chairman of the County Council

Substitute Members:

- * Mr Ian Beardsmore

38/13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Natalie Bramhall, Mark Brett-Warburton, Pat Frost and David Goodwin.

Ian Beardsmore acted as a substitute for David Goodwin.

39/13 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: 19 JULY 2013 [Item 2]

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

40/13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

There were no declarations of interest.

41/13 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

No Member questions or petitions had been received. One public question was received by the Committee and response was circulated. The response to the question can be found attached to the minutes of this meeting.

The Select Committee agreed that it would not take any further action on the issues raised by the question, as the planning decisions in question were a matter for Runnymede Borough Council to consider.

42/13 RESPONSES FROM THE CABINET TO ISSUES REFERRED BY THE SELECT COMMITTEE [Item 5]

There were no responses from Cabinet for the Committee to note. The Chairman informed the Committee that they expected a response regarding the petition to resurface Forty Foot Road at the Committee's next meeting in October 2013.

43/13 RECOMMENDATIONS 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 the Recommendations Tracker and proposed Forward Work Programme, and were asked to provide comment. Members were made aware that the report on Concessionary Fares would now go to the October meeting owing to a wider Transport Review which had taken place.
2. The Chairman explained that a Members briefing on the Surrey Wildlife Trust agreement had been arranged for 27 September 2013 at 10am, and that scrutiny of the Surrey Cycle Strategy will take place

with the Communities Select Committee on 28 November. This meeting will be public and will be led by the Communities Select Committee, with the Environment & Transport Select Committee being invited to attend.

3. The Chairman requested Members note there will be an E&I budget planning workshop for Members during the afternoon following the Select Committee meeting on 23 October.

Recommendations:

None.

Actions/further information to be provided:

Members were requested to consider items scheduled for future meetings and what they would like to discuss during the meeting. This would ensure appropriate officers were present at the meetings and the reports considered Members concerns.

Committee next steps:

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

44/13 MAY GURNEY/KIER CONTRACT - 12 MONTH REVIEW [Item 7]

Witnesses:

Mark Borland, Projects and Contracts Group Manager, Highways
Jim Harker, May Gurney

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Project and Contracts Group Manager explained that the May Gurney contract covered five main activities – safety, planned maintenance, network improvements, minor works and winter service.
2. The contract was delivering on all potholes being repaired, however last year they were unable to reach the 98% target for Medium Risk repairs within 28 days. This led to overall target performance of 96% for safety repairs.
3. May Gurney had increased the number of gangs operating by 14, and this increase was covered within the contract. This was in response to a third successive bad winter and increasing number of potholes to repair.
4. High Risk repairs previously needed to be completed within 24 hours though it was felt that this was creating a negative public image as neighbouring potholes were being left. The time period had now been extended to five working days, one week, to allow multiple potholes to be repaired at the same time with larger machinery, however it was also noted that there was still a need to educate the public as to why certain potholes would be repaired ahead of others.

