

ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 15 APRIL 2014 AT KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Rosemary Brown, Cllr Terry Chivers (Substitute), Cllr Brian Dalton, Cllr Peter Edge (Vice Chairman), Cllr Jose Green, Cllr Mollie Groom, Cllr Alan Hill (Chairman), Cllr Magnus Macdonald, Cllr Horace Prickett, Cllr James Sheppard, Cllr Bridget Wayman and Cllr Philip Whalley (Substitute)

Also Present:

Cllr Richard Britton, Cllr Jon Hubbard, Cllr Bob Jones MBE, Cllr Jeff Osborn, Cllr Toby Sturgis, Cllr John Thomson, Cllr Philip Whitehead and Cllr Jerry Wickham

14 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Evans, Cllr McLennan and Cllr Drewett.

Cllr Evans was substituted by Cllr Whalley and Cllr Drewett was substituted by Cllr Chivers.

15 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Minutes of the previous meeting held on 18 February 2014 were presented. It was;

Resolved:

To APPROVE as a true and correct record and sign the minutes.

16 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

17 Chairman's Announcements

There were no Chairman's announcements.

18 **Public Participation**

The rules on public participation were noted. There was no public participation.

19 **Highways and Streetscene Contract**

a) **Report from the Rapid Scrutiny Group**

At its meeting in November 2013 the O & S Management Committee agreed that a rapid scrutiny exercise should be undertaken on the content of the report submitted to it by the Cabinet member for Highways and Streetscene. Following the rapid scrutiny exercise in December a report was compiled and presented to the Management Committee in January. A subsequent meeting took place and a second report was produced and presented to the Environment Select Committee.

A successful Balfour Beatty community team event had occurred in Trowbridge, which provided important information regarding the relationship between Balfour Beatty and Wiltshire Council. Meetings for other community areas would begin in May 2014. Concerns were raised regarding the effectiveness of communication between Parish and Town Councils, Wiltshire Council officers and Balfour Beatty.

It was resolved;

That, having completed its work as directed by the Management Committee the existing members of the Rapid Scrutiny group, enhanced by two additional backbench members, form a Task Group to ensure that outstanding issues area addressed and to monitor the performance of the Highways and Streetscene Contract, including the report to be produced after the first full year of operation.

To recommend endorsement of this proposal by the Management committee and adjustment to the O & S Work Programme accordingly.

b) **Highways operational performance over winter**

At its meeting in November 2013 the O & S Management Committee agreed that a progress report would be presented to the Environment Select Committee after the winter, addressing operational performance and an amended report was contained within the agenda pack.

The Balfour Beatty Living Places contract was the largest contract procured by Wiltshire Council and had a value of £24 million, to which an additional £8.5 million had been added through the highways investment fund. Balfour Beatty were developing data to inform local communities when they could expect grass in their area to be cut and by whom.

Wiltshire Council was adopting a longer term approach to maintaining roads, by scheduling improvement works rather than focusing on reactionary repair work. This had been particularly difficult in areas where Network Rail was carrying out work, which had resulted in the deterioration of minor roads following their use as diversion routes. The Council was consulting with central Government to determine who should pay for this repair work.

Advertisements had been placed for three desk-based apprentices, and 12 Prince's Trust road-based positions, which would be reduced to six road based apprentices. The highways team were working hard to repair road damage following flooding, they had completed 50 salt runs and cleared over 400 trees. The council was considering adopting a 10 month highways programme each year, to allow for two months when they might not be able to carry out works due to extreme weather

In response to members questions, Cllr Whitehead confirmed that Atkins check the quality of the work completed by Balfour Beatty and the highways team to ensure that it is of a high standard. When a pothole is identified, if it is deemed to be dangerous, it is filled and the road is later patched as a more permanent solution. A gully clearing program was in place, and the Council were developing information to determine which gullies were prone to blockage and flooding.

It was also confirmed that where possible road maintenance was scheduled after utilities works. The utility companies had a responsibility to repair any road damage or deterioration arising within 2 years of a repair. It was suggested that Town and Parish Councils should be advised to check on any repairs after 18 months to ensure they were still of a good quality and report deficiencies to Wiltshire Council.

