

MINUTES of the meeting of the **COMMUNITIES, ENVIRONMENT AND HIGHWAYS SELECT COMMITTEE** held at 10.00 am on 21 January 2022 REMOTE MEETING.

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

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)

(* = present at the meeting)

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

Victor Lewanski substituted for Keith Witham.

2/22 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: 15 DECEMBER 2022 [Item 2]

The minutes of the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee held on 15 December were reviewed. The minutes will be formally agreed at the 8 March 2022 Committee Meeting.

3/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

None received.

4/22 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

None received.

**5/22 SURREY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE REPORT ON HER
MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES
INSPECTION REPORT 2021/22 [Item 5]**

Witnesses:

Kevin Deanus, Cabinet Member for Community Protection

Dan Quin, Deputy Chief Fire Officer

Bernadette Beckett, Chief of Staff

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Chairman acknowledged the progress made and appreciated that the Service was on a continued journey of improvement. The Chairman said the Report (page 56) noted that response times up to March 2020 were slower than the average for services, like Surrey, that cover both urban and rural areas' and queried if response times have improved since and asked whether the ten-minute target set was unambitious. An Officer confirmed that current figures were resting at an average of seven minutes and 12 seconds. Benchmarking takes place among Fire and Rescue services and was a helpful in many ways, albeit it causes challenges in terms of how rural and urban services were differentiated. Surrey was reflected as predominantly urban only at borough and districts level, however if the benchmarking were more exact, Surrey would be reflected as predominantly rural. As part of the Making Surrey Safer plan, the Service aimed to keep the target whilst demonstrating that changes being applied were not having a detrimental effect on services or a negative impact on the ability to perform against that commitment. Reviews of the response standard were continual with the balance of meeting targets whilst ensuring safe and appropriate responses to calls.
2. A Member asked if there were plans to conclude the ongoing issues concerning relationships with staff and the dispute with the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) observing that the media battle between the FBU and the Fire Service had been direct and at times harmful to the reputation of the Service. An Officer confirmed that the trade dispute had continued for a number of years. Work was continuing with colleagues in the FBU and with that agreement on one item had been removed from ongoing discussions recently. Although the Service was meeting the FBU frequently, it was becoming evident that it would be impossible to resolve all matters in the trade disputes and it was time for honest discussions with trade union partners. A Joint Committee for Consultation and Negotiation had been set up to include all locally recognised trade unions, resulting in a significant improvement in engagement between the trade unions. This committee, in addition to ACAS training and

conversations, had agreed the implementation of open letters by the Chief Fire Officer and were confident that this would culminate in a final agreed policy on how to work together.

3. A member noted the new initiatives to encourage better relationships with staff and the continuing dispute with the trade unions and asked how they reflected on each other. An officer explained that the Service was actively encouraging an honest dialogue with staff to seek their views, irrespective of representation. Engagement was being expanded by supporting and empowering staff. Station visits were being conducted to encourage face to face conversations although this had been more difficult during the COVID-19 pandemic. A newsletter including feedback, key themes and changes undertaken was being distributed to reinforce communication in addition to middle managers monthly meetings, providing an opportunity for managers from across the Service to share current information and encouragement to express their views.
4. A Member, in considering 'Understanding fires and multi-agency incidents' asked if the decline from 'Good' in 2018 to 'Requires Improvement' most recently, had been expected by the Service. An Officer said that inspection exposed inaccuracies with the processes used to gather operational risk information. These issues had since been resolved in agreement with the inspectorate. As prior self-assessments had recorded that the Service would maintain 'good' within that area, the situation was seen as an opportunity to revisit how self-assessments were undertaken. This highlighted that within the 'understanding risk' it was beneficial to differentiate into two parts, the Making Surrey Safer Plan and the understanding of risk and how we deliver services.
5. A Member, in referring to page 56 of the report, noted that control staff were not regularly involved in operational learning and development and asked how this was being addressed. An Officer explained that work undertaken as a result of a joint exercise following lessons learnt from the Grenfell Tower Enquiry had not been included in the report due to its timing. The foundations of widening learning and development to include teams that had been overlooked were present at the time of the inspection and the work to embed this is being accelerated.
6. A Member, in referring to page 71 of the report, asked if an update could be provided with regard to bullying and harassment within the Service. An Officer explained the Service continued with a zero-tolerance approach. Any reports of bullying or harassment were thoroughly investigated and necessary actions taken. Training for all managers was being developed with a launch due imminently. Membership to the Fairness and Respect Network spans across all

teams with themes from this group being developed to take forward and improve the culture within the Service.

