

MINUTES of the meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE** held at 10.00 am on 6 September 2018 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, 5 December 2018.

Elected Members:

(present *)

- * Rachael I. Lake (Chairman)
- * Mr Saj Hussain (Vice-Chairman)
- * Mr Mike Bennison
- * Mr Jonathan Essex
- * Mr Richard Hampson
- * Miss Marisa Heath
- * Mrs Jan Mason
- * Mrs Tina Mountain
- * Mr Richard Wilson
- * Mr Keith Witham

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Cllr Mike Goodman and Cllr Denise Turner-Stewart. Both were in attendance at an urgent Cabinet away day.

2 MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE: 08 FEBRUARY 2018 [Item 2]

The minutes of the 8 February Communities Select Committee meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

Cllr Witham stated that he was a Member of the Surrey Wildlife Trust charity.

Cllr Mason stated that she represented Epsom and Ewell on the Surrey Countryside Partnership.

4 QUESTIONS & PETITIONS [Item 4]

There were none.

5 A JOINT STRATEGY FOR SURREYS COUNTRYSIDE ESTATE [Item 5]

Declarations of interests:

None

Witnesses:

Lisa Creaye Griffin, Countryside Group Manager
Sam Cunningham, Senior Change Consultant

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The report was introduced by the Countryside Group Manager who explained that a Countryside Estate Strategy Member Reference Group (MRG) would focus on developing questions for the public engagement exercise, supporting the drafting of the Countryside strategy and the three year business plan.
2. It was clarified that since the partnership had been established in 2002 there was no overarching strategy for the Countryside although each area within the Countryside had a management strategy in place. In terms on key achievements, the Surrey Wildlife Trust (SWT) had improved conservation sites that formed part of the estate and would be focusing on improving visitor's services going forward.
3. With the reduction of funding to the Countryside from the County Council and the impact of the loss of funding through Brexit, there was a plan in place to replace funding. It was explained that DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs) would be lobbied for financial support.
4. The Countryside Group Manager explained that SWT would be in attendance at MRG meetings and confirmed that EU funding for the Countryside currently stood at £300k.
5. The Chairman requested that officers confirmed what ideas had been considered as part of income generating activity on the Countryside estate.
6. It was confirmed that the MRG would be given the opportunity to review funding sources to support the management of the Countryside estate.
7. In response to a Member question, it was confirmed that discussions around the development of the strategy with a number of partner organisations including Natural England and the Forestry Commission had already taken place.
8. The Chairman queried the timescales for strategy launch in February 2019. Officers explained that work on the strategy would be prioritised for launch in March 2019 to coincide with the 60th anniversary of SWT.
9. A Member of the Committee queried the timescales for engagement with the public and asked if this was an appropriate amount of time. The Senior Change Consultant explained that 8 weeks was the standard amount of time given for public engagement exercises and that a number of channels including social media and focus groups would be used to support activity.

Cllr Heath briefly left the meeting at 10.42am

10. It was stated by a Member that public engagement should also include holding events for residents to attend.
11. In regards to charging on the Countryside, the Countryside Group Manager explained that as part of the engagement activity officers wanted to understand the public desire for setting variable costs.
12. A Member of the Committee stated the importance of clarifying and communicating with the public the costs associated with maintaining and supporting the Countryside. It was further added that DEFRA would be focusing on 'public money for public goods' and that this was something that the MRG should focus on as a possible avenue for future funding.

13. It was agreed that the Committee should be notified of when a Countryside Estate Strategy MRG meeting would be taking place.

Resolved:

- I. The Select Committee agreed the following membership of the Countryside Estate Strategy Member Reference Group, subject to agreement by COSC,
 - Richard Hampson
 - Tina Mountain
 - Jonathan Essex
- II. The Countryside Estate Strategy Member Reference Group to report back on work undertaken to support the countryside estate strategy at the 22 February 2019 Select Committee meeting.

6 AIR QUALITY: LOW EMISSIONS TRANSPORT STRATEGY AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE STRATEGY [Item 6]

Declarations of interests:

None

Witnesses:

Bronwen Chinien, Principal Environment and Sustainability Officer
Paul Fishwick, Local Transport Programmes Manager

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Low Emissions Transport Strategy (LETS) report was introduced by the Principal Environment and Sustainability Officer and the Electric Vehicle Strategy (EV) was introduced by the Local Transport Programmes Manager.

Cllr Heath briefly left the meeting at 11.08am

2. The Chairman queried what work had been undertaken to encourage sustainable travel behaviour. The Principal Environment and Sustainability Officer explained funding had been received between 2012-16 from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund to support sustainable travel work. Since then, funding has been secured for a programme for schools to provide a range of travel planning measures which will be rolled out by the end of 2018.
3. In response to concern from the Chairman about health and safety of electric charge points in domestic properties, the Local Transport Programmes Manager confirmed that rapid charge points could not be installed in homes and only trickle (slow) charging points could be installed in the home. Furthermore, in the context of the previous item's subject of countryside sites, it was advised that in secluded locations the cost for installing rapid charge points could cost considerably more than £25k and would be subject to other suitability criteria.

