

MINUTES of the remote meeting of the **COMMUNITIES, ENVIRONMENT AND HIGHWAYS SELECT COMMITTEE** held at 10.00 am on 16 September 2021.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its meeting on Wednesday, 15 December 2021.

Elected Members:

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

1/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

(= present at the meeting)*

Apologies for absence were received from Janet Mason.

Mark Sugden attended as a substitute for Keith Witham.

2/21 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: 19 MARCH 2021 [Item 2]

The minutes were agreed as a true record of the meeting.

21/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

None received.

22/21 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

Two public questions and a Member question, together with a petition, were received in advance of the meeting. The details, including responses are provided below:

Public Question from Elizabeth Daly, Mole Valley District Councillor for Bookham South

It is great news that Surrey Highways with the backing of the Leader of Surrey County Council is supporting a 20mph zone on the A244 through Oxshott. Will the Committee encourage Surrey Highways to support communities that wish to adopt 20mph speed limits as a default in other Surrey towns and villages - by removing current costly procedural obstacles to such schemes?

Answer:

Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure stated that the County Council are currently consulting on a new Local Transport Plan (LTP4) which places greater priority on a sustainable travel hierarchy with walking and cycling at the top. To support this, the LTP4 advises making 20 mph the speed limit for shopping and residential streets where appropriate. This is already happening in a number of locations. For example, there is already a 20-mph speed limit in Reigate town centre, and several roads adjacent to Guildford town centre bounded by Woodbridge Road, York Road and Stoke Road have recently been reduced to 20 mph. Also, work is also taking place to develop 20 mph schemes for Farnham, Caterham and Weybridge town centres.

It was right and proper that local communities and local councillors be consulted and have their say on the speed limits set for their roads where they live, within the framework set by the County Council, and in consultation with the police. There was also a need to follow the correct procedure set by central government to advertise local speed limit legal orders. There were no procedural obstacles to such schemes – instead the County Council's process ensured that local people were consulted appropriately, and new schemes were effective in managing vehicle speeds.

Member Question from Catherine Baart

Surrey County Council applied to the government for £1.697m Tranche 1 funding, to support the rollout of emergency travel measures during the pandemic to encourage more cycling and walking. When the Council was only granted £848,000, it decided to match the government funding with a further £848,000 from its own resources. However, the Council subsequently withdrew its match funding to focus on an application for Tranche 2 funding for larger scale permanent improvements to the highway network. Please confirm that the £848,000 remains earmarked for active travel improvements, in addition to Tranche 2 funding?

Answer:

Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure said that he was pleased to confirm that after a successful bid the County Council received £6,445,750 of tranche 2 government funding to introduce eight permanent active travel schemes. Details of these were on Surrey Council website. The Council had also submitted an ambitious bid for tranche 3 funding of £8,130,796 and hoped to learn the outcome of this bid in the new few weeks. Tranche 1 funding was primarily for temporary measures associated with the pandemic – helping people socially distant/reducing the need for public transport and the Council delivered 21 schemes with the grant of £848k. The Council was now focusing its efforts on long lasting improvements. With the successful bids to government, the proposed match funding for tranche 1 was not needed but would be made available if required to support further tranches.

Public Question from Paul Kennedy, Mole Valley District Councillor for Fetcham West

I am grateful to Andrew Matthews for submitting his petition to the Committee asking Surrey County Council to respond to the current consultation on future rail services by South Western Railway (SWR), in partnership with Network Rail and the Department for Transport, by calling on them to:

- a) abandon proposals to make permanent cuts from December 2022 to SWR rail services via Epsom and Mole Valley;
- b) restore SWR rail services via Epsom and Mole Valley to pre-pandemic levels as soon as conditions allow; and
- c) adopt a fairer and more joined-up approach to building back rail services via Epsom and Mole Valley.

