

MINUTES of the meeting of the **COMMUNITIES, ENVIRONMENT AND HIGHWAYS SELECT COMMITTEE** held at 10.00 am on 8 February 2023 at Council Chamber, Woodhatch Place, 11 Cockshot Hill, Reigate, Surrey, RH2 8EF

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its meeting on 20 March 2023

Elected Members:

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

(* = present at the meeting)

1/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

Apologies were received from John Furey and Cameron McIntosh. Robert Hughes substituted for Becky Rush.

2/23 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: 5 DECEMBER 2023 [Item 2]

The minutes of the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee held on 5 December 2022 were formally agreed as a true and accurate record of the meetings.

3/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

None received.

4/23 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

None received.

5/23 DELIVERING IN PARTNERSHIP: TOWNS – THE NEXT PHASE [Item 5]

Witnesses:

- Tim Oliver, Leader of the Council
- Denise Turner-Stewart, Cabinet Member for Communities and Community Safety
- Michael Coughlin, Executive Director of Prosperity, Partnerships and Growth
- Marie Snelling, Executive Director Customer and Communities

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Chairman asked if the National Health Service (NHS) had shown the necessary commitment of time and resources to fulfil their responsibilities as a partner. The Leader of the Council explained that three of the principles outlined in a review commissioned by the Government to determine how the NHS delivered the aims of the recently launched Integrated Care Partnerships (ICS) included collaboration between systems, a limited number of shared priorities and making system working real to provide collaborative working with a collective focus to include all agencies. The Leader of the Council added that the Surrey Heartlands ICS and Frimley ICS were in full support of the programme. The Executive Director of Prosperity, Partnerships and Growth noted that the report also had the support of the ICS executive, the Neighbourhood Board, the Chair of the Primary Care Networks (PCN) across Surrey and highlighted Horley and Ashford St Peters as examples of where the NHS had already contributed to this work.
2. A Member queried the process for setting up the programme – for example, in Guildford, would local Members for Guildford lead it. The Executive Director of Prosperity, Partnerships and Growth explained that the programme would not conflict with the established processes of local partners, the aim was to bring partners together to represent their towns. He further noted that the crew approach set out in the paper had worked well in Tandridge and Caterham with district and borough councillors, county councillors and officers meeting every few months to discuss progress.
3. A Member queried if, for example, the whole borough of Guildford would be considered, or was a localised programme to involve more residents expected. The Executive Director of Prosperity, Partnerships and Growth said that Guildford would be included in a prioritisation process based on an assessment of need against a range of socio-economic and health criteria. This prioritisation process identified the ten towns set out in the report to be included in 2023 which it was intended would be followed by a further 10 towns in 2024.
4. A Member asked if the districts and boroughs had been cooperating in terms of towns selected for the future. The Executive Director of

Prosperity, Partnerships and Growth explained that although variable relationships had been experienced depending on the work coming forward, the input had been positive and productive. The Cabinet Member for Communities and Community Safety suggested a plan on a page approach to illustrate to Members the activity taking place and highlight any gaps.

5. A Member, in noting the reference to the crew on section 22 of page 29, asked how the crew would work in practice and requested clarification around their constitution, budget, decisions on spending, frequency of meetings, officer support available and how it would be determined that residents associations and other local engagement teams would be involved. The Executive Director of Prosperity, Partnerships and Growth explained that factors varied between different places, however it had been evident that boroughs, districts and parish councillors were working as one to explore the further engagement required in the local community. The aim was to provide local partners with an opportunity to come together and discuss issues with officers, district and borough councillors and the relevant divisional Members.
6. A Member queried the meaning in practical terms of 'light touch oversight' referenced in the last bullet point on page 29, section 22. The Executive Director of Prosperity, Partnerships and Growth explained that this referenced having the oversight of the five projects, understanding the commonalities between them, the opportunities for shared learning and how these commonalities were considered.
7. A Member queried the criteria for selecting the first five pilot towns and the process to include other towns in the programme. The Executive Director of Prosperity, Partnerships and Growth said that engagement with the original five towns had taken place during the COVID-19 pandemic in response to health and economic drivers, including health estates and buildings, traffic congestion and air quality, flooding issues, the decline of the retail high street and the impact of the decline in the economy during the COVID-19 pandemic. The prioritisation of the 29 towns and villages areas already identified was undertaken against a set of criteria which included children in relatively low-income families, under 16s, the universal credit payment rate, the employee count, people achieving different levels of qualifications, education and health assets, people with limiting long term conditions, and personal independent payments for those under 65 amongst others. The Cabinet Member for Communities and Community Safety added that the expectation was to establish a commonality for Surrey residents on a localised basis. The Executive Director of Prosperity, Partnerships and Growth gave reassurances that a work would continue as normal in other parts of the county not represented by these towns.

