

MINUTES of the meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT SELECT COMMITTEE** held at 10.00 am on 23 October 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, 12 December 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

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 Will Forster
- * Mr Mike Goodman
- * Mr Colin Kemp

In attendance

- * Mr John Furey, Cabinet Member for Transport, Highways and Environment

49/13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

Apologies were received from David Goodwin, Adrian Page and Victoria Young.

Will Forster, Mike Goodman and Colin Kemp substituted respectively.

50/13 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: 11 SEPTEMBER 2013 [Item 2]

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

51/13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

There were no declarations of interest.

52/13 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

No questions or petitions were received.

53/13 RESPONSES FROM THE CABINET TO ISSUES REFERRED BY THE SELECT COMMITTEE [Item 5]

The Committee received a response from the Cabinet Member for Transport, Highways and Environment regarding the Fortyfoot Road petition submitted to the Select Committee in July 2013. The Committee were pleased that a resolution had been found and noted the response.

54/13 RECOMMENDATION TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME [Item 6]

Declarations of interest:

None.

Witnesses:

None.

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. Members requested that the last page of the Winter Service Review be circulated to the Committee as it was not available at the last meeting.
2. Members were informed that the Select Committee's recommendations regarding the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) from the July meeting had been discussed at the most recent Local Committee Chairmen's Group. Concern was expressed during this meeting that the County Council was being side stepped and would have no involvement in how the funding would be granted. However, it was also acknowledged that it was not within the County's remit to decide how this money was spent. It was felt that it was important that County Councillors were kept informed of developments within their

Boroughs and Districts, and that they negotiated funding for highways and schools.

3. The Committee were informed the Communities Select Committee were holding a meeting to scrutinise the Cycling Strategy on 28 November to which the Environment and Transport Select Committee was invited.
4. It was felt that the item scheduled on Operation Horizon for a meeting on 12 June 2014 should scrutinise the first year's performance of Kier, rather than the annual performance.
5. Members were informed that an item on Superfast Broadband was being scheduled for the meeting on 23 January 2014. This would enable the Committee to scrutinise the performance figures for the second quarter.
6. Members felt that until update reports on Utilities and CIL were received by the Committee in January these Task Groups should be terminated. Furthermore, the Committee requested the wording for the Winter Maintenance Task Group be edited to read 'The Task Group will reconvene in the spring of 2014 to consider the effects of the Winter Maintenance policy for 2013/14 and any suggestions for winter 2014/15.'

Recommendations:

None.

Actions/further information to be provided:

1. Members to be provided with the last page of the Winter Maintenance Policy.
2. The Task Groups considering CIL and Utilities Coordination be terminated until update reports be received in January 2014.
3. 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.

55/13 BRIEFING: SURREY HIGHWAYS PERMIT SCHEME [Item 7]

Declarations of interest:

None.

Witnesses:

Kevin Orledge, Street Works Manager
Matthew Jezzard, Traffic Manager

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. Members were provided with a presentation on the South East Permit Scheme (SEPS) which had received Department for Transport (DfT) sign off to be implemented on 11 November 2013. This permit scheme would replace notices and would require utility companies to ask rather than tell Surrey County Council that they are doing works.
2. The SEPS could impose conditions on the utility companies which could either be standard or model, and would be decided on a site by site basis. Each permit would cost £216 on traffic sensitive roads.
3. The charging element of the permit scheme would enable the Street Works team to double in size which would mean there were more officers on the street monitoring the works and ensuring the conditions were being adhered to.
4. The Committee were informed that SEPS was not a lane rental scheme, the likes of which was being trialled in London Boroughs. A lane rental scheme would be considered in the future if shown to be successful. Results to-date had been positive as the scheme appeared to be driving the right behaviour. However, the County Council would be required to charge for its own works, unlike under SEPS, and any profits would be required to be invested on projects and research within the industry.
5. Members queried whether there would be any budget net savings under the permit scheme, however it was stated that there would be no savings as profits from the charging were to be reinvested in the scheme and new staffing.
6. Members questioned whether it was possible to regulate how long utility companies took to complete a job. It was stated that the conditions could control the work and how long it took to complete, however the legislation required the County Council to be 'reasonable' and it was felt that the permit scheme would help control the works but would not entirely resolve the issue of works taking a long time to complete.
7. One of the conditions which would be part of the permit scheme would be that all works on traffic sensitive roads would require an information board to be visible to the public. These boards would include information such as; contact number, type of works and expected duration. It was felt that although these boards would assist, it was very difficult to manage the time frames accurately as other emergency works could arise which would push back the start date. However, if there was a significant drift from the stated start date there would be a condition which would deal with this issue.
8. For emergency works the same rules would apply; that a permit would be required and a fee charged. The officers would only be given a couple of hours notice of works starting but would have the power to

question whether the works being completed were emergency works. If utility companies found further issues in the locality, which were not of an urgent nature, then a subsequent permit would be required.