In responding to his petition, and considering Surrey County Council's response, will you please bear in mind that:

1. A separate petition to SWR, Network Rail and the Department for Transport seeking the same three outcomes has now been signed by over 2,000 people online and on paper; this is the link to the separate petition, <https://www.mvld.org.uk/restoreourtrains> ;
2. SWR's claim to be maintaining 2 peak time trains per hour from each of Dorking and Bookham is in fact an hourly service supplemented by one extra morning train from Dorking, and a 45-minute gap at Bookham in the morning;
3. SWR's claim that just 5 passengers were using off-peak trains from Bookham in May 2019 ignored passengers who travelled through Bookham on trains between Guildford, Leatherhead and Epsom;
4. SWR's webpage on "Train and station overcrowding" dated 21st July 2021 identifies its services from Epsom and Mole Valley to Wimbledon and London Waterloo – those which it proposes to cut - as its busiest services:

Busy services

Services through Stoneleigh, Worcester Park, Motspur Park & Raynes Park through to Wimbledon, Clapham Junction & Waterloo are currently the busiest in the morning peak. Please consider travelling on different services where possible. At Motspur Park and Raynes Park in particular, services from Chessington are likely to be quieter than services from Epsom."

<https://www.southwesternrailway.com/plan-my-journey/coronavirus-train-crowding> (link to train and station crowding information at South Western Railway website)

5. These proposals undermine all our efforts to restore jobs and local communities after the pandemic, promote active travel, secure adequate infrastructure for new housing, reduce traffic congestion and pollution, and fight climate change?

Petition from Andrew Matthews

The following petition about the Surrey County Council's response to South Western Railway (SWR) consultation was received from Andrew Matthews.

'We, the undersigned, call on Surrey County Council, as well as other Surrey councils, residents, businesses and community groups, to respond to the current consultation on future rail services by South Western Railway (SWR), in partnership with Network Rail and the Department for Transport, by calling on them to: a) abandon proposals to make permanent cuts from December 2022 to SWR rail services via Epsom and Mole Valley; b) restore SWR rail services via Epsom and Mole Valley to pre-pandemic levels, as soon as conditions allow; and c) adopt a fairer and more joined-up approach to building back rail services via Epsom and Mole Valley.'

Responses to questions from Paul Kennedy and a petition from Andrew Matthews listed above were taken together under agenda item 5, South Western Railways Timetable Consultation, as they related to the same topic.

23/21 SWR TIMETABLE CONSULTATION [Item 5]

Witnesses:

Matt Furniss, Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure

Lucy Monie, Director, Highways and Transport

David Ligertwood, Passenger Transport Projects Team Manager

The Chairman welcomed the public question and a timely petition about the South Western Railways Consultation.

The Chairman invited the Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure to respond. In his response, the Cabinet Member stated that he appreciated the concerns raised by the petitioners. He informed the Select Committee that he had raised similar concerns, along with the local MP, Chris Grayling, in a frank exchange with the train operator.

The Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure added that he would formally be responding to the South Western Railway (SWR) consultation and that he had similar concerns to the ones raised in the public question and the petition before this Select Committee on this topic.

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The report presented to the Committee outlined South Western Railway (SWR) undertaking a strategic review of their rail timetable with the aim of providing reliable train services to meet forecast future passenger demands and to offer value for money.
2. This review would consider service frequencies and train capacity, with changes planned to be introduced in December 2022. The proposed new timetable would, SWR stated, reflect the predicted changes to travel pattern because of the pandemic.
3. A consultation was launched on 31 July 2021 and would close on 19 September 2021. Ahead of any changes to services SWR were

seeking the views of stakeholders. The SWR December 2022 Timetable Consultation was appended as Annexe 1 of the report.