8. A Member requested that a prioritised list of towns be provided at an early stage and that districts and boroughs needed to be engaged with before decisions were made.
9. A Member said that it was important for residents in deprived rural areas to be considered in addition to those in towns. The Executive Director of Prosperity, Partnerships and Growth highlighted that villages in the southern rural areas had been included and agreed that larger rural areas would need to be considered. This would be aided by the insight of Community Liaison Officers. A Member suggested that Community Liaison Officers ask local Members to identify smaller areas of deprivation in their areas.
10. A Member asked what common deliverables would be measured and suggested ongoing Key Performance Indicators (KPI) against air quality, flood risk, congestion, mental and physical health and biodiversity to ensure that the momentum continues after the crew have moved on. The Cabinet Member for Communities and Community Safety agreed that monitoring delivery was vital and gave reassurances that the roles and responsibilities of the crews would remain in place to grow the process once the programme had been implemented.
11. A Member queried if the Caterham model would be used as the standard for future. The Executive Director of Prosperity, Partnerships and Growth confirmed that while flexibility of approach at a local level was key, subject to local circumstances, the broad approach had worked well in Horley, Caterham and Farnham and would stand as a core approach going forward.
12. A Member asked if Surrey County Council (SCC) would be involved in the Woking Partnership Board. The Executive Director of Prosperity, Partnerships and Growth said that representatives on the board would include the Cabinet Member for Communities and Community Safety and a senior officer.
13. A Member questioned how visible community engagement and the impact SCC was having on these projects would be measured. The Executive Director of Prosperity, Partnerships and Growth explained that this would be assessed by reference to qualitative and quantitative outcomes, as well as research to determine impacts.
14. A Member said that it was important for Members to have an indication of the costs related to the programme so that they can be compared against the benefits. The Executive Director of Prosperity, Partnerships and Growth said that some costs were quantifiable, and some were qualitative adding that the requirement of additional resources was minimised as the programme encouraged a different way of working, rather than additional resources.

15. A Member asked if it was possible to measure any impact in the short term as it was vital to articulate the benefits. The Cabinet Member for Communities and Community Safety confirmed that once priorities had been addressed, residents feedback would form case studies to support the analysis and statistics to demonstrate the improvements and outcomes delivered. The Chairman said something more substantive than resident feedback would be required.
16. A Member asked how charities in Surrey could be involved without having to attend meetings instead of carrying out their work. The Executive Director of Prosperity, Partnerships and Growth said that work to understand the way in which these organisations can contribute and provide balance would take place in conjunction with representatives of the sector.
17. A Member queried why there was only one reference to the Police in the report. The Executive Director of Prosperity, Partnerships and Growth explained that for the purposes of the report, the Police were included in the term 'partners' however, their involvement had not been extensive to date, although a clear commitment to neighbourhood working was evident.
18. A Member asked officers for a commitment to return to the Select Committee on a regular basis with an update report. The Chairman suggested that six to eight months would be reasonable expectation for this update.
19. A Member, in noting some missing areas from Appendix D, asked what the criteria for amending the list would be. The Executive Director of Prosperity, Partnerships and Growth said there was no existing criteria for amendments but that feedback from Members regarding the missed areas would be welcomed.

Resolved:

The Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee:

- a. Endorses the principle of bringing together key agencies, particularly the National Health Service, Districts & Boroughs as well as others, at a towns spatial level on a prioritised basis, to work collaboratively on locally determined priorities, empowering local residents to contribute to their achievement.
- b. Seeks reassurance around the monitoring of inputs, outputs and outcomes using key criteria and measures of success with regular reporting to the relevant Cabinet Member/Cabinet, in order that the effectiveness of the towns approach can be evaluated.