7. A Member was concerned that negative media and reputational issues due to the dispute with the FBU could risk misinformation and fear amongst the community. An Officer confirmed that the Service had taken advice on its responses to reports in the media and on social media. There has been an increase in communications resources to improve our communications to residents and counteract any misinformation.
8. A Member recognised that recent reorganisation appears to have resulted in positive developments and asked if the Service was doing enough to communicate key messages and improvements. An Officer said that a wider use of social media had begun to reach all demographics. Measurements of the use and responses to these were key with positive interaction having increased during recent months.
9. A Member noted that the report and the Service response both referred to the concerns of staff and the measures to address these and asked how will the Service measure the success or otherwise of its various initiatives. An Officer explained that a cultural baseline survey had been carried out last year by an independent organisation to understand the culture of the Service. Some of the key feedback related to lack of engagement about changes being implemented and openness and transparency. A roadmap had been developed since to include a series of actions that sit across the whole organisation to be delivered. Evaluations would continue on a regular basis to monitor and adapt these developments going forward. The Chairman asked if measuring improvements for staff in the form of a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) could be considered and if the Service could share information with the committee on a periodic basis to confirm that staff morale and relationships were improving. An Officer agreed to share the outcomes of the baseline survey with subsequent updates relating to outcomes and improvements that take place.
10. A Member asked if the Service had access to the necessary specialist human resources expertise to address workforce and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) training. An Officer confirmed that the Service had access to two levels of human resources advice and guidance across the organisation. One being at County Council level and a People and Organisational Development Team within the Fire Service that specialist knowledge of the Fire Service.
11. A Member asked about opportunities to generate income. An officer explained that the inspectorate had been clear in their advice that to generate income the service should look to research grant funding to improve fleet, land or property related to the green agenda. In

addition, the service was also engaging with teams at Surrey County Council to consider how the fleet should improve over next 15-20 years to incorporate such.

12. A Member asked if further work had taken place in relation to partnership building to learn and share the best practice. An Officer confirmed that best practice in relation to all aspects of the organisation was being shared between services and included a County Council Chief Fire Officers Group. There was a commitment to learning from each other and Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) had been in contact with Fire and Rescue Services recommended identified by the inspectorate as having good practice.
13. A Member queried the lower than average performance of pump availability and asked when these figures would increase. An officer responded by explaining that the 68 per cent pump availability noted in the report was not reflective of the crewing model in SFRS. The report calculated consistent cover day and night, in practice the SFRS model was to have a requirement of 20 fire engines during the day (7am – 7pm) and 16 at night (7pm – 7am). This part of the report did reference that availability was being consistently achieved and real time figures supported this.
14. A Member queried the lower than average performance of the number of home fire safety checks and asked when these figures would increase. An officer said that resources had been invested following changes to the prevention and protection aspects of the resourcing model and both areas would take time to reach full operating model. In addition, COVID-19 had impacted the ability to deliver Safe & Well visits locally. This time had been taken to ensure staff were appropriately trained and have been upskilled in terms of awareness of safeguarding. Resources were directed to the most vulnerable residents highlighted through risk ratings and the formation of local management hubs was planned to include safeguarding and safety officers. The Service was confident that improvements in quantity and quality would be evident going forward.
15. A Member said that in terms of a wider prevention strategy and auditing, upskilling was particularly relevant and asked if it was being considered. An Officer confirmed that upskilling was considered a priority within SFRS. The National Fire Chiefs Council had created a skills competency framework which allows the Service to differentiate between roles within the differing areas of Business Safety. This framework had been followed since the Making Surrey Safer Plan began and the majority of staff were qualified to the competency framework. The Service continued to

revisit operations and to investment in the upskilling of staff in addition to establishing Safe & Well Visit champions at local level.

16. The Chairman asked, in relation to the Inspection and Improvement plan, what were the components and strategy likely to be and could the Service provide a periodic update to ensure it was on track. An Officer said that all elements of the report were being included on an improvement plan which would incorporate the outcome from the State of Fire report which provides outcomes from the first tranche of inspections. This will aid continuous improvement. Monitoring at six months would be timely, allowing traction to have taken place.

17. The Cabinet Member for Community Protection reiterated that evaluation and monitoring would be continual and conveyed his thanks to the team who had gone through a difficult inspection and were producing excellent work consistently.

