

MINUTES of the meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT SELECT COMMITTEE** held at 10.30 am on 27 October 2014 at Ashcombe Suite, County Hall, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT1 2DN.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its next meeting.

Elected Members:

- * Mr David Harmer (Chairman)
- * Mr Mike Bennison (Vice-Chairman)
- Mrs Nikki Barton
- 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

In attendance:

Mike Goodman, Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning

69/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Nikki Barton, Natalie Bramhall, Pat Frost and John Furey.

Chris Norman substituted for Pat Frost.

70/14 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: 10 SEPTEMBER 2014 [Item 2]

The Minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

71/14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

There were none.

72/14 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

There were none.

73/14 RESPONSES FROM THE CABINET TO ISSUES REFERRED BY THE SELECT COMMITTEE [Item 5]

There were none.

74/14 RECOMMENDATION TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME [Item 6]

1. The Chairman brought attention to the Environment and Transport Select Committee's Performance and Finance Sub-Group, advising Members of the Sub-Group to think laterally about where budget reductions could be made. Specifically, the Chairman called on Members not to focus solely on the numbers in order to identify savings but rather to challenge assumptions made by officers about where and how money is spent in the Environment and Infrastructure (EI) Directorate. The Committee was advised that a briefing note would be sent round highlighting the approach that the Performance and Finance Sub-Group should take towards scrutinising E&I's spending and identify potential areas of savings.
2. The Chairman further advised that the Utilities Task Group may also want to consider reconvening following the submission of the Flooding Task Group's final report.

Recommendations:

None

Actions/Further information to be provided:

None

Committee Next Steps:

- The Chairman to distribute a note to the Committee detailing the approach that should be taken to identifying savings by the Performance and Finance Sub-Group.

75/14 SURREY CYCLING STRATEGY UPDATE [Item 7]

Witnesses:

Ian Good (Head of Emergency Management)
 Lesley Harding (Place and Sustainability Group Manager)
 Helyn Clack (Cabinet Member for Community Services)

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The report was introduced by the Place and Sustainability Group Manager (PSGM) who provided an update on the Surrey Cycling Strategy to date.

2. Members expressed particular concern with large cycling events which were identified as being an area of concern for Surrey residents due to the disruption they caused. The Head of Emergency Management (HEM) highlighted that regulated cycling events were an effective means of advertising cycling as an active pastime and encouraging people to exercise. They also have a more general positive impact on Surrey by promoting tourism and increasing trade to local businesses.
3. The HEM further advised that since the implementation of the Surrey Cycling Strategy a drop has been recorded in the number of complaints about cycling events.
4. The Committee asked about measures laid out in the Surrey Cycling Strategy to combat the number of unregulated events taking place in Surrey, pointing out that there appeared to be little, if any, reduction in the number of unregulated events taking place. The HEM advised that Surrey County Council (SCC) has been working with Surrey Police, British Cycling and Sport England to tackle these but as there were not any regulations in place it was difficult to clamp down on such events. Instead, the Council has been working to engage with a small number of organisers who arranged the majority of unregulated cycling events in Surrey to ensure that they adhere to a code of practice in order to minimise disruption to residents.
5. Members highlighted problems arising from 2014's Prudential Ride London-Surrey event and highlighted that a lack of local knowledge by stewards had meant that they were unable to provide directions for drivers who had to be diverted. The HEM highlighted that the stewards had been briefed to allow as many drivers through as possible but that the discussions would be held with the race organisers ahead of the 2015 event to communicate the improvements expected in the standards of marshalling.
6. The Cabinet Member further advised that the organisation of the race would continue to improve every time it took place especially if it was kept along the same route each year as it would allow stewards to develop local knowledge and organisers to fix past problems.
7. Members also indicated that it might be a good idea to advertise the date that Prudential Ride London-Surrey would be taking place as soon as possible so that residents had plenty of advanced warning and would therefore have the opportunity to plan accordingly.
8. The Committee stated that residents were not solely concerned with cycling events but also with the conduct of some cyclists who pay little heed to road traffic laws and discussed ways in which this small minority of cyclists could be encouraged to act more responsibly on the roads.
9. Members requested data on how many cyclists had been the cause of traffic collisions on Surrey's roads in the past year and suggested that the communications department could be asked to launch a campaign highlighting the dangers of cycling irresponsibly and not paying attention to road traffic laws. The PSGM indicated that she didn't have

any data on cyclists causing accidents but would find out if it were possible to generate this data from police records and discuss the possibility of initiating a high-impact campaign promoting responsible cycling as part of the work of the Drive SMART Partnership. The Chairman further requested information on accident hotspots in Surrey and asked that these be circulated to the Committee. The Cabinet Member also advised that she would be attending a meeting about cycling casualties and would gather more information on statistics about accidents and deaths.

