

MINUTES of the meeting of the **COMMUNITIES, ENVIRONMENT AND HIGHWAYS SELECT COMMITTEE** held at 9.00 am on 7 February 2022

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its meeting on Tuesday, 8 March 2022.

Elected Members:

- * Catherine Baart
- * Jordan Beech
- * Stephen Cooksey
- * Colin Cross
- * Paul Deach (Vice-Chairman)
- * John Furey
- * Jonathan Hulley
- * Andy MacLeod (Vice-Chairman)
- * Jan Mason
- * Cameron McIntosh
- * John O'Reilly (Chairman)
- * Lance Spencer
- * Keith Witham

10/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

None received.

11/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 2]

None received.

12/22 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 3]

None received.

13/22 LOCAL AND JOINT COMMITTEE HIGHWAY FUNCTION [Item 4]

Witnesses:

Matt Furniss, Cabinet Member for Transport & Infrastructure

Mark Nuti, Cabinet Member for Communities

Marie Snelling, Executive Director - Customer & Communities

Katie Stewart, Executive Director for Environment, Transport & Infrastructure

James Painter, Community Partnership Manager

James Glover, Community, Partnerships & Engagement

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. An Officer introduced a presentation covering the new proposal that sought Cabinet approval to change the way in which the executive highway functions currently considered by Local/Joint

Committees were undertaken. Current and transitional arrangements in addition to funding and allocation summaries for 2022/2023 and 2023/24 were summarised to clarify queries raised by Members previously.

2. The Chairman noted the Community Network Approach (CNA) had not yet been developed but was mentioned several times in the report and suggested that the CNA be disregarded at this stage and reconsidered when there were more details available. The Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure said there would be no objections to this recommendation if it enabled clearer consideration of the executive highways function.
3. A Member asked if the £50,000 capital referred to in the report was an increase. The Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure noted that the current amount was £23,000 of capital and £7,500.00 of revenue and the proposal was to increase that to £50,000 of capital with an additional £7,500 of revenue, totalling £57,000.
4. A Member was concerned at the formula to split the transitional year amount of £2.95 million. Originally, budgets were divided by 81 Members and then multiplied by the number of county councillors per borough, resulting in larger boroughs receiving a larger proportion. The proposal reverts to an 11-way split which was disproportionately unfair to larger boroughs. The Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure said that the proposal for the transitional year had been generous. Every district and borough would be given the same amount to give them the opportunity of delivering as many top priorities within this financial year, as possible. The same methodology from the previous year could be implemented, however it was worth noting that whilst larger area such as Elmbridge, Guildford, Reigate and Banstead and Waverley would benefit, other areas would lose out.
5. A Member queried the reasons for the recommendations of the new procedures and said it was not clear how the better outcomes noted in the report would be achieved. The Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure said that the proposal was an extension of the Select Committee's current remit. Currently results of spending and funding decisions were reported back to the local committee annually which would continue but instead to the Select Committee. Minor elements would be built faster with Members working in their local communities delivering more efficiently without the need to wait for annual or quarterly Committee cycles.

6. A Member asked how the current process which supported transparency and local involvement could be replicated. The Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure confirmed that the highways engagement team would offer support with appropriate expertise and would attend local meetings.
7. A Member queried why a process that worked well was being recommended for change. Any previous non delivery of recommendations put forward had been due to a lack of resources and the paper did not note an increase in the resources available. The Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure explained that joint and local committees had not quite delivered what was hoped for, with most of their work undertaken now related to highways. Highways matters were the responsibility of County Councillors and as such, decisions should be made by the County Council. It was vital to empower the county councillors to make decisions for which they had been democratically elected to undertake.
8. A Member, in reference to a comment from Officers regarding petitions, asked which alternative established channels could petitions be brought through. The current process requires petitions to go to joint and local committees to be debated, how would this be undertaken going forward. An Officer said that there was an established petition scheme operated by Surrey County Council and the content of the petition would determine where a petition matter was directed.
9. A Member was concerned at the potential lack of instant feedback and local knowledge when current maintenance engineers were replaced with newly appointed interface personnel. An Officer explained that it would remain the role of majors engineers to meet Members on site to discuss issues. The newly appointed engagement officers would work closely with County Councillors to provide guidance and direction.
10. An Officer summarised that there had been an increase to core resources for schemes proposed including increased traffic engineers and a design team to progress any ideas put forward. A Member was concerned that changing the process for traffic maintenance would result in having to go through less experienced colleagues and suspected that matters would not go back to the local or joint committee for engagement due to the method of petitioning. The Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure reiterated that more resources had been implemented allowing direct and specific contact to traffic or