Resolved:

The Select Committee:

1. Welcomes the notable improvements in the Service's performance as reflected in the Inspectorate's Report and expresses its expectation that progress should accelerate and intensify such that it improves on its performance from the 2021 report at the next inspection.
2. Asks to be informed at regular intervals (bi-annually or sooner if possible) about the timings and components of the Updated Improvement Plan, with the Plan included in the future update to the Select Committee.
3. Urges the Service to address where the ratings declined from good to require improvement.
4. Recommends the Service to have a major focus on further improving and addressing staff concerns and aspirations, and for credible mechanisms to measure success of its initiatives.
5. Recommends the Service to continue to explore more effective ways to communicate (including the use of appropriate social media channels) in order to highlight its improvements, achievements, prevention messaging as well as challenges.

6/22 SURREY ELECTRIC VEHICLE PUBLIC CHARGEPOINTS PROGRESS AND PREFERRED PROCUREMENT OPTION [Item 6]

Witnesses:

Matthew Furniss, Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure

Katie Stewart, Executive Director – Environment, Transport & Infrastructure

Jonathon James, Electric Vehicle Project Manager

Lee Parker, Director – Infrastructure Planning and Major Projects

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. An Officer gave a brief presentation on the background to the report explaining that since 2015 there were ten times more electric vehicles on Surrey's roads and during November 2021 more electric vehicles were sold than diesel. The proposal for a single supplier concession for chargepoints to shoulder the financial risk and responsibility for delivering on-street public chargepoints across Surrey was reinforced by a research report in 2020 by KPMG. Discussions had taken place with dozens of local authorities to learn from their experiences and 14 chargepoint operating companies had been consulted in wide ranging research. Forums with the districts and boroughs had taken place to explore progress and share best practice with a view to building partnerships. Research had shown that until recently, all pioneer authorities that had delivered chargepoint projects had almost all received significant grant funding, such funding was time limited and authorities needed to look to alternative means of delivery. The market had responded over the last 12 months by accessing investor funding to support fully funded installations where these can be secured by an extended period to achieve a reasonable financial return. The model for recommendation was principally private sector funded but also enabled the opportunity for part funding by public sources where this was available and justifiable.
2. On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman expressed concern at the lack of detail included in the report and said that the Committee sought reassurances on the programme as a whole.
3. The Chairman noted that the site selection of chargepoints could be controversial for residents. An Officer agreed that this topic divided opinion and whilst it was widely acknowledged as necessary, the opinions of residents and councillors was dependent of their personal and moral positions. Some residents might be against any change at this point but the Service had to reflect these advancements and improve the way that they were communicated to residents to improve the proportion of acceptability.

4. A Member said that the report in its current format was confusing and did not provide enough information. An Officer said that whilst the exact numbers of chargepoints required were not currently known and would, by necessity, evolve, that should not stop the County Council making progress to procure an Electric Vehicle (EV) chargepoint partner that could scale delivery to the required demand over time
5. A Member asked if the boroughs and districts would have the final say on Electric Vehicle (EV) chargepoints in their car parks. A Member confirmed that the districts and boroughs had been invited to be part of the process. In response it was noted that it was their choice to sign up but in any event they would control their own carparks.
6. A Member asked if Surrey County Council knew how many houses did not have enough street parking and what was the total requirement of on-street EV chargepoints. An officer said a significant commitment of time, money and resource was going into planning the network delivery and exactly where chargepoints were required. This planning would take into account many datasets and the chargepoint operators would make the selections.
7. An Officer, in relation to the Chairman's comments concerning a lack of reported detail, apologised to Members that the session originally planned to brief them before this Select Committee, had been cancelled. The Officer pointed out that the report proposal responded to the Committee's recommendations in October that EV infrastructure was critical to ensure the success of our climate change delivery plan, highlighting the need to scale up the programme to implement the right processes and procedures.
8. An Officer noted that without acting now to apply these mechanisms Surrey County Council would not meet its climate change targets, something the Committee had requested regular reassurances on and with a good reason. This mechanism would help to meet the ambitious target of a 16 per cent to 31 per cent carbon reduction in transport emissions by 2025 and mitigates the risk to the authority in respect of changing technology, allowing flexibility to move with demand. To wait for perfect information would cause delays and threaten timely delivery.
9. The Cabinet Member for Transport & Infrastructure accepted the concerns raised regarding the sensitive issue of chargepoint sites locations and said that EV cars also required parking spaces and so there would not be a reduction in parking spaces. The Cabinet Member for Transport & Infrastructure asked Members to consider the information they would find helpful and the criteria that could be

provided to aid their decision regarding a single provider to deliver this programme in Surrey.