4. Surrey County Council as a key stakeholder had been invited to comment but did not have any direct control of the service.
5. Transport for the South East (TfSE), the sub-national transport body for the South East of England, had published a Transport Strategy. This focussed on economic, environmental, and social priorities and identifies the need for sustainable and attractive alternatives to the car, placing the passenger at the heart of the local public transport network, including more frequent rail services.
6. On 30 March 2021 the County Council's Cabinet adopted a New Rail Strategy for Surrey. This set out its future ambition and priorities for rail across the county. The New Rail Strategy supported the Council's objective of growing a sustainable economy, how it might help residents and businesses respond to changing demands, and also supported the Council's priority objective of enabling a greener future with net zero carbon a strong feature throughout.
7. The emerging Surrey Transport Plan set out a bold ambition on how to achieve a future-ready transport system that would allow Surrey to lead the UK with a low-carbon, economically prosperous, healthy, and inclusive county. The Surrey Transport Plan proposed a hierarchy of modes and the ambition to shift journeys from the private car to other more sustainable modes, including active travel and public transport.
8. SWR was seeking views on their proposals, particularly the proposed service reduction articulated in paragraph 17 and thereafter conclusions listed in paragraphs 18 to 20 of the report, for the rail network from December 2022. This December 2022 timetable had been informed by the experiences gained running the railway during the pandemic, customer feedback and the arrival of new rolling stock (90 new high capacity Arterio trains).
9. The Select Committee, in formulating their feedback and response to the proposals, considered the following key points:
 - The robustness and relevance of the data SWR had used to inform the draft December 2022 timetable service specification;
 - The impact on the communities affected by the proposed rail service reductions, particularly those where off-peak service would only be hourly;
 - The ability and flexibility within the rail network and SWR to respond to increased capacity needs should this be necessary, noting the historically long planning and implementation timescales for timetable changes; and
 - How these proposals align (or otherwise) with local and regional transport strategies and policies, the climate change and sustainable transport agendas, and housing growth.

10. In its deliberation to formulate its recommendations, the Select Committee carefully considered the public representations made to the Committee on this topic, responses provided at the meeting, and the key points listed in the report.

Recommendations:

The Select Committee recommends that the following key points are reflected in Surrey County Council's formal response to the South Western Railway (SWR) consultation:

- i. The Council challenges the rigour of the prediction of 60% pre-pandemic levels at peak periods in the proposed timetable. Should this prove too low, the prospect of the passenger over-crowding across the network (with health implications with continuing COVID) is alarming for Surrey residents.
- ii. Therefore, it is imperative that SWR develop a high level of flexibility to adjust the timetable at short notice in such circumstances.
- iii. The cuts to services run counter to the Council's emerging Local Transport Plan and its Climate Change Strategy, both of which actively seek to encourage people to use public transport at all times of the day.
- iv. At individual level, the extensive peak and off-peak reductions affecting stations in Epsom and Ewell and Mole Valley will cause considerable inconvenience and act as a perverse disincentive to rail travel in favour of the car. The Council also asks whether liaison has taken place with Southern who also serves this route. The County Council would like the service to remain at pre pandemic level and abandon this change.
- v. The Council welcomes the new rolling stock of ten car trains but notes that, despite this, peak hour seats in December 2022 will only be 86% of May 2019 levels. The Council would be disappointed if this results in even more passengers having to stand.
- vi. The Council has strong reservations as this proposal runs contrary to Surrey County Council's Climate Change targets and sustainable travel policies. In addition, there are serious concerns about fewer trains on Sundays, which hampers the service's ability to support the leisure provision and reduces availability during the peak time.

**24/21 PROCUREMENT OF HIGHWAYS' TERM MAINTENANCE CONTRACT
[Item 6]**

Witnesses:

Matt Furniss, Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure
Katie Stewart, Executive Director – Environment, Transport and Infrastructure
Lucy Monie, Director, Highways and Transport
Paul Wheadon, Business Improvement and Consultancy Team Manager

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Select Committee welcomed the report on the Procurement of the Term Maintenance Contract and some of the key features of the new arrangements scheduled to start in April 2022.
2. The questions posed by the Committee to Cabinet Members and officers, together with the report, provided a sound insight into how over the past 12 months, Surrey County Council had overseen an exhaustive, complex procurement process to drive the best outcomes in each of the bidder's tenders.
3. The Select Committee understood that Council had undertaken a Competitive Procedure with Negotiation (CPN) procurement exercise which allowed both the Council and bidders to discuss and develop their proposals in several stages, allowing open discussion and negotiation to enable each bidder to eventually put forward their best submission.
4. This approach allowed the Council to test and improve each bidder's tender, giving confidence in the substance of the written submission, detailed scrutiny of the associated pricing to deliver those services, understanding of where risk pricing had been included, and allowing - where appropriate - the reallocation of risk to reduce the artificial inflation of prices.
5. The Select Committee noted that the process to finalise the new contractor was to formally conclude soon with a report for the Cabinet at its next meeting, to approve the award of the Term Maintenance Contract to the successful bidder. Confidential information about this process and the name of the successful provider had been shared with the Members of the Select Committee privately before this meeting. The Committee was grateful to the Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure for this commitment to collaborative working.
6. The Select Committee was reassured to learn that following the awarding of the contract, the Council would work with the successful contractor's senior management teams to implement their mobilisation plan. Also, a communication plan would be developed and implemented to advise stakeholders on the award to the successful bidder.