5. 5% of all repairs were audited which ensures a high standard – this was in addition to before and after photographs of the potholes, while a new PDA device was to be developed by Kier which would assist in reporting.
6. Communication with the public had been an issue though a new website was in development which was hoped to be live by the next financial year. Members were invited to be part of a RIE to assist in the development of this webpage. It was hoped this website would encourage residents to report directly to Surrey County Council and not through websites such as Fix My Street. Members additionally suggested that instead of saying repairs would be completed within five working days the public would respond better to the terminology of 'a week'.
7. A £5 million additional budget, which was approved by Cabinet, has assisted in ensuring the potholes are being repaired as the figures are higher than anticipated. Members were surprised that the number of potholes has been larger than anticipated. It was explained that May Gurney had tendered for one bad winter though there had now been two. There had also been a backlog of repairs to be completed from the previous contractor which was higher than expected. An action plan was being drawn up which would assist in getting the numbers down to a normal level, though the success of this plan was dependent on whether there was a bad winter.
8. The Committee discussed repairing potholes below the 40mm depth, though it was stated that these would not be repaired as the whole road may need to be resurfaced. This was in keeping with the benefits of Project Horizon, which sought to move from reactive to proactive road maintenance.
9. Members queried the decision to not use over-banding when repairing potholes, though officers explained they had received technical evidence that vertical banding is sufficient for most potholes.
10. Contractors ensured temporary repairs were returned to within 28 days as all pothole repairs were time stamped and an automatic report would be created once the 28 day period had passed. It was felt that the PDA devices would ensure this was more successful along with the extension from 24 hours to five working days, one week, to complete repairs.
11. Unison's recent protests against Kier's blacklisting of contractors was a concern to the Committee, though they were assured that the protests were in regards to Kiers construction sector and not the Surrey highways contract. Furthermore it was confirmed that Kier was in communication with Unison over the issue.
12. Members raised concerns regarding the depth of potholes near kerbs as 40mm is dangerous for cyclists. The Committee were informed that if it is a separate cycle path the depth must be 20mm for repairs to take place, however on normal carriageways the minimum depth for repairs to take place would remain 40mm, otherwise a policy change

would need to occur. The viability of this taking place was limited, as it would require a significant amount of additional funding.

13. Members were concerned by the number of projects which were aborted, however it was felt by officers that the new PDAs would assist in lowering this number as the inspectors would be required to talk to traffic management teams and work in collaboration.
14. The impact of utility companies street works on the condition of the highway was discussed, as highways were often not properly reinstated. Officers were keen to improve record keeping so they are able to go back to the company if repairs were required within two years of utility works. To this end a number of additional staff would be employed to assist with the reporting and monitoring of utility company street works.
15. Members raised concerns over kerb stones in the road and the speed at which these would be fixed. It was stated that if a large concrete kerb stone was found in the road it would be removed within two hours, though the kerb would be repaired within three months.
16. Officers stated they were now targeting having a date for minor works to be done within ten days of reporting, in order to improve public understanding of the repairs process. Members expressed disappointment at the length of time it took to complete minor works, though officers admitted this was an area of improvement which they were looking at and they aimed to have the works done within three months.
17. Minor works were being completed with other organisations, such as signs for those with special needs being created by a charity, with only 40% completed by May Gurney. To ensure these were positioned where appropriate the team was liaising with the Local Area Teams.
18. Members raised concerns at a lack of communication and the quality of certain works. May Gurney agreed that this was an area of improvement for them. The Project and Contract Group Manager suggested that Surrey Highways needed to improve communication with Members regarding works in their areas and that he would investigate further.
19. The Project and Contract Group Manager stated that he felt that planned maintenance had been the greatest success over the past 12 months as this was an area which had seen a lot of innovation, including Project Horizon which had reduced design costs from 40% to 15%. Additionally a new app for Members' iPads was in development which would enable officers to update Members quickly regarding works in their division.
20. May Gurney had previously had problems with cars parked on roads which were to be resurfaced, however gangs were now aware they had the power to remove cars.
21. May Gurney felt that they had had a good year overall and that their focus was on delivering Project Horizon. They felt that being acquired

by Kier would have good outcomes for Surrey as it was their biggest contract in highways. Kier, it was felt, would invest time and money into the delivery of the contract to improve the Surrey network.

22. The Select Committee congratulated officers for the improvements made to Surrey's highway network following the introduction of the May Gurney/Kier contract.

Recommendation:

None.

Actions/further information to be provided:

The Committee be provided with details of the first year of Project Horizon schemes at its meeting in October 2013.

Committee next steps:

The Committee to scrutinise the May Gurney/Kier contract at a future meeting.