9. Officers would have the power to revoke permits if it was felt the conditions were not right, such as snow and floods, and would then engage with the utility companies to find an alternative suitable date for works to begin.
10. The Committee were informed that it was difficult to make all works take place at night due to a number of restrictions, including noise, but where it was felt that it was possible this could be made to be a condition of the permit.
11. Members were concerned that utility companies may be willing to work outside the terms of their permits and accept a fixed penalty notice if it came at a lesser cost than compensating local businesses. However officers confirmed that the County Council had the power to take the company to court if penalties were not paid or conditions were repeatedly breached.
12. The potential for a Lane Rental scheme in Surrey was discussed. Officers informed the Committee that feedback from the Department for Transport and Kent County Council – who currently operated such schemes – was positive, and that this could possibly be rolled out in Surrey in the future. It was noted however that under a lane rental scheme the Council would be obliged to apply charges to its own works.
13. The Committee were informed that the permit scheme would enable more inspections of works to take place as each inspection could be charged to the works promoter. The inspections would be used to ensure there was compliance with the conditions of the permit and could ensure that full reinstatement of the road took place and all materials were removed after the works were completed.
14. Members queried whether officers expected a rise in applications prior to the start date of 11 November 2013 for the permit scheme. The officers assured Members that any works which were to take place after 11 November were being requested to reapply after this date.
15. The Committee were informed that pothole works were considered emergency works as these were reactive works.

Recommendations:

None.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Committee next steps:

The Committee will scrutinise the South East Permit Scheme six months following its implementation.

56/13 HIGHWAYS STRATEGIC PEER REVIEW [Item 8]

Declarations of interest:

None

Witnesses:

Jason Russell, Assistant Director Highways

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. Members were informed that a peer review based around the Local Government Association (LGA) peer review process was conducted in November 2012 by similar organisations to Surrey County Council. The feedback from this process had been positive though also highlighted that the Council's Highways Team needed to do more work on communication and organisational capability.
2. Officers have since considered the recommendations from the peer review and have developed an action plan to look at integrated team working, customer service excellence and a people strategy. Officers hope to develop more integrated teams with contractors, such as the one on Operation Horizon, where appropriate, as this would strengthen the delivery of services.
3. There was a recognition between Members and officers that the peer review was limited given that no other organisation was in a similar situation regarding long term programmes, such as Operation Horizon.
4. The Assistant Director Highways stated that he had been working with Infrastructure UK to look into asset management, and there had been a number of recommendations from this work which had been signed off by the Cabinet Member for Transport, Highways and Environment. Officers were in the process of considering the recommendations and forming responses which would be brought to the Select Committee in March for consideration.
5. The Highways department were in the process of learning from other industries, such as Water, to ensure assets could be managed and accounted for appropriately.
6. It was felt that it was important to scrutinise the contract with Kier after one year to ensure that the contract was performing at a high level.

Recommendations:

That the Select Committee endorses the approach as set out in the report, and that more detailed scrutiny be given to the following individual proposals at the dates set out below:

- a. Customer Service Excellence (December 2013)

- b. Proposals for development of a longer-term approach to management of highways (February 2014)
- c. Review of the first 12 months of Operation Horizon (June 2014)
- d. Review of the first 12 months of new approach to safety defects (October 2014)

Actions/further information required:

The Committee be provided with details for a Member Reference Group at its next meeting to assist officers to develop future highways proposals.

Committee next steps:

The Committee will scrutinise the above items at future Select Committee meetings.

57/13 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT: HIGHWAYS CONTRACTS LOT 5 - HIGHWAY FLOOD PREVENTION [Item 9]

Declarations of interest:

None.

Witnesses:

Jason Russell, Assistant Director Highways
Diane Mackay, Audit Performance Manager

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee were informed there were 159,000 known gullies and 8,000 soakaways in Surrey, though there may be several which had not been found yet. Officers attend Local Flood Forums which were useful for utilising local knowledge of where additional gullies and soakaways were located. Additionally, if there were any concerns or issues in a particular area these are investigated and sometimes an additional gully discovered.
2. Officers undertake around two site visits a week to gullies and soakaways to ensure the cleansing work is taking place. It was hoped that technology would assist officers to monitor progress.
3. Members queried whether it was possible to remove cars which were obstructing gullies/soakaways which were due to be cleaned. Officers stated that if cars prevented cleaning contractors were required to do a second visit when it was considered parking may be lighter. Furthermore, officers tried to coordinate with Borough and District street cleans to decrease the inconvenience to residents. Officers would not have cars towed away at a cost of £1,000 unless a deep clean was taking place which would make it more cost effective.
4. If it was not possible to clean a gully it would be flagged up and go on a list for further investigation. Additionally, there was a wet spot list for investigation which had around 1,000 locations where water was

unable to run off properly. It was felt that the cleaning and investigation works needed to be coordinated effectively.

5. It was felt by officers that at present the contract with Conway was performing well, with the follow-up of works being improved as requested. The contractors were in the process of also implementing a mapping system so as to better understand the works and system.
6. Members queried how design faults in gullies, such as swan necks, were being fixed. It was explained that the cost to replace all swan necks would be significant so they were not being replaced unless there was a fault.
7. The Committee requested a schedule of works of gully cleaning be circulated to Members for their information. The Assistant Director agreed to look into whether this was possible.