20 **Flood Plan Update**

The flood plan, which was due to be reviewed in 2013, sets out Wiltshire Council's flood management arrangements and takes into account the Council's responsibilities under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 and Reservoirs Act 1975. The flood plan details the coordinated response that would be required from Wiltshire Council in the event of severe flooding in the County.

The Committee praised the efficient and well coordinated response to the extreme winter weather. The ESC was advised that the lessons learnt during the period of extreme weather could be incorporated into the plan, following which a draft plan would be presented to the Committee later this year.

It was resolved to;

Note the interim report.

21 **Executive response to CIL Task Group**

Cllr Toby Sturgis gave an executive response to the CIL Task Group.

Cabinet had originally decided to utilise a single levy across all of Wiltshire. The Task Group had recommended CIL rates for all four settlement categories. It would have been a very difficult exercise to determine the boundaries for each settlement category and entail a great deal of work. Cabinet had decided to have two CIL rates. This approach had been assessed as a workable compromise had been submitted to the Inspector.

Many changes to the CIL concept had been announced by Central Government at different times. The changes would be incorporated into the draft CIL proposal which would then proceed to consultation. Although Cabinet had not accepted all of the Task Group's recommendations, Cllr Sturgis confirmed that they had adopted the recommendations they felt able to.

It was resolved to;

Continue the work of the CIL Task Group.

22 **Executive response to Air Quality Task Group report**

With the agreement of the Chairman, the Committee were permitted to ask questions of Cllr Toby Sturgis regarding the withdrawal of mini recycling facilities and he confirmed that this had occurred as part of the budget decision. Although use of the mini recycling centres had reduced considerably, the cost of maintaining them remained the same.

Cllr Sturgis was asked about the progress of the Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document. He confirmed that the Planning Inspector had challenged some of the evidence presented.

It was resolved to;

Note the executive response.

23 **Community Speedwatch**

The Police and Crime Panel (PCP) was running a Task Group to examine Voluntary Schemes, including Community Speedwatch. The main function of the PCP was to hold the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to account for the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan. Although the Police and Crime Plan made no specific commitments to Speedwatch, it sought to help communities do more for themselves to improve safety. Cllr Richard Britton, Chair of the PCP addressed the Committee. He confirmed that there would not be a detailed examination of Speedwatch as part of the Voluntary Schemes Task Group and

the Panel was not in a position to consider many of the issues raised by the Committee. However, from his background knowledge, Cllr Britton was able to assist members regarding Speedwatch issues.

In order to develop a Speedwatch scheme, a metro count must be installed which identifies a speeding issue in the community. A risk assessment then takes place and if there is sufficient interest in the community, a Speedwatch training day is arranged.

Some members noted difficulty in accessing Speedwatch training for the members of their local community, whilst other members praised the support and training provided by the PCC's office. There were two members of staff running the Speedwatch scheme in the PCC office.

The Committee noted that resourcing problems were likely to occur as the Speedwatch scheme became more popular. A suggestion that volunteers could assist with office work was dismissed due to data protection issues. The panel considered that to minimise the number of interfaces and points of contact, the PCP should be the first point of contact for the Committee, should it wish to raise further issues.

24 **Forward Work Programme**

It was resolved to;

Note the Forward Work Programme.

25 **Task Group Updates**

a) Adoptable Estates Task Group

Cllr Edge advised the Committee that a meeting had taken place with the representatives of developers. It was expected that two further meetings would take place before the work of the Task Group was complete.

b) Parking Review Task Group

Cllr Wayman advised that two meetings had taken place and the Task Group were in the process of gathering information.

c) 20 mph Policy Task Group

Cllr Edge confirmed that the Task Group had met with Cllr John Thomson and the Traffic Engineering Manager. The group were arranging a meeting with 20's Plenty and other interested groups.

d) Waste Task Group

Cllr Green advised the Committee that the Task Group had not met recently and were awaiting a report on the Affordable Plan from the waste service. Tracey Carter will be meeting with Dr Peter Alberry on 30 April 2014 to discuss his presentation.

e) CIL Task Group

No update was given as the subject had been covered by the Cabinet Member under the earlier agenda item on the executive response to the CIL.

26 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

27 **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Environment Select Committee would take place on Tuesday 10 June 2014.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 12.15 pm)

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