highways engineers. The newly appointed engagement team included experienced and knowledgeable staff and was headed by a former area hiring manager.

11. An Officer said the data concerning the local engagement by local and highways committee showed a low level of engagement resulting in work behind the scenes to enable community conversation to increase engagement with the public.
12. A Member asked how the backlog of the Integrated Transport Scheme (ITS) would be addressed. The Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure explained that transitional arrangements would deliver items prioritised for the next financial year. From 23 April 2022 items would be judged by the new criteria, allowing each county councillor to put forward their prioritised major schemes providing a further opportunity to review items on the backlog.
13. The Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure reiterated to Members concerned about resources, that to this point, areas were nominated using the £23,000 capital, with delivery this financial year. Members may be asked to make decisions earlier so that works could be planned appropriately but there are sufficient resources to deliver all schemes that had been put forward.
14. A Member asked if part of their allocation could be spent on speed surveys. The Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure confirmed this was possible.
15. A Member appreciated the concept of CNA but said it required further development and testing. He asked what tools would be available to Members to support engagement. An Officer said that the aim of the new approach would be to ensure Members were clear about the process and what was on offer to them in terms of tools, techniques and direction.
16. A Member asked how residents without access to technology would be included in engagement. An Officer summarised the intention to open varied lines of communication between County Council partners and communities and confirmed that new engagement platforms were being considered in addition to utilising current assets differently, such as libraries and voluntary organisation premises. A Member suggested the use of multi-channel communications, including the more effective use of

council tax letters as a way of encouraging residents to subscribe by email. Districts and boroughs resources could also be better coordinated and utilised.

17. A Member asked if there were plans to ensure better decision making and scrutiny on a strategic level in terms of highways schemes within local areas. The Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure confirmed that there would be the opportunity for district and boroughs and county councillors to meet at least once a year to agree borough or district wide priorities or items affecting more than one or two divisional councillors.
18. A Member asked for clarification regarding rationale behind the threshold of the £50,000 capital allocation as most projects would cost more than this. The Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure explained that the £50,000 was settled on due to budget consideration.
19. A Member, in reference to an Officers comment that “where an agreement cannot be reached on an individual project, it will be escalated further” asked what this would mean and how would it work in practice. The Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure explained that this referenced a situation where a Member wanted to go against County Council policy with evidence and any escalation would be to the Cabinet Member. An Officer added that this option would be a last resort.
20. A Member noted the aim for the process to allow decisions to be made more promptly and asked if the implementation process would be quicker. The Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure explained that Members would be encouraged to make suggestions and discuss with the relevant officer in good time to enable a prompt process.
21. A Member sought clarification with regards to working with joint divisional members. How would joint working with districts and boroughs happen if there was no longer a local committee. The Cabinet Member for Transport & Infrastructure confirmed that planned meetings with the districts and boroughs would address an improvement of the process going forward.
22. A Member asked for assurances that engagement officers would have a good geographical understanding of their area of responsibility. The Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure confirmed this would be the case.