10. A Member said they were concerned about adopting a private sector business model due to previous unsuccessful experiences with the sector. An Officer said that their understanding of the market was that the fundamental driver to opt for a fully funded private sector concession was the ability to incorporate part funding solutions at any time. There was no alternative practical option to deliver the numbers of chargepoints that were required, other than through a chiefly private sector option.
11. A Member said that inviting the districts and boroughs to join a partnership when the business model had been agreed was not in the spirit of partnership, should the districts and boroughs not be involved in the decision-making process. An Officer said that the Surrey EV Forum had been formed in April 2021 and consisted of Officers from all of the districts and boroughs. The official policy backing was given for all of the districts and boroughs to pursue. Work had been ongoing during the last 12 months to grow these partnerships and that part of the rationale for recommending the model proposed was that it enabled districts and boroughs to join in the concession if they wished.
12. A member asked what proportion of the 10,000 Chargepoints target would be located on-street and in car parks. An Officer said that this information was not yet available. The target of the first year was to define a network plan through broad consultation that would be presented to the Committee for feedback.
13. A Member asked if it was appropriate to consider fast chargers and if future technologies were being considered. An Officer explained that the concession contract would allow for changes in the provision and deal with the flexibility of new technology. At this stage, many on-street chargers would suit fast charging, however slow chargers that would be appropriate for overnight charging, had not been discounted.
14. A Member suggested that chargepoints could be installed at Surrey County Council car parks located to serve parks and greens. This could reduce the number of on-street chargepoints and whilst more expensive, may be a more acceptable solution. An Officer said that these were the types of locations that would be included in the network plan. Cost implications would depend on distances from power connections, however, it was generally more economical to install chargepoints in car parks than on-street and the fact that traffic regulation orders would not be required made these locations less contentious and high priority.

15. A Member queried if, in relation to the Surrey EV Forum, there were minutes, targets or action plans available to support development. An Officer said that minutes of the forum were circulated amongst forum officers, they were not shared but were available on request. The programme is driven by the Climate Change Delivery Plan with a blueprint to develop a specific action plan proposed. This would be the first action within the concession contract. The network plan would be 12 months from the start of the contract with the agreed action plan to run parallel to that. If the contract were agreed, procurement would be in place by September 2022, after this point a long-term action plan would be available.
16. A Member asked what risks were involved in committing to a 15-year contract. An officer said that the private sector organisation had to commit in terms of return on investment. To agree to make and fully fund the scheme would only be possible with exclusivity for chargepoint installation over a sufficient period of time. Any non-performance would be covered by break points in the contract, including a five-year break point in any event to allow for review and evaluation. Suppliers often refresh technology after seven years which would allow joint consideration of available technologies.
17. A Member asked if Surrey County Council would be at risk of being monopolised by a single supplier and did it risk missing the opportunity to raise revenues. An Officer explained that this was a competitive element of the tender. It was hoped there would be revenue return which would be used to manage the process, assist in developing the process and reinvest in further chargepoints.
18. A Member asked if the equipment was transferable, enabling a switch to a different supplier at the end of the contract. An Officer confirmed that this had been considered in the plans. If the choice was to decommission at the end of the contract, all underground cabling would be in place resulting in more economical replacement of the equipment. There may also be an option to take the equipment into the ownership of SCC. If a supplier were to cease trading during the contract, there would be a contractual provision to make the equipment suitable for instant transfer to another operator with the required software compatibility.
19. A Member asked if Officers could give insight into what a contract that might look like and asked why the report refers to being at the procurement options stage. Could the process be paused to enable the Committee the opportunity to consider the detail and contribute constructive comments and recommendations. An Officer said that they were very open to further engaging the Committee but there would be concerns regarding any delays caused. As the Committee was aware that there is a perception that the County Council was already acting too late to tackle carbon emissions and had difficult targets to meet. The Cabinet Member for Highways & Infrastructure

suggested that the Highways Reference Group could scrutinise the detail in place of a new reference group.

20. A Member asked if the Long-Term Network Plan could be developed by a separate entity to the those supplying the equipment to avoid a conflict of interest. An Officer said that decisions would be based on the quality of the competition, however it was recognised that companies had a deep vested interest in using their own data driven software to produce a plan to best deliver a return on their investment.
21. A Member asked how many chargepoints were being considered in less contentious and top priority locations. An Officer explained that plans would be considered with the districts and boroughs. Some districts and Boroughs had committed to house exemplar car parks as part of the process and currently every parking review was being looked at in a sequential manner to ensure that the more acceptable locations were considered first, resulting in approximately 200 – 300 chargepoint locations including carparks.
22. A Member asked if there were plans to charge electricity to the grid to sell back at a more profitable time and also questioned whether electric bike (e-Bike) charging had been considered. An Officer advised that vehicle to grid charging was not currently an option but would be taken into account during the life of the concession at the point of the technology review at five years, also providing an opportunity to consider e-bike charging.
23. A Member asked if there would be disabled access to chargepoints. An Officer advised that disabled access to Electric Vehicle (EV) charge points was easier to take into account in car parks where there was space and would continue to be part of ongoing consideration. National advice was expected which would inform a way to integrate disabled access and charge across the programme.
24. A Member asked what the provision for the maintenance of chargepoints be. An Officer confirmed that the supplier would be responsible for maintenance which would be governed by Key Performance Indicators (KPI) resulting in penalties for poor performance. Demonstration of that capability would form part of the contract.
25. A Member asked if the Service was aware of the number of chargepoints being installed by supermarkets. An Officer explained that private sector were moving fast in installing chargepoints with 630 chargepoints across Surrey, more than two thirds being located in private car parks such as supermarkets and retail parks. It was not possible to include the private sector in the County Councils arrangements because the contractual capability was only available