45/13 OVERVIEW OF WATER MANAGEMENT IN SURREY [Item 8]

Witnesses:

Lesley Harding, Sustainability Group Manager
Colin Buckle, Environment Agency
Justine Glynn, Environment Agency

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Surrey Local Flood Risk Strategy was in the process of being signed off by the Boroughs and Districts. A Lower Thames Flood Alleviation Strategy (FAS), which aimed to alleviate flood risk within the lower Thames area, was also being worked on by the Environment Agency and all councils affected. This would cost in the region of £256 million and would be part government funded.
2. Water companies in the county were forming Water Resource Management Plans which were to look at tackling leakage and shifting to greater use of metering.
3. The Environment Agency explained that only 35% of rainfall is useful or available to use which is why other sources of water are abstracted for the water supply. In Surrey, the gap between the water supply and water consumption was very small, which is why the county was designated as an area under water stress. Additionally, Surrey uses comparatively more water than other areas of the country, though there was an upward trend of properties being metered which lowered consumption over time. Furthermore, water quality in Surrey was very poor as there had been several hundred incidents of water pollution, half of which were due to sewage leakages.

4. The Environment Agency explained that according to the National Flood Risk Assessment (NaFRA), Runnymede and in particular Egham and Staines, were high risk areas. The Environment Agency, it was explained, was working with Woking Borough Council on an initial assessment to benefit three communities (Mayford, White Rose Lane and Queen Elizabeth Way, and Old Woking and Westfield) where there were flooding risks. The Cranleigh Attenuation Scheme was looking at ways to store water downstream from a pond.
5. The Committee discussed that it was very important to get Surrey's water consumption down to the regional average, especially given potential further strains on the water supply as a result of increased housing and development. Officer confirmed that although there would be engineering solutions to alleviate the water supply issues these would be at a high cost. It was felt that it was important for Surrey County Council to understand water stress alleviation schemes.
6. Officers confirmed that metering usually saw water consumption go down by between 10% and 17%, however water companies were moving away from compulsory metering as OFWAT was the organisation with the power to allow it.
7. Members requested the draft report by the Environment Agency be shared with Boroughs and Districts.

Recommendations:

None.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Committee next steps:

The Committee scrutinise Lead Local Flood Authority functions and the Lower Thames Flood Alleviation Scheme at a future meeting of the Select Committee.

46/13 SURREY RAIL STRATEGY [Item 9]

Witnesses:

Iain Reeve, Assistant Director, Environment, Transport & Planning
Stephen Bennett, ARUP

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Assistant Director for Environment, Transport & Planning explained that though Surrey County Council had no statutory obligation regarding the development of rail within Surrey, it was felt that the county should be more proactive in lobbying for schemes which would benefit residents and the Surrey economy. Surrey had

asked ARUP to assist in the research and writing of a strategy which would enable Surrey to have areas of focus.

2. Four specific elements had been identified as suggested areas of focus for the county – train capacity, access to airports, electrification of the North Downs line and Crossrail 2.
3. Crossrail 2 was felt to be an opportunity for Surrey, if the regional route was chosen, as it would free up capacity at Waterloo. However, it was anticipated that Crossrail would not be delivered until 2026 at the earliest and for the full benefits of this project to be felt within Surrey additional incremental works would need to be completed. Additionally, the report suggested a new station at Park Barn in Guildford and implementing more parking at stations. However, it was felt that more work needed to be done to enhance the Rail Strategy.
4. The Committee queried whether the platforms at Waterloo International could be reopened and whether this would assist in easing capacity at Waterloo. Officers suggested that one platform could be reopened, however to utilise the others new tracks would need to be laid and there was an issue of capacity on the lines approaching Waterloo, particularly within the Clapham Junction area.
5. Members felt the Strategy needed to look at utilising the improvement works which had been carried out at Reading station and easing congestion outside Woking station. Additionally, Members queried the lack of strategy for Tandridge, however officers suggested the Strategy was Surrey wide and that Tandridge would benefit from the confirmed improvement works on Brighton Main Line. Members suggested the Strategy mention that Surrey supports the improvement works on this line.
6. The Committee discussed whether train companies should use longer trains on the 'shoulder' rush hours to encourage commuters to travel later and free up capacity during the rush hour. ARUP confirmed that South West Trains would be getting additional train carriages which will enable longer trains to run during the rush hour.
7. Station parking was discussed as an issue for commuters; however it was hard to predict the actions of commuters as some drove into London to get cheaper fares whilst others drove further out to get a seat. It was suggested that looking at putting in multiple level car parks at popular stations would need to be considered, in addition to further cycle parks at rail stations.