10. The PSGM told the Committee that Surrey Police Officers would receive guidelines on spotting and responding to irresponsible and anti-social behaviour by cyclists.
11. Some of the Members suggested that very few crimes committed by cyclists are actually reported to the Police because there is no way of identifying who the offender was. It was requested whether it would be possible to make sure that all cyclists had an identification number on their bike.
12. Requiring cyclists to have third party insurance was also put forward as a possibility by some Members of the Committee. The Chairman expressed concern with this idea as it was felt that this could have a detrimental effect on leisure cyclists. It was suggested that the Cabinet Member send around an email to all members with the dates for future cycling events to be held in the county.
13. The Committee also asked whether it was possible to increase the network of cycle paths in Surrey to keep up with the increased cycling activity taking place in the County. A couple of particular roads in Surrey were mentioned which it was felt would benefit significantly from having cycle paths. The PGSM advised that local cycle plans were developed, working with the boroughs and districts and overseen by the local committees and that they are encouraged to think differently about how roads can be used for all users. It was further highlighted that there were plenty of funds available for sustainable transport through the LEP's.
14. Some of the members flagged the cycling proficiency tests and suggested that they did not appear to be having a great impact particularly at Level 3 which only provided training for 61 people in 2013/14. The PSGM explained the different Bikeability levels and stated that the high ratio of cycling instructors required for Level 3 meant that the County Council is seeking to expand its pool of cycle instructors in order to have the capacity to deliver level 3 courses.
15. The PSGM further highlighted that there was presently no target for number of people taking the Level 3 cycling proficiency training. The service wanted to ensure that the programme was expanding at a sustainable and safe rate for those who wished to undertake the training. The Cabinet Member indicated that the Level 1 and 2 proficiency training were both extremely well attended with 5,071 and 6,100 students undertaking these levels of training respectively.

16. Members agreed that the cycling strategy would also need to pay careful attention to a range of cyclists and would also need to focus on changing the behaviours of some cyclists.

Recommendations:

The Environment and Transport Select Committee agreed the following recommendations;

- a) Endorsed the progress to date on delivering the Surrey Cycling Strategy.

Actions/Further information to be provided:

- For the PSGM to look at data for the number of accidents involving cyclists on Surrey roads in 2013/14 and forward this to the Committee.
- For the Cabinet Member to email to all members with dates for future cycling events to be held in Surrey.
- For the Scrutiny Officer to raise with the Drive Smart Partnership board concerns the Select Committee raised in relation to road collisions involving cyclists.

Committee Next Steps:

None

76/14 REPORT OF THE FLOODING TASK GROUP [Item 8]

Witnesses:

Ben Skipp (Programme Manager)
Mark Howarth (Flood and Water Strategy Manager)

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Chairman prefaced Member discussions on the report by qualifying some of the information provided in Annexe 1. It was highlighted that, for each town or village listed in the annexe, the flood source was listed as the original reason for the flooding, i.e. the river which burst its banks, rather than any other water sources which may have overflowed as a result. The Environment Agency (EA) manage main rivers, so their data has been used.
2. The Committee asked how the Council was working to mitigate the dangers of flooding caused by sources of water which fall outside the EA's remit. Sewage was cited by Members as a particular problem for residents and had inundated numerous houses during the floods that occurred in early 2014. The Chairman noted that some leaks in the sewage network were caused by rivers bursting their banks and so it

was vital to work with the EA to ensure that appropriate flood defences were put in place. The Chairman asked the Flood and Water Strategy Manager (FWSM) to provide an update on any discussions taking place with Thames Water who maintained Surrey's sewage network.