- c. Encourages the active consideration of how rural areas are to be effectively incorporated into the future programme, recognising the particular needs and issues faced in those communities;
- d. That the rationale for the prioritisation of towns should be shared with Members; and
- e. Asks the Cabinet Member and the relevant Executive Directors to provide a progress report to this Select Committee on the progress being made, by December 2023, including an update on recommendations a. to d. above.

6/23 SFRS PROGRESS REPORT OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM HMICFRS 2021 INSPECTION REPORT [Item 6]

Witnesses:

- Denise Turner-Stewart Cabinet Member for Communities and Community Safety
- Dan Quin, Chief Fire Officer
- Bernadette Beckett, Chief of Staff
- Elizabeth Lacey, Head of Change

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Chairman asked if it was too early to see improvements following recommendations from the last inspection in the next inspection due in March 2023. The Chief of Staff advised that the previous inspection report was received in December 2021 and therefore a short period of time to implement change, however the journey of improvement was continuous and being monitored carefully.
2. A Member queried if there were plans to summarise the report so that it could be easily shared with the public. The Chief of Staff explained that work was underway with the communications team to develop a plan regarding public engagement and methods of communication regarding the inspection.
3. A Member asked if the addition of a new 'adequate' grading would be positive or negative for the Service. The Chief Fire Officer said that there were concerns at the introduction of the new 'adequate' rating, particularly around the possibility of the 'requires improvement' ratings from 2021 being moved to adequate with any improvements seen not being recognised as they would have been if the scoring had moved to good. 'Good' ratings were also at risk of being moved to 'adequate' as a result of the inspectorates understanding of the fire service maturing.

4. A Member requested further information about the red RAG rating for recruitment on page 77 of the report. The Chief Fire Officer explained that the rating was the result of efforts to establish a local framework in the absence of a national one. Unfortunately, this attempt did not receive the right candidates and resulted in the Service looking at developing existing partners frameworks to imbed to suit the needs of the service.
5. The Chairman queried the current staff compliment for firefighters. The Chief Fire Officer said that a recruitment retention project to mitigate the impact of staff leaving by ensuring a pipeline of people to enter the service had resulted in the compliment of staff being 104 per cent which provided increased resilience in dealing with the fluctuating workforce.
6. The Chief Fire Officer summarised the current recruitment programme for on call firefighters and asked for Members assistance in sharing the message with their residents.

Resolved:

The Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee:

1. Commends the Service for its application and commitment to a robust and far-reaching Improvement Plan, which must be sustained and deepened, and wishes the Service well in the forthcoming Inspection, recognising the short period from December 2021 in which to effect the necessary measures to enhance performance.
2. Welcomes the improved relationship between the Service and its staff together with the Fire Brigades Union.
3. Asks the Service to continue to ensure rigorous implementation of its Improvement Plan in order to take strides towards securing an overall improvement in the following inspection.

7/23 PROPOSAL REPORT ON FUTURE SCRUTINY OF SURREY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE [ITEM 7]

Witnesses:

- Denise Turner-Stewart Cabinet Member for Communities and Community Safety
- Dan Quin, Chief Fire Officer
- Bernadette Beckett, Chief of Staff
- Elizabeth Lacey, Head of Change

Key points raised during the discussion:

The Chairman requested that an appropriate summary of what was being reported to Cabinet to be included when the Service reports its key performance indicators (KPIs) to the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee in July 2023.

Resolved:

The Communities, Environment and Highway Select Committee agrees to include two reports from Surrey Fire and Rescue Service in its Forward Work programme for July and December. These reports should include status and commentary on the relevant and latest Key Performance Indicators.

8/23 RECOMMENDATIONS TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME [Item 8]

The Select Committee noted the Recommendation Tracker and the Forward Work Programme. After a brief discussion, the Chairman agreed that one substantive item to include countryside and rural matters, land management and the nature recovery strategy be added to the Forward Work Programme.

9/23 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING: 20 MARCH 2023 [Item 9]

The Committee noted its next meeting would be held on 20 March 2023.

Meeting ended at: 1.29pm

Chairman