

MINUTES of the meeting of the **COMMUNITIES, ENVIRONMENT AND HIGHWAYS SELECT COMMITTEE** held at 12.00 pm on 20 March 2023 at Committee Room, Woodhatch Place.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its meeting on Thursday, 5 July 2023.

Elected Members:

- * Catherine Baart
- Stephen Cooksey
- Colin Cross
- John Furey
- * David Harmer
- * Robert Hughes
- * Jonathan Hulley (Vice-Chairman)
- * Andy MacLeod (Vice-Chairman)
- * Jan Mason
- Cameron McIntosh
- * John O'Reilly (Chairman)
- Becky Rush
- * Lance Spencer
- * Richard Tear
- * Keith Witham

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Stephen Cooksey.

Robert Hughes and Richard Tear substituted for Cameron McIntosh, John Furey respectively.

11/23 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS: 8 FEBRUARY 2023 [Item 2]

The minutes of the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee held on 8 February 2023 were formally agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

12/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

None received.

13/23 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

None received.

14/23 STRATEGIC WASTE INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN [Item 5]

Witnesses:

- Natalie Bramhall, Cabinet Member for Property and Waste

- Katie Stewart, Executive Director for Environment Transport and Infrastructure
- Steven Foster, Interim Director for Waste
- Rob Macpherson, Waste Contract & Project Officer
- Jodi Johnston, Waste Contract Management Project Officer

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Chairman noted that several components of the strategy involved other entities and asked if alternative plans had been considered if agreements could not be reached. The Executive Director for Environment Transport and Infrastructure explained that third party market capacity would be considered if agreements could not be reached.
2. A Member asked how the council work with districts and boroughs in a more collaborative way to provide resilience, security and value for money for the future of waste services, as outlined in the councils vision. The Interim Director for Waste noted the good level of horizontal cooperation between the districts and boroughs through the Surrey Environmental Partnership (SEP) and explained that the districts and boroughs, provided frontline resilience, the statutory obligations of the council provided security of service and value for money resulted from more efficiency around recycling by having a Surrey County Council (SCC) owned Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) to reduce costs. The Cabinet Member for Property and Waste noted the differing levels of services provided by the districts and boroughs and said that the SEP would work with them to provide support to implement change going forward.
3. A Member asked what responsibility the council had to engage with residents. The Waste Contract Management Project Officer said that in addition to the districts and boroughs having their own communications plans, quarterly meetings took place between waste and recycling officers to agree communications strategies which were produced by the Surrey Environmental Partnership.
4. A Member queried how the proposed introduction of a new operating model for the Community Recycling Centre (CRC) network would improve network efficiency and effectiveness and provide greater control over the quality of the materials collected. The Interim Director for Waste explained that the long term ambition was to rebuild six sites that were currently substandard rather than introduce a new operating model. The Waste Contract & Project Officer agreed that there were plans to redevelop the six sites to improve safety and efficiency with no new operating model proposed.

5. A Member queried if the recycling credits offered to the districts and boroughs were progressive. The Interim Director for Waste said that from April 2023, with SEP members agreement, action plans would be in place for all 12 authorities to drive forward initiatives to reduce waste arisings and increase recycling. Progress against these plans would be assessed without penalties or deductions in the first and second year, however deductions to credit payments could be implemented in the third year if an authority is assessed as making insufficient progress to deliver on their stated actions.
6. A Member queried if some disposal could be dealt with by the council in partnership with relevant third parties to reduce transportation costs. The Interim Director for Waste noted the industry focus on reducing tonnage to landfill or incineration and said that in terms of recyclables journeys, the Trumps Farm project noted in the report would enable the council to build its own MRF to bulk up waste within the county and reduce transportation. Apart from the Eco Park There were currently no facilities in the county to incinerate residual waste.
7. A Member queried how the proposed Infrastructure Plan would reduce the carbon impact of waste treatment, transportation and disposal, and increase resource recovery from residual waste materials. The Member asked how effectively this would align with the 25 year Environment Plan which sets out the Resources and Waste Strategy. The Interim Director for Waste said that gains could be made by reducing the annual 50,000 tonnes of food waste currently in black bags. By educating residents to place this food waste in the separate container provided, it would significantly reduce costs and enable it to be used to produce electricity in an anaerobic digestion process. In addition, discussions were taking place regarding electric collection vehicles and although these were at an early stage of development and not necessarily viable There were early indications of vegetable based fuels being an option going forward. Measurement of any successes would be reflected in environmental returns to The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). The Executive Director for Environment Transport and Infrastructure added that existing key performance Indicators to align with the Greener Futures Plan would be reviewed and agreed with the Committee.
8. A Member asked how the proposed multi-facility solution at Trumps Farm would reduce the cost and environmental impact of long-distance haulage for the out of county treatment of dry recycling. The Interim Director for Waste explained that the Trumps Farm site was currently at the feasibility stage, and it was expected that a transportation review would be required prior to the submission of any planning application. It had been

agreed with Cabinet that a planning application would not be submitted until an additional round of challenge had taken place and it was expected to come back to that Committee as part of this process.