3. The FWSM advised that progress was being made with Thames Water in getting them to contribute to flood prevention strategies. The Chairman highlighted that the EA only has power to regulate Thames Water where sewage is at risk of draining into a river but that no powers are available to compel them to take action where sewage is at risk of flooding homes. As Thames Water is a private company, SCC is not allowed to contribute money towards upgrading the sewage network.
4. Members expressed concern that the proposed solution to prevent flooding in the future for some areas was still listed as 'unknown' in the annexe. The Chairman highlighted that SCC and the EA were at present still exploring what measures could be taken to reduce the risk of flooding where the solution was listed as unknown but advised the Committee that the flooding Task Group would ensure that measures would be identified to mitigate flooding risks.
5. The Committee asked for further information on the River Thames Scheme and asked for assurances that the strategy wouldn't come at the expense of local projects creating flood defences for communities in Surrey. The FWSM confirmed that there are a number of local schemes and projects taking place in Surrey to develop flood defences. The Chairman suggested that the time taken to get planning permission for flood schemes could be a cause for delays to implementation if not resourced adequately. The Programme Manager (PM) agreed to ascertain the current involvement of planning officers in flood scheme development and whether there should be any concern around resource to take schemes through the planning process in optimum timescales.
6. Members asked who would be paying for the Caterham Bourne flood defences which were being built in conjunction with Croydon Council. The FWSM indicated that the intention was for Surrey to pay for these defences and to put it forward as their contribution to the Caterham Bourne Scheme being overseen by the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee
7. Members pointed out that communication during flooding was listed as the primary concern of Surrey residents and so requested information on how the officers had been engaging with the local communities. The PM advised that many multi-agency engagement events had been carried out since the floods, in the form of public meetings and market place events. Partner agencies are continuing with this engagement, but moving towards building community resilience to flooding. This will be a long term exercise and a new SCC post has been recruited to provide more capacity to take this work forwards. The Surrey Local Resilience Forum also carried out de-briefs following the winter floods and have working to improve communication between agencies where lessons have been learnt. The PM praised

the work of SCC's Community Partnerships Team during the flood recovery and their expertise is being utilised in the community resilience work and to help improve information flow with Member in future flood incidents.

8. The Committee expressed reservations about SCC's relationship with the EA and felt that they needed to be brought into the discussions more as the Council's main partner in mitigating flooding risks. The FWSM advised that SCC work with the EA through the Surrey Flood Risk Partnership Board. The EA are ultimately responsible for managing the flood risk associated for main rivers, however they do consult and work closely with the council, It would be difficult for the county to change the EA's national policy on issues such as dredging without considerable evidence that the policy was wrong .Members were informed that bids had been submitted to the EA for projects to defend the highest risk areas in Surrey and that the results of these bids were still pending.
9. Members asked whether there was any help that the Select Committee was able to provide in order to encourage the EA to process these bids more rapidly. The officers indicated that they would discuss how the Select Committee could assist in this respect and report back.
10. A number of bids had been made by officers to secure funding contribution for Surrey flooding schemes. Officers were currently in the process of forwarding a bid to the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC). Concern was raised around the prioritisation given to the 'index of multiple deprivation' and the effects this could have on the funding Surrey received from DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs).
11. The PM stated that he would investigate further how the 'index of multiple deprivation' funding was included in the funding model and would report back to the Committee with findings.
12. The committee agreed to include an additional recommendation around the early submission of planning consent for flooding schemes.

Recommendations:

The Environment and Transport Select Committee agreed the following recommendations;

- a) Surrey County Council should lobby Central Government to change the powers of the Water Company regulators, such that proper investment in the drainage networks of the water companies can be directed, until such time as the Secretary of State is satisfied that those drainage networks fully comply with current standards.
- b) The Environment Agency should be pressed to give strong consideration to a programme of selective, tactical dredging of specified areas of the Thames.

- c) Surrey County Council should work with partner organisations to make significant improvements to the arrangements for communications in emergencies, and in particular to provide for communication structures between residents and the relevant authorities. Particular attention should be made for special arrangements in holiday periods.
- d) Surrey County Council should work with all the Boroughs and Districts and with residents in the relevant areas to establish flood fora.

Actions/ Further Information to be provided:

- For the PM and FWSM to investigate how flooding schemes are prioritised by DEFRA.
- For the PM to investigate further how the 'index of multiple deprivation' funding formula operates and report back findings to the Committee.
- For the PM to meet with the SPOA (Surrey Planning Officers Association) to discuss flood schemes and anticipated timescales for implementation along with the associated planning approval required and to report back to the committee with findings.

Committee Next Steps:

None

77/14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING [Item 9]

The Date of the next meeting is Monday 15th of December at 10.30 am in the Ashcombe Suite.

Chairman