Recommendations:

None.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Committee next steps:

The Select Committee will consider further items on rail in Surrey as and when required.

47/13 WINTER SERVICE REVIEW / REPORT OF THE WINTER MAINTENANCE TASK GROUP [Item 10]

Witnesses:

Peter Agent, Asset Planning Group Manager

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Winter Maintenance Task Group spokesperson explained the Task Group had been in operation for three years and that the recommendations have been effective in improving Surrey's response to severe winter weather, which had been welcomed by residents. He explained that there had been some concern within the Task Group at the decision by Cabinet, to remove the £5 million reserve for an extended severe winter. Members however had been assured by officers that if additional budget was required this could be found within the existing E&I budget.
2. The Task Group spokesperson stated that there had been a preference that the Task Group meet earlier in the year to discuss the future winter as it would enable Local Committees to comment on recommendations, however this was not possible in 2013 due the elections.
3. The Task Group has requested Cabinet look into replacing the salt barn at Merrow and the associated costs.
4. The relationship between the County Council and Boroughs and Districts was discussed by the Committee, as it was agreed that it was beneficial for refuse collectors to assist in clearing snow and gritting pavements, if possible, as they are provided grit by the County Council. Additionally, Parish Councils were able to purchase and install grit bins on public highways.
5. The Asset Planning Group Manager confirmed that there had been a strategic review and a planned route for gritters had been formed. It was felt that the current salt barns were sufficiently local to operate across the county.
6. The Committee confirmed that residents were able to clear footpaths and would not be liable for accidents if they swept snow away. The general 'rule' was that as long as their actions did not make the area any more dangerous than it was before, they would not be held responsible for any incidents.

Recommendations:

The Select Committee endorses the recommendations as set out in the report to Cabinet. That:

1. The recommendations of the Winter Performance Task Group and the Winter Service Plan be approved by Cabinet.
 - a. The 2012.13 Gritting Route Network be maintained for the 2013/14 winter season, while also incorporating minor amendments resulting from Member, resident and officer feedback and the new Surrey Priority Network (SPN).
 - b. A process for the Highways Service to access additional funding in the case of a sustained severe winter event be put in place.
 - c. Property Services investigate and report on the viability of repairing or replacing the salt barn at Merrow Depot and the optimum capacity to meet current operational requirements.
 - d. Beare Green Depot remains available as a key resource for use during severe weather events.
 - e. Communities are permitted to purchase additional grit bins at a total cost of £1,040 for a 4 year period while Parish Councils and other statutory bodies may be licensed to install grit bins on the public highway.
 - f. The trial of alternative vehicles for use on hills, narrow routes and estate roads etc. is continued during the 2013/14 winter season.
 - g. The Surrey Winter Service Plan 2013/14 be approved.
 - h. Approval of any future amendments to the Surrey Winter Service Plan be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Transport, Highways and Environment and the Assistant Director, Highways.
2. Cabinet provides a response to each recommendation confirming the agreed outcomes.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Committee next steps:

The Committee to continue to scrutinise the performance of the Winter Service and for the Winter Maintenance Task Group to reconvene in Spring 2014 to consider the Winter Service for 2014/15.

48/13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING [Item 11]

It was noted that the next meeting of the Environment & Transport Select Committee would be held on 23 October 2013 at 10am and that there would be an E&I budget workshop during the afternoon.

Meeting ended at: 1.05 pm

Chairman