

MINUTES of the meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT SELECT COMMITTEE** held at 10.30 am on 12 March 2015 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

Mr John Furey, Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Flooding

11/15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

There were no apologies.

12/15 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: 22 JANUARY 2015 [Item 2]

These were agreed as a true record of the previous meeting.

13/15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

There were none.

14/15 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

There were none.

15/15 RESPONSES FROM THE CABINET TO ISSUES REFERRED BY THE SELECT COMMITTEE [Item 5]

There were no responses from the Cabinet.

**16/15 RECOMMENDATION TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME
[Item 6]**

**17/15 UTILITIES TASK GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS AND SOUTH EAST
PERMIT SCHEME (SEPS): UPDATE REPORT [Item 7]**

Witnesses:

Kevin Orledge, Streetworks Team Manager

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. Members drew attention to paragraph 20, recommendation 4f, of page 22, which proposes exploring the idea of the potential for the collation of a limited central store of specialist surfacing materials by Surrey County Council. Members expressed the opinion that this was financially and logistically impractical. Officers agreed that this recommendation was impractical and informed the Committee that a condition stating that utilities were responsible for sourcing and replacing materials to a high standard was a viable approach.
2. Members raised the concern, with regards to paragraph 20, that utilities have not displayed enough impetus to replace the right materials and that there needs to be additional pressure applied. An increase in inspections was recognised by the Committee, but officers were asked for the figures surrounding this. Officers assured the Committee that applying a condition to a permit is enforceable, as the non-compliance of a condition on a permit is an offence. Officers informed the Committee that utility inspection figures would be presented to the Committee at a later date.
3. The Chairman of the Committee asked officers if it would be practical to inform Members when a notice is issued to a utility. Officers were also questioned over what the fixed penalties were. Officers informed the Committee that the fixed penalty was £80 and if this is not paid £120 then if not paid this is a criminal offence. The Chairman, along with other Members, felt this fixed penalty is low and expressed the need to apply pressure through media platforms. In addition, officers, along with some Members, informed the Committee that a bulletin on Highways and Utilities works was circulated around Surrey's local authorities; he accepted there was scope for enhancing this. This was welcomed by the Chairman who added that the bulletin should specify if these works are in conservation areas.
4. The Vice Chairman of the Committee asked officers if it would be possible to add a requirement for utilities to provide before and after photos when either digging up or reinstating. Officers stated that measures of this nature are not enforceable.
5. Officers informed the Committee that a maximum of 10% of utilities works could be inspected, but highlighted a need to update the specification for areas of work that were deemed non-standard. Members agreed there was a need to designate important areas. The

Chairman of the Select Committee questioned officers over what percentage of the 10% is carried out within conservation areas. Officers informed the Committee that, as part of statute set out within the code of practice, inspections were random. Officers added that any extra inspections could be designated to conservation areas.

6. Members questioned officers over whether a red, amber, green status on utilities reinstatements might be a useful way of pressuring companies. It was also suggested that a Memorandum of Agreement that companies have to sign up to might also help.
7. Officers informed the Committee that utility performance figures could be put in the public domain. They also reminded the Committee that most dealings with utilities are bound by legislation. The Cabinet Member expressed the opinion that the Local Government Association should tackle any legislative issues.

Recommendations:

The Environment and Transport Select Committee;

- a) Supported the removal of original recommendation 2 a.) ii), given the increased number of inspections now being undertaken.
- b) Supported the ongoing development of the SEPS.

Actions/Further information to be provided:

- That the Streetworks team manager include the select committee on the distribution list for the Streetworks bulletin once this has been finalised.
- For the Streetworks team manager to send the committee performance figures of the main utility companies carrying out work in Surrey.

Committee Next steps:

None

18/15 BASINGSTOKE CANAL UPDATE REPORT [Item 8]

Witnesses:

Lisa Creaye-Griffin, Countryside Group Manager

James Taylor, Strategic Manager- Basingstoke Canal

Philip Riley, Basingstoke Canal Society

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Chairman of the Committee informed Members that the Canal is unusual in that it is not fed by a reservoir but by rainfall. He questioned officers over what happens to the surplus rainfall. Officers told the Committee that the Canal was designed without a reservoir as a cost saving measure and that especially during winter the Canal experiences high levels of runoff water which is discharged into the river network lower down the Canal through locks and sluices. The Chairman of the Basingstoke Canal Society added that back-pumping, a system involving the recycling of water aided by pumping mechanisms, is an option being explored for tackling water flow issues on the Canal in the future.
2. Members commented on how interesting the slides about the Basingstoke Canal were and asked that they be circulated among Members.
3. Members asked officers about the role Mychett Lake plays in the Canal's water supply. Officers informed the Committee that because Mychett Lake is connected directly to the Canal, water levels cannot be attenuated independently in the lake and it is therefore not currently useful as a water supply. Officers added that the construction of a secondary bund separating the lake and Canal is a future option for tackling this.
4. The Vice Chairman questioned officers over whether, in a time of austerity, the Canal should be a priority for funding. Officers along with other Members of the Committee expressed the view that the Canal is an asset for local residents which is highlighted by the large number of people that visit the Canal on a regular basis and whom benefit from increased health and wellbeing as a result of what the Canal has to offer. Members stated that the Canal plays a strategic role in Surrey's flood risks. Officers echoed this point whilst adding that there is potential for income generation from managing water runoff.
5. Members asked when the report being carried out by JBA Consulting, as reference in paragraph 26 of the report, is likely to be expected. Officers informed the Committee that it is expected next month and this will be used to assess the Canal's future options.
6. One Member reiterated the view that the Canal is an asset by stating that water leisure is one of the fastest growing industries, but expressed the need to develop a business plan and find a partner that could bring expertise and finance. Along with this is the need to define exactly how much land comes with the Canal; it was suggested that commissioning some students to map the Canal's land ownership might be a useful project. This idea was recognised by officers as an opportunity they would look into.
7. A Member made the point that the plan to regenerate the Basingstoke Canal Centre was interesting but underplays itself, as £3 average spend per person is too low.

8. Members enquired as to what funding agreements exist between Surrey Borough, and District Council's and the Basingstoke Canal Authority; a particular reference was made towards Guildford Borough Council's (GBC) input. Officers informed the Committee that GBC pay £30,000 annually; this was based on a 2008 agreement which set out how many local authorities should pay based on the length of the Canal within the authority. Officers added that problems arise when local authorities don't meet this agreed funding.
9. Members drew attention to paragraph 27 on page 97 of the report and questioned why JBA Consulting's evaluation of the Basingstoke Canal Authority's methods of managing risk is not contained within this report. Officers stated that this evaluation is susceptible to change.
10. There was a discussion around the need for the Committee to receive a regular update on the progress of the Canal. Officers informed the Committee that the JBA report was expected by April; the result of this would help steer future planning. The Chairman of the Committee asked Officers to produce a series of milestones on when the Committee can expect to hear an update on a Basingstoke Canal Authority's business plan and the JBA report.

Recommendations:

The Environment and Transport Select Committee;

- a) noted the canal update and next steps

Actions/Further information to be provided:

- For the Scrutiny Officer to discuss with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning the possibility of setting up a task group to look at the future management of the canal.
- For the Scrutiny Officer to send the committee the PowerPoint presentation shown at the meeting.

Committee Next steps:

None

19/15 LOCAL TRANSPORT REVIEW [Item 9]

Witnesses:

Paul Millin, Travel and Transport Group Manager

Laurie James, Bus Service Planning Team Manager

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. Members congratulated officers on the level of communication and work surrounding the consultation.

2. The Committee discussed whether it might be useful to see the questions that those taking part in the consultation were asked, so that the responses can be gauged.
3. Members questioned officers over the cost of concession passes. Officers responded by stating that the cost of concession fares are relatively low when compared with the positive impact it has on the wider community; this was a clear conclusion drawn from the consultation.
4. Some Members expressed the feeling that the report was too focused on urban development. Officers responded to this by stating that it was essential to develop the more commercially viable sites so that they can help support the sites that are less commercially viable but still essential to local residents.
5. Members enquired as to whether the increased level of public transport information had had a direct impact on user numbers. Officers responded by stating that real time information could not individually be attributed to rises in users, as this has been introduced with various other improvements. However, along with the other improvements user numbers have risen.
6. One Member asked if officers have looked into smaller buses for quieter routes or times of the day. Officers informed the Committee that the idea of different sized vehicles had been analysed and the current system was seen to be the most economical.

Recommendations:

The Environment and Transport Select Committee;

- a) noted the outputs from the public consultation.

Actions/Further information to be provided:

- For the Scrutiny Officer to send the committee the PowerPoint presentation shown at the meeting.

Committee Next steps:

None

20/15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING [Item 10]

The next meeting of the Committee will be held at 10.30am on 23 April 2015 in the Ashcombe Suite, County Hall, Kingston upon Thames.

Meeting ended at: 1.15 pm

Chairman