9. A Member, in noting paragraph 18 of the report, queried what were the commercial opportunities resulting from initiatives in the strategy. The Interim Director for Waste said that this related to the generation of a small income by transferring back control to the council at the transfer stations currently used by contractors to bulk up commercial waste for the collection of commercial waste.
10. A Member queried where in the process was the council in relation to Trumps Farm as paragraphs 30 and 31 of the report conflicted with the information provided on page 16 of the annex. The Interim Director for Waste explained that the process was at an earlier stage than a year ago due to challenges from Cabinet, the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee and the Major Projects Board. The Cabinet Member for Property and Waste added that there had been increased Land and Property department involvement to identify alternative sites within the county for an MRF and a Property Board had been set up exclusively for this project.
11. The Chairman said that the monitoring of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of all components of the plan were an essential part of the process. A Member noted the need for KPIs around cost effectiveness, carbon impact and the circular economy. The Executive Director for Environment Transport and Infrastructure agreed with the suggestion to develop new KPIs and of ongoing monitoring of existing KPIs.
12. A Member asked how much landfill capacity remained in Surrey. The Waste Contract & Project Officer confirmed that the only landfill capacity remaining in Surrey was at Cormongers Lane in Redhill which took 10,000 tonnes (5 per cent) of the counties waste. The site would be capped and restored by 2030 at which point there would be no landfill capacity in Surrey and it would be unlikely for any further landfill sites to be permitted.
13. A Member asked if lobbying of government was possible to make it a requirement for mattresses to be more easily recyclable. The Interim Director for Waste said that solutions were being sought around mattress recycling.
14. A Member queried incinerator temperature sensitivity required to remove Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) from mattresses. The Interim Director for Waste said that discussions were taking place with SUEZ to identify solutions around POPs.

Resolved:

The Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee:

- a. While recognising the imperative to work with Districts and Boroughs, supports the proposed Strategic Waste Infrastructure Plan and commends its ambitions to work in partnership with the County's District and Boroughs.
- b. Asks that – as the various components move forward – clear measures, including specific Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), are put in place to ensure cost effectiveness; carbon impact; and circular economy with appropriate monitoring to evaluate performance.
- c. Urges the Cabinet Member to write to central government requesting them to take further necessary measures to reduce the need for specialist recycling.

15/23 FUTURE BUS NETWORK REVIEW AND LOCAL BUS SERVICE INVESTMENT [Item 6]

Witnesses:

- Matt Furniss, Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth
- Katie Stewart, Executive Director for Environment Transport and Infrastructure
- Lucy Monie, Director, Highways and Transport
- Paul Millin, Assistant Director, Strategic Transport

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Chairman queried the councils capital and revenue spending on buses in the financial years 2022/23 and 2023/24. The Assistant Director, Strategic Transport confirmed that the revenue budget for 2022/23 was £10.5 million and the budget for 2023/24 was £12.2 million adding that Cabinet had agreed budget and pipeline funding at £49 million to support investment initiatives.
2. The Chairman asked if residents expect this financial commitment to bus services in Surrey to continue. The Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth gave reassurances that bus services and improvements to public transport were a priority for the council.
3. A Member queried the lessons learnt from the Mole Valley Connect Scheme, Digital Demand Responsive Transport

(DDRT) pilot and asked if residents not digitally aware would be deterred from using the service. The Assistant Director, Strategic Transport confirmed that telephone bookings would continue alongside online and app booking. Lessons learnt included the understanding that school journeys could not be provided as vehicles were tied up for significant parts of the day resulting in a reduction in availability for residents and the original electric vehicles could now longer cope with the daily mileage, which has increased throughout the day due to greater ridership, requiring their replacement.

4. A Member asked if the DDRT would be council run or commercially operated services. The Assistant Director, Strategic Transport explained that the DDRT services would be going to tender in April for services to start in September 2023, ideally with the aim of one or two contractors to provide a range of DDRT services with the ability to combine high levels of quality in delivery and control.
5. A Member noted that Stagecoach bus drivers had been advising users of the 17 and 520 bus services that the route would be cut from September 2023 and sought reassurances that the council would provide clear communications about the change of services to residents. The Assistant Director, Strategic Transport committed to raise the issue of drivers giving incorrect information with Stagecoach senior managers and said that information about the proposed changes to services would be provided to local Members, with an early briefing planned post Cabinet.
6. A Member said that residents needed a clear explanation of the DDRT service. The Assistant Director, Strategic Transport agreed and noted that as demand increased going forward, the service may evolve to a corner to corner service, rather than a home to destination service to improve service efficiency.
7. A Member asked how the five areas of priority noted in paragraph 21 of the report had been identified and what were the improvements planned in these areas and their timescales. The Assistant Director, Strategic Transport explained that the five areas had been identified by considering where passenger growth could be maximised as referenced in the National Bus Strategy published in March 2020. The Member queried if the consultation had reaffirmed the five areas of priority. The Assistant Director, Strategic Transport confirmed that 70 per cent of residents agreed with the investment in the priority areas.
8. A Member asked what proportion of the revenue and capital expenditures over the next two years would be spent on DDRT services as opposed to normal bus services. The Assistant

Director, Strategic Transport said that approximately £700,000 would be spent on the cost of DDRT services in a full financial year.

