

ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 27 OCTOBER 2015 AT KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Brian Dalton, Cllr Dennis Drewett, Cllr Peter Edge (Vice Chairman), Cllr Peter Evans, Cllr Jose Green, Cllr Jacqui Lay, Cllr Magnus Macdonald, Cllr Ian McLennan, Cllr Linda Packard, Cllr James Sheppard, Cllr Tony Trotman, Cllr Bridget Wayman (Chairman) and Cllr Philip Whalley

Also Present:

Carlton Brand, Cllr Chris Caswill, Cllr Terry Chivers, Cllr Tony Deane, Marie Gondlach, Cllr Alan Hill, Cllr Bob Jones MBE, Paul Kelly, Cllr Jeff Osborn, Fiona Rae, Cllr Jonathon Seed, Stephen Slater, Cllr Toby Sturgis and Cllr Philip Whitehead

52 **Apologies**

There were no apologies for absence.

53 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

Resolved:

To confirm as a true and correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 1 September 2015.

54 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

55 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman made the following announcements:

- **Fracking consultation response (Habitats Regulations Assessment)**

The Chairman drew attention to the robust response provided by Wiltshire Council to the consultation.

- **MiPermit**

The Chairman explained that Salt Lane Car Park had been identified as a site in Salisbury for the MiPermit trial. It was expected that the trials in Melksham, Royal Wootton Bassett, and Devizes would begin in February and the Salisbury trial would begin in March.

It was highlighted that there would be signage in each car park for the duration of the trial to advise members of the public how to contact Parking Services with any feedback and comments. The responses and car park occupancy data would be collated and further decisions would then be made on the potential of extending the trial.

- **HRC Traffic Management**

The Chairman read an update from the Associate Director for Waste and Environment. It was noted that opening times for the Household Recycling Centres (HRCs) had been publicised through the Communications Team and that this had included the use of local radio stations. However there had still been some traffic issues at HRCs probably caused by lack of awareness.

It was also explained that a series of measures had been introduced to relieve pressure to the HRCs including re-directing charities to transfer stations, on site direction of traffic by Hills' staff, and enforcement action against businesses attending HRCs.

The Chairman commented that the full response had been passed on to the Waste Task Group who would continue to monitor the traffic management at HRCs.

56 **Public Participation**

The Committee noted the rules on public participation.

57 **Energy Resilience Plan**

Louise Woollen, Development Officer, Green Economy, introduced the Energy Resilience Plan. It was explained that stakeholder engagement, including internal and external consultation, had been critical in the development of the Energy Resilience Plan. The Development Officer noted that there were four key action areas and that a detailed action plan was available in the Appendix to the Plan.

It was hoped to publish final document next month following comments.

It was explained that carbon emissions had been gradually reducing both locally and nationally. In addition, more efficient sources of energy had resulted in an overall reduction in the demand for energy.

It was highlighted the main source of carbon emissions in Wiltshire was electricity use in homes and businesses. It was also noted that transport accounted for 40% of emissions but that this was largely due to the size and rural nature of Wiltshire where personal vehicles were necessary for transportation.

The Development Officer drew attention to fact that Wiltshire was rated third in the South West region in terms of installed renewable electricity and heat capacity.

Members of the Committee enquired about the impact of the recent government changes to energy subsidies and the likely impact for solar parks. The Development Officer explained that the impact would be difficult to judge and that, although there would likely be a reduction in the installation of new renewable energy sources, other options were being investigated.

The Chairman highlighted that a key issue in Wiltshire was affordable warmth. The Committee raised concerns that a restricting factor was the connection points on the grid and commented that it would be beneficial to have more information about gas points in Wiltshire. The Development Officer explained that the Public Health team was doing some work in this area and that information gathering on this subject was being undertaken in association with the Energy Resilience Plan.

Following questions from the Committee, it was confirmed that there was a programme that installed biomass fuel into Wiltshire schools. At present, about 13 school buildings used biomass and a lot of work had been undertaken to ensure that the biomass had been sourced locally. It was also clarified that fracking was not covered in detail in the Energy Resilience Plan and explained that the Plan focused on the immediate short term.

The Committee expressed the importance of ensuring that the Energy Resilience Plan operated in harmony with all Wiltshire Council Plans, especially the Core Strategy, and the actions and decisions of central government.

Some members expressed concern that local community groups were no longer able to ensure returns on renewable energy projects. It was noted that the Energy Resilience Plan would support renewable energy groups through ongoing partnership work. It was explained that this would likely involve a number of avenues, including an investigation of funding at a European level. It was also noted that a government announcement on an alternative to the Green Deal was anticipated shortly.

It was clarified that the viability of ground source and air source heat was decided at a project level. The Energy Resilience Plan aimed to raise awareness of a number of technologies but to be technology neutral.

Resolved:

- 1. To request an annual report on the Energy Resilience Plan.**

58 **Update on Street Lighting**

The Associate Director for Transport and Highways drew attention to the written report available in the agenda pack. It was highlighted that the changes to street lighting reductions had reduced energy consumption by almost 20% between August 2013 and August 2015.

Some members of the Committee commended the prompt action of officers in response to ongoing public consultation on the changes to street lighting.

It was noted that, in the case of new developments, lighting was provided by the developer but that Wiltshire Council was responsible for providing the electricity.