4. The Local Transport Programmes Manager gave details of a number of schemes that were taking place, this included £56m which had been allocated for major schemes including sustainable travel improvements.
5. Officers agreed to support the inclusion of an additional performance indicator within the LETS, measuring travel behaviour as indicated within the public consultation summary and explained that this data was already available.
6. Members generally supported both strategies and agreed both were clear in aims and objectives.
7. A Member of the Committee was concerned that the LETS had not explicitly mentioned air travel and the implications of the expansion at London Heathrow on emissions in Surrey. The Member added that he was not confident the strategy could deliver against the scale of the issues at hand. Officers stated that as a partner within the Heathrow Strategic Planning Group, the council is seeking sufficient mitigation of the impacts of growth. Heathrow Airport Ltd are responsible for designing the scheme and proposing mitigation measures to ensure air quality is not adversely impacted by the expansion. Regarding delivery of the LETS, although there was no explicit action plan attached to the strategy, local transport strategies at the borough level will be a key element of delivering the aims of the strategy.
8. In regards to planning issues, it was confirmed that the transport development planning team based at the county advised districts and boroughs on transport implications for new developments with larger developments requiring an air quality assessment.
9. It was explained that home working was encouraged at the Council and promoted through travel plans with businesses. Officers explained that there was a rail strategy in place which lobbied electrifying on particular networks. Unfortunately, the cost of rail travel is regulated by government which meant the County could lobby for reduced fares but that this was ultimately a government decision in conjunction with train operators.
10. It was confirmed that under the Environment Act (1995), district and boroughs have to send information regarding AQMAs (Air Quality Management Areas) to DEFRA who then sign this information off.
11. In regards to the impact of future development on the strategy, the officer explained that the projected volume of development is proposed through the development of local plans. Transport modelling was then undertaken on areas where there may be problems. This information is then set out into the Local Transport strategies and required funding is sought.
12. A Member of the Committee queried why there was not any information in the EV strategy regarding electric bikes and if there were any future plans for using street lights as EV charging points. With regards to using lamp columns as charging points, it was stated that in Surrey lamp columns had generally been moved to the back of the footway which meant potential health and safety issues with trailing cables across the footway. There was also a potential issue with unwanted charging outside people's homes. This technique was currently being trialled by Oxford, Portsmouth and the London borough of Hounslow and would be reviewed carefully. Officers stated that they were happy to consider the inclusion of electric bikes in the EV strategy.

13. A Member of the Committee felt that the public consultation responses to the EV strategy was low. It was argued that more needed to be done to improve engagement.
14. The Chairman queried what action was undertaken to ensure people moved EV's after they had been sufficiently charged. The Local Transport Programmes Manager explained that in instances with rapid charging points, drivers are able to book their vehicles for charging, although this is also balanced with flexibility of access. On the highway, limited waiting at charging points could be introduced with CPOs (Civil Parking Officers) to enforce this.

The Committee recommended:

- I. For the inclusion of a specific indicator in the low emissions transport strategy which measures travel behaviour.
- II. For both air quality and carbon emissions data and indicators within the Low Emissions Transport Strategy to be developed and reported back to the Committee in the next 12 month as part of ongoing performance monitoring.
- III. The Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport to lobby the DfT for funding (where appropriate) to support the objectives of the Electric Vehicle Strategy and Low Emissions Transport Strategy.
- IV. The Low Emissions Transport Strategy and Electric Vehicle Strategy to be shared with partners including the County Council's approved transport providers after Cabinet approval.
- V. For SCC fleet vehicles to be reviewed and replaced with low emission vehicles, electric vehicles and charging infrastructure as appropriate.

7 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME [Item 7]

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Chairman explained that the 5 December Select Committee meeting would be held at the Surrey Fire and Rescue Service HQ in Wray Park.
2. It was agreed that the Countryside Estate Strategy MRG would review disabled access on the Countryside estate.
3. The Chairman confirmed that to her knowledge the final report regarding the HMICFRS inspection of the Surrey Fire and Rescue Service was not ready for publication.
4. A Member asked that in future when an item was removed from the forward plan that this be communicated with the Committee. The Chairman agreed to this course of action and ensured Members that they would be notified when the forward plan was changed.
5. The Chairman stated that the forward plan would be updated with the scrutiny of transformation projects in due course.

8 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING [Item 8]

The next meeting of the Environment Select Committee will be held on 5 December 2018, at 10.00am in Room 1, SFRS HQ, Wray Park.

Meeting ended at: 12.45

Chairman