Recommendations:

While supporting the contents of the Report and the rigorous process leading to the award of the contract, the Committee recommends:

- i. Timely and robust details of the specific improvements Surrey residents will be expecting from this new contract, particularly

regarding the reporting of and quality of work on potholes and other highways matters and the overriding importance of 'Right First Time'.

- ii. Early publication of the chosen contractor's commitment to "improve engagement with residents" and improve communication with them on planned works etc. and collaboration more generally. This should also involve elected Divisional members. The Reference Group of Councillors which has been involved throughout the contracting process can play a constructive role in helping shape these.
- iii. That a robust process remains in place for the transition phase and initiated for mobilisation period.
- iv. That unannounced and random spot checks on a regular basis be considered as part of an effective contractual management process; the contract is easy to understand with strong governance and monitoring provisions for dispute resolution mechanism and in an unlikely termination scenario from Surrey County Council's perspective.
- v. More publicity/communication be considered for social value activities and projects undertaken as part of the new partnership.

25/21 BUSES BACK BETTER [Item 7]

Witnesses:

Matt Furniss, Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure
Katie Stewart, Executive Director – Environment, Transport and Infrastructure
Lucy Monie, Director – Highways and Transport
Laurie James, Bus Service Planning Team Manager

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. Officers introduced the item and outlined the key aspects of the report.
2. The Committee was informed of the Council's obligations in respect of the new National Bus Strategy, 'Bus Back Better'. A new national bus strategy, 'Bus Back Better', was published by government earlier in 2021.
3. In summary, Bus Back Better required a local authority to consider its role in encouraging more people to travel by bus post-COVID-19 and set out aspirations for bus services that were more frequent, more reliable, easier to understand and use, better-co-ordinated, with understandable fare structures and with high quality information for passengers.
4. To achieve the desired aims of the strategy and to be eligible to access further government Covid-19 support funding for bus services and a share of other new funding from a £3bn national fund. Local Transport Authorities must agree to pursue either bus franchising or to develop an Enhanced Partnership with all local bus operators in their administrative area.

5. The Council issued a formal Notice of Intent to the Department for Transport on 29 June 2021, which stated that it would introduce an Enhanced Partnership with bus operators, in accordance with section 138F of the Transport Act 2000.
6. To address carbon emission levels and to mitigate the national decline in bus patronage, which had been accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic, central government recognised that action was required. It also acknowledges that of all public transport modes, buses were the most adaptable and change could take place relatively quickly.
7. In responding to Bus Back Better, there was a challenging requirement for Surrey County Council to create a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) by 31 October 2021.
8. A Local Transport Authority's BSIP needed to contain a range of aspirations and ambitions to make the bus travel option more attractive, including various initiatives. The BSIP needed to be developed in collaboration with bus operators, community transport providers, adjoining Local Transport Authorities and other stakeholders, and it would be guided by issues in connection with bus services that had been identified by residents' feedback. A BSIP would set out the local measures proposed for achieving the objectives of the national strategy and for encouraging greater bus use as part of the county's 'building back better' more sustainably.
9. The new National Bus Strategy and the proposed BSIP for Surrey needed to be aligned with several key themes from the new draft Surrey Transport Plan, in particular the proposed hierarchy of modes and the ambition to shift journeys from the private car to other more sustainable modes. Moreover, central to the Surrey County Council's response to Bus Back Better would be to highlight and cross-reference the strong linkages to the aims and ambitions of the Council's Greener Futures programme of work and the delivery of the Council's 2030 Community Vision.
10. The questions posed by the Committee, together with the report, provided a sound insight into how the Council would be responding strongly, positively and proactively to the challenge set by the Government in the Bus Back Better. Previous joint working with bus operators had seen large and joint investment in many parts of the county, with improvement programmes already being delivered, for example, in Camberley, Guildford and Woking. Other improvements were planned in Redhill, Reigate and the A23 corridor, building upon previous partnership work in these areas. This investment had seen significant improvements in passenger facilities, real time bus information, bus priority measures, joint ticketing schemes and zero

emission buses, alongside enhancements to service frequencies and the introduction of some new services.