The Cabinet member for Highways and Transport explained that there had been public concern in about 3% of the changes to street lighting and that the majority of people in Wiltshire had welcomed the changes to street lighting as a sensible strategy in response to limited resources.

It was explained that about one third of street lights in Wiltshire used LEDs (Light Emitting Diodes). LED lights lasted longer and involved less maintenance than traditional street lights. It was noted that large scale installation of LED lighting in Wiltshire was very costly as it also involved a modification of street lighting columns.

The Committee expressed an interest in understanding better the use of S.106 monies and whether they could be used for street lighting, and if so how this could be done.

It was clarified that Wiltshire Council had been unsuccessful in securing Department for Transport Challenge Funding to improve the street lighting stock. It was noted that £275 million was available and that this had been oversubscribed by £1.4 billion.

Resolved:

- 1. To note the update on Street Lighting.**
- 2. To request further information on s.106 monies and how they could be used with regards to street lighting.**

59 **Wiltshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy**

The Cabinet member for Housing, Leisure, Libraries, and Flooding explained that there had been fewer issues of flooding in the winter of 2014 when compared with previous years although there had been some flash flooding in September 2014. It was explained that Wiltshire Council was working well with all flooding partners and the Cabinet member commended the report to the Committee.

It was confirmed that the budget for the three flood working groups was controlled centrally had that the working groups had a clear understanding of how projects were prioritised.

It was noted that some local residents had concerns that the flood working groups met too often and that there was not a live action tracker online. The Cabinet member for Housing, Leisure, Libraries, and Flooding commented that regular attendees of the flood working groups considered the meeting frequency to be appropriate. It was also highlighted that parish councillors and partners could raise any issues through the Chairman in advance of the meetings.

Some members of the Committee commended the work of the flood working groups and encouraged parish representatives to attend when an issue of interest to their area arose. In relation to Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS), the importance of long term maintenance was emphasised. It was confirmed that the Drainage Team considered the long term sustainability of any systems when consulting on planning applications.

It was highlighted that, following the flooding in September 2014, a report had been expected and the Cabinet member for Housing, Leisure, Libraries, and Flooding undertook to investigate progress on this issue. It was highlighted that flooding in early autumn was a different issue to prolonged flooding in winter. The Head of Highways Asset Management and Commissioning explained that where flooding was caused by a specific reason, Wiltshire Council was usually able to effect a prompt solution but that other issues were less clear and took several years to resolve.

The Cabinet member commented that flooding was likely to be a permanent issue in Wiltshire. The expertise of local residents in flooding issues was noted and the Cabinet member advocated the importance of local involvement.

It was noted that the Developers' Guidance Note did not include reference to the Wiltshire Council Core Strategy. It was suggested that the guidance should provide a clear statement that all developers are expected to comply with the Wiltshire Council Core Strategy. The Committee was informed that the full version of the Developers' Guidance was likely to be available shortly.

Resolved:

- 1. To note the progress being made on managing flood risk in Wiltshire, and the work of the Operational Flood Working Groups, which have been particularly effective at working with local communities, the Environment Agency, and other organisations.**
- 2. To note the development of the Groundwater Management Strategy and the Developers' Guides to augment the strategy set out in the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.**
- 3. To request that the annual report on the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy include information on Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS).**
- 4. To request an annual update be presented to the Committee.**

60 **Integrated Emergency Management Plan**

The Chairman introduced the Integrated Emergency Management Plan. The Committee's attention was drawn to the fact that, at its 8 September 2015 meeting, the Management Committee considered the new Wiltshire Council Integrated Emergency Management Plan, ahead of its adoption by Full Council. This Plan details the Council's policy on emergency planning, and how the Council would discharge its duties for major incidents, business continuity and recovery.

The Integrated Emergency Management Plan could be viewed in the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee's agenda. The Management Committee recommended that the Environment Select Committee was aware of the purpose and content of the Plan when undertaking its work.

Resolved:

- 1. That the committee remains aware of the Integrated Emergency Management Plan when undertaking its work.**

61 **Wholly Owned Subsidiary Rapid Scrutiny**

The Chairman explained that, on 8 September 2015, Cllrs Bridget Wayman, Peter Evans, and Magnus Macdonald took part in the Rapid Scrutiny Exercise, established by the Environment Select Committee, to consider the report on Future Delivery Model for the Repairs, Improvements and Maintenance of Council Owned Assets.

The outcome report of the Rapid Scrutiny Exercise was presented to Cabinet on 15 September 2015 was available in the Cabinet minutes on the Wiltshire Council website

It was explained that another Rapid Scrutiny Exercise was to be undertaken, prior to the formal start of the procurement process, to enable the scrutiny members to consider the details of the proposed Wholly Owned Subsidiary.

The Chairman highlighted that the recommendations included giving consideration to more than one contractor and the inclusion of an apprenticeship scheme in the Wholly Owned Subsidiary.

Resolved:

To endorse the work done by the rapid scrutiny exercise.

62 **Highways and Streetscene task group - early termination of the Highways and Streetscene Contract with Balfour Beatty Living Places**

Cllr Jeff Osborn, Chairman of the Task Group, explained that the Highways and Streetscene Contract had been terminated by mutual agreement. It was highlighted that the Audit reports had been made available after the Task Group meeting and the Chairman of the