9. A Member asked if there was a charge for DDRT. PM confirmed the charge was currently £2.
10. A Member questioned how services provided by the Council related to district and borough services such as Woking Bustler. The Assistant Director, Strategic Transport said that the Council had an excellent working relationship with Woking Bustler and plans were underway to work more closely and invest with them to grow their business and provide additional opportunities to both parties going forward.
11. A Member asked if the reduction of services noted in Annex E of the report were likely to be reconsidered and if not, what were the mitigations around these measures. The Assistant Director, Strategic Transport said that not all the routes would result in service withdrawals and explained that plans to refine 11 of the 24 poorly performing services shared to the public consultation were required due to the financial implications of low patronage. The Assistant Director, Strategic Transport noted the commitment to work with residents affected by the changes through Members, district and boroughs, parishes and town councils to promote alternatives such as affiliated and non-affiliated voluntary car schemes. The Chairman was concerned that the areas in question were key neighbourhoods in areas of deprivation in Surrey. A Member urged that additional mitigations be put in place to ensure that no one is left behind. The Assistant Director, Strategic Transport undertook to reconsider the 11 services proposed. **(Action:** Assistant Director, Strategic Transport)
12. A Member noted concerns about the Tattenham Corner school bus service cessation. The Assistant Director, Strategic Transport explained that the company operating the Tattenham Corner and Preston school bus services commercially had said that the services were no longer commercially viable. As a result, another operator had been persuaded to pick up one of the services and the second service was going to tender.
13. A Member asked what the financial savings of would be implementing the changes. The Assistant Director, Strategic Transport said that there would be no savings as any additional money input would cover tender increases.
14. A Member asked if the council could run its own service. The Assistant Director, Strategic Transport said that this would be a huge undertaking and it was unlikely that the council could

achieve a more efficient or cost effective service with requirements for a suitable depot and the purchasing of vehicles to be considered.

15. A Member asked if the changes happening to services would be promoted on buses. The Assistant Director, Strategic Transport confirmed that briefings regarding the changes would be provided to all Members going forward.
16. A Member questioned if the negative impact to those with disabilities would be analysed further. The Assistant Director, Strategic Transport acknowledged the obligation to consider residents with disabilities and noted the East Surrey Rural Transport Partnership and the Woking Bustler service as examples of the provision of different services for those unable to access public transport and committed to look again at the 11 service areas in relation to the negative impact on residents with disabilities. The Member asked if residents with disabilities would be consulted. The Assistant Director, Strategic Transport said that organisations such as Sight for Surrey and the Surrey Coalition of Disabled People had been consulted and were aware of the proposals. The Member asked if information could be provided to confirm the date of the consultation with Sight for Surrey. The Assistant Director, Strategic Transport agreed to provide the information directly to the Member. (**Action:** Assistant Director, Strategic Transport)
17. A Member asked how much the council would be involved in promoting the '20 and Under Half Fare Concessionary Scheme'. The Assistant Director, Strategic Transport said that the council would share the news through social media channels and the communication plan for this was being developed. The Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth added that the Surrey Youth Cabinet had provided positive feedback about the DDRT and the concessionary scheme. The Member asked if feedback could be provided to the committee regarding the success of the DDRT and '20 and Under Half Fare Concessionary Scheme' at an appropriate time. The Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth agreed to provide the committee with an update.
18. A Member queried if the Department for Transport (DfT) would require the DDRT service to be financially sustainable. The Assistant Director, Strategic Transport said that the council would report back to the DfT, including a refreshed Bus Service Improvement Plan, with the DDRT included as a registered local bus service.
19. A Member asked what the vision for bus services in the future was. The Assistant Director, Strategic Transport noted zero

missions and a successful '20 and Under Half Fare Concessionary Scheme' leading to more residents using public transport.

Resolved:

The Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee:

- a. Welcomes the proposed increased investment to stimulate passenger figures in a number of areas and particularly supports the new '20 and Under Half Fare Concessionary Scheme'.
- b. Endorses the roll-out of new Digital Demand Responsive Transport (DDRT) services to new areas, but with an expectation that this be accompanied by effective and timely communications to residents affected who may be less digitally aware.
- c. Is concerned at the findings of Bus Service Improvement Programme Route Analysis (Annex E of the report) that seven very underprivileged areas – Key Neighbourhoods – will be severely affected by these changes, which runs counter to Surrey's declared 'No one left behind' ambitions. The Committee urges consideration of effective mitigation measures.

16/23 RECOMMENDATIONS TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME [Item 7]

The Select Committee noted the Recommendation Tracker and the Forward Work Programme.

1. A discussion took place regarding items not on the programme and the Chairman agreed that one substantive item to include countryside and rural matters, land management and the nature recovery strategy would be added to the Forward Work Programme.

17/23 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING: 11 MAY 2023 [Item 8]

The Committee noted its next meeting would be held on 5 July 2023.

Meeting ended at: 1:45pm

Chairman