11. In Members' questions, the spotlight was put on the need for: discounted fares for family and young people; understanding and addressing the impact of school transport/buses in the strategy; converting all existing Surrey County Council buses to electric; implementing appropriate social value provisions; realistic yet challenging timescale and targets to increase bus passengers in both the short and long terms; improvements to bus shelters; introducing a single joined up bus fare across Surrey like the Oyster model in London; and contingency planning if no meaningful funding was forthcoming from the Government.

Recommendations:

Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee support the County Council's intention to produce a Bus Service Improvement Plan and the creation of an Enhanced Partnership Scheme, both of which are a National Bus Strategy requirement and commends the extensive range of ambitious initiatives contained in the Report, while also recommending that:

- i. Serious consideration be given to reducing bus fares (at least on some routes to begin with) as stipulated in the Government's Policy document and in order to make bus travel for Surrey residents a more viable and better value option compared to driving a car.
- ii. Family discount and other concessions (U18s, U16s, etc.) bus fares be considered as part of the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP).
- iii. Any app for passengers includes information on the location of the expected service and the next available bus on the map.
- iv. The scope, terms of reference etc. for the Partnership Governance Board and the Stakeholder Reference Group are rigorously defined and delineated to help ensure the credibility and effectiveness of the Enhanced Partnership.
- v. Actively pursue the process, wherever possible, to make all Surrey buses to run on non-fossil fuel.
- vi. Better communication, awareness and publicity campaign as part of the wider Greener Future piece.

26/21 POLICY ON THE USE OF SAFETY CAMERAS IN SURREY [Item 8]

Witnesses:

Matt Furniss, Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure

Lucy Monie, Director for Highways

Duncan Knox, Road Safety and Sustainable School Travel Team Manager

Key points noted during the discussion:

1. The Select Committee received a report outlining a new policy setting out the criteria and process that would be followed for investment in new safety cameras. Overall, Select Committee Members were very supportive of the scheme and appreciated the information provided to them in the report.
2. The questions posed by the Committee to Cabinet Members and officers, together with the report, provided insight into the key aspects of this update and proposed changes that included average speed, spot speed, red-light and combination cameras. While road casualty hotspots would remain the top priority, the policy also set out the criteria for the use of safety cameras at other locations where there might not have been such a high level of collisions, but where excess speeds were a concern for the community.
3. In Members' questions, a spotlight was put on the ability of Members to use their divisional highways allocation to request the possible introduction of cameras at relevant local 'community concern' sites without unnecessary obstacles. Broader queries were also raised about the new Local Transport Plan and the ease of establishing 20 mile-per-hour zones, enforcement of moving traffic offences and heavy good vehicles.

Recommendations:

The Select Committee supports the proposed revisions and specifically endorses the creation of the "community concern" sites that may become eligible for cameras but cautions that:

- i. Any unrealistic expectations among residents are not raised about new average speed cameras.
- ii. In exploring alternative options before the use of cameras in "community concern" areas, these options themselves do not become a reason (costs etc.) resulting in no decision is ever reached.
- iii. Members should be able to request, wherever appropriate, spot cameras for a community concern site using their respective divisional highways allocation and other sources without unnecessary constraints.
- iv. A roadmap of the process and prioritisation of requests – existing and new – be put in place and communicated accordingly to all relevant stakeholders.

27/21 RECOMMENDATIONS TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME [Item 9]

The Select Committee noted the Recommendation Tracker and the Forward

Work Programme.

28/21 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING: 15 DECEMBER 2021 [Item 10]

The Committee noted its next meeting would be held on 15 December 2021.

Meeting ended at: 1:30pm

Chairman

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