to the public sector. The plans and forecasts of the of the private sector were very relevant to the concession and important to avoid doubling up.

26. The Chairman reiterated the Select Committee's strong concerns regarding the paper and the unsatisfactory timescale given to decide upon a business model. The paper was missing the reasons why models two, three and four were not appropriate for Surrey County Council. Points raised by Committee Members concerning the districts and boroughs appeared to be a good starting point for the Highways Reference Group to begin scrutiny of the paper along with the concerns raised by the Select Committee today.

Resolved:

The Select Committee:

1. Asks Cabinet Member to consider postponement of the 25 January Cabinet report titled 'Surrey Public Electric Vehicle Chargepoint Procurement Plan' so that issues raised by the Members of the Select Committee can be considered and reflected in the final report presented to Cabinet.
2. Requests a further information update report be presented to the Select Committee meeting at its special meeting on 7 February 2022.

[Following the Select Committee meeting, the wording of the Cabinet report had been revised such that the Chair and Vice Chairs believe it now addresses the concerns raised by the Select Committee and a further information update report will be presented to the Select Committee on 7 February, as requested.]

7/22 COMMUNITY RECYCLING CENTRE POLICY CHANGES [ITEM 7]

Witnesses:

Marissa Heath, Cabinet Member for Environment

Katie Stewart, Executive Director for Environment, Transport & Infrastructure

Richard Parkinson, Waste Group Manager

Carolyn McKenzie, Director of Environment

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. A Member asked how proof of residency would be checked, would residents be turned away if they didn't have the correct

documentation and what policing and safeguards against any potential abuse were planned. An Officer explained that initially, the policy would be implemented softly. There would be publicity to notify residents of the new requirements but until it was common knowledge, residents would be permitted to use facilities with a reminder to bring proof of address on their next visit. Residents would be required to provide proof of address on their first visit and would be issued with an annual windscreen sticker so that they would not have to bring documentation on each visit. The ability to register vehicles would be considered for the future.

2. An Officer summarised that SCC was bearing the costs of processing other counties' waste. The policy change was to counteract this and act as a cost avoidance. This change was considered a short-term measure to contain cost pressures. In terms of climate change, changes were being made in the immediate term and the Committee would be engaged in the longer-term approach to waste going forward.
3. A Member said that it would be useful to see the cost implications referred to and it was important for discussions with other counties to explore cross border agreements. An Officer confirmed that dialogue was continuing with neighbouring counties and there was a willingness to work together in a wider context of climate change.
4. A Member was concerned that reduced opening hours would result in residents travelling further to recycle which was not only inconvenient but also against the climate change policy. An Officer said that the planned re procurement of waste services would give the opportunity to consider the future use of Surrey County Council's infrastructure
5. A Member said that it would be useful to digest figures relating to use of the recycling centres following these changes. An Officer said that residual waste and recycling was monitored closely in addition to vehicle numbers providing good data for the Committee to analyse.

Resolved:

In supporting all three policy changes listed in the report, the Select Committee:

1. Asks the Cabinet Member to consider joint agreements with neighbouring authorities to facilitate and help residents in using the nearby recycling centres/facilities that might fall under other local authorities;

2. To minimise longer travel; environmental impact; and to encourage more recycling, asks the Cabinet member to explore whether the Surrey County Council Recycling Centres should extend their opening times and days to cover the whole week; and consider developing pedestrian access to recycling facilities in future; and
3. Asks that the Service put in place a mechanism whereby local residents can register online to comply with these changes as opposed to only being able to do so onsite - and often only after sitting in a long queue.

8/22 RECOMMENDATIONS TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME [Item 8]

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

9/22 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING: 8 MARCH 2022 [Item 9]

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

Meeting ended at: 1.07pm

Chairman