23. A Member was concerned that in dealing with ITS schemes through central funding decision, some areas would miss out. The Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure explained that currently, not every area received funding every year. The Committee was being asked to support the development of the criteria to improve on the current priority-based system.
24. The Chairman noted that the forum of a local committee would be powerless to assist residents. The Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure reiterated that if the public wanted to submit petitions on highways matters, they would still go through the County Council's existing petition scheme. The petition would not be heard at the local and joint committee but be directed to the relevant areas. The Chairman pressed, notwithstanding the powers of the joint committees over highways, would a resident be able to present a petition to a local or joint committee on a highways matter. The Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure confirmed they would not and that the proposal offered other forums for that petition to be heard by the divisional councillor upwards.
25. Moving towards conclusion, the Chairman noted that there were differing opinions on the proposed recommendations in the draft Cabinet report and proposed a vote to agree the Select Committee's own recommendations.
26. The Chairman, in moving towards the Select Committee's recommendations asked Members to vote whether they supported or opposed the recommendations contained in the draft Cabinet report. Six Members voted for the recommendation in the draft Cabinet report and four Members voted against, with one abstention. Paul Deach, John Furey, Jonathon Hulley, Cameron McIntosh, John O'Reilly, Keith Witham voted for whereas Stephen Cooksey, Colin Cross, Andy Macleod and Lance Spencer voted against. Catherine Baart abstained.
27. The Chairman proposed a further vote to determine whether to include an additional recommendation point suggested by a Member regarding the distribution of Integrated Transport Scheme (ITS) funds. This recommendation was carried with six votes to two and three abstentions. Catherine Baart, Paul Deach, Jonathon Hulley, Cameron McIntosh, John O'Reilly and Keith Witham voted to include the recommendation. Stephen Cooksey and Lance Spencer voted against. Colin Cross, John Furey and Andy Macleod abstained.

Resolved:

The Select Committee, in principle, support the recommendations in the draft Cabinet report titled 'Local and Joint Committee (LC/JC) Highway Function' subject to the following areas being addressed:

- i. All references to Community Network Approach (CNA) in the Cabinet report be removed. [Any future CNA proposal needs to be fully developed first with a draft provided to Members for their comments and feedback].
- ii. County wide Integrated Transport Scheme (ITS) funding is apportioned using the same methodology used previously which is a top slice of £100,000 to districts and boroughs and then the remaining amount splits between the 81 members, for the transition year only.
- iii. An information sheet about how the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) aspect will be incorporated under the new arrangement be circulated to assist Members, or a detailed report is brought to the Select Committee.
- iv. Asks residents continuing to have the right to present petitions and questions to Joint Committees/Local Committees on highways matters during the transition period even if the other components (Members' allocations, parking reviews, etc.) are taken out of their jurisdiction.
- v. Any new proposal must be accessible to all – especially those with no digital/internet access.

14/22 SURREY ELECTRIC VEHICLE PUBLIC CHARGEPOINTS FURTHER INFORMATION [Item 5]

Witnesses:

Matt Furniss, Cabinet Member for Transport & Infrastructure

Katie Stewart, Executive Director for Environment, Transport & Infrastructure

Jonathon James, Electric Vehicle Project Manager

Lee Parker, Director of Infrastructure, Planning & Major Projects

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Chairman summarised that the concerns of Committee Members regarding the lack of detail in the previous report had been addressed. Cabinet had amended its recommendations following the Select Committee's feedback and that a Member Reference Group reference group had been formed to consider this matter in detail.

Resolved:

The Select Committee:

1. Agrees to the establishment of a Member Reference Group which will be engaged to provide scrutiny support to the procurement exercise, including in helping to define the outcomes to be specified in the procurement and the network plan.
2. Membership of the Member Reference Group to be as follows:

John O'Reilly (Convener/Chair)
Andy MacLeod
Lance Spencer
Catherine Baart
Stephen Cooksey
John Furey

15/22 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING: 8 MARCH 2022 [Item 6]

The Committee noted its next meeting would be held on 8 March 2022

Meeting ended at: 11:05am

Chairman