Recommendations:

None.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Committee next steps:

The Committee will scrutinise gully cleaning during a meeting in December 2013.

58/13 COUNTRYSIDE MANAGEMENT TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME UPDATE [Item 10]

Declarations of interest:

None.

Witnesses:

Lisa Creaye-Griffin, Countryside Group Manager

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Chairman suggested amendments to the proposed Terms of Reference of the Countryside Management Task Group as he felt it would not be effective with the current Terms of Reference. The amendments were noted by officers and would be circulated to Task Group Members for approval.
2. Members expressed their dissatisfaction with the Surrey Wildlife Trust (SWT) agreement and wished to look at the contract between Surrey County Council and the Surrey Wildlife Trust, and requested they be provided with advice regarding the ten year review.

3. Members of the Task Group suggested that all elements of the countryside, which came under SWT management, be considered by the Task Group also.
4. Members raised issues with point 11 of the Transformation Project as Boroughs and Districts were concerned with the effect of the Countryside Management Partnerships Review.
5. Members raised concerns regarding the Knight Frank review of the Rural Estate and queried whether they could submit questions and concerns they would like the final report to consider. It was felt that it would be best to wait for the final report by Knight Frank; and if any concerns were not answered these should be subsequently asked. It was agreed that this review would be considered by the Countryside Task Group, who would report back any concerns to the Select Committee.
6. The Committee requested that when the Basingstoke Canal is being considered as part of the Transformation Programme that Members of the Joint Management Committee be invited to attend because they would be better able to understand the current financial situation of the Canal.
7. Members requested the wording on point 7 of the Transformation Programme be edited as the Surrey Hills AONB had been established for over 50 years.

Recommendations:

None.

Actions/further information to be provided:

Updated Terms of Reference for the Countryside Management Task Group be circulated and approved.

Committee next steps:

None.

59/13 BRIEFING: SURREY FUTURE [Item 11]

Declarations of interest:

None.

Witnesses:

Iain Reeve, Assistant Director Economy, Transport & Planning
Hannah Philpott, Senior Policy Manager

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. Surrey Future had been set up to concentrate on large scale infrastructure programmes, such as the recently completed Hindhead

Tunnel and Walton Bridge. These projects had taken a long time to be completed with the suggestion for a Hindhead bypass first being made in the 1930s.

2. It was felt that it was important to begin thinking about the next large scale infrastructure project for Surrey, because although the Government will invest in projects, it takes many years to lobby successfully and funding is getting harder to win, with around only one in five bids successful.
3. Surrey had a strong economic case for investment with the Surrey economy estimated to be worth around £30 billion but with huge problems with congestion both on roads and rail.
4. The Rail Strategy priorities had been agreed by Cabinet and active lobbying had begun. In addition, a Rail Officer would be recruited to pursue investment in these projects.
5. £2.8m had been successfully granted for the Redhill Balanced Network which had been successful due to the joint work with the Borough. It was important that joint working continued with Boroughs and Districts for both major and minor infrastructure projects to be successful.
6. Five top priorities had been decided upon by Surrey Future partners – the A3 corridor, the major schemes programme, the North Downs Line, Crossrail 2 and improving journeys to airports.
7. Members queried whether smaller scale schemes, such as looking at congestion in rural town centres, would be considered as there was a concern that these towns were suffering and would 'die out' in the long run. Officers confirmed that strategies were being looked at for pinch points in town centres.
8. Members felt it was important to concentrate on the issues along the A3 as businesses were beginning to question how long they could stay why in Guildford with the current congestion issues. Officers informed the Committee that the Highways Agency was looking at highway improvements schemes, and that they had discussed congestion issues on the A3 and M3.
9. Members queried whether officers were bidding when funding was released by the Government. Officers explained that often there was a very short window of opportunity to bid for these schemes and they felt it was important to maintain Surrey's reputation for quality bids. This meant they only submitted a bid if they had a scheme that met the government's criteria.
10. Officers felt it was important to work with the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) as they were receiving more responsibilities and funding to distribute. The Cabinet Member stated that LEPs had £2 – 3 billion and needed to function effectively to ensure this funding was distributed appropriately. The LEPs were preparing Strategic Economic Plans in order to negotiate Growth Deals with government. These Growth Deals would influence how much funding each of the

two Surrey LEPs receives. The Committee requested that the LEP Strategic Economic Plans are discussed in January 2014 when drafts have been submitted.

Recommendations:

None.

Actions/further information to be provided:

None.

Committee next steps:

The Committee will scrutinise Surrey County Council's relationship with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and their strategies at the meeting in January 2014.

60/13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING [Item 12]

It was noted that the next meeting of the Environment & Transport Select Committee would be held on 12 December 2013 at 10am.

The Committee were informed they were invited to attend the Communities Select Committee meeting on 28 November 2013 at 2pm to scrutinise the Surrey Cycling Strategy.

Meeting ended at: 1.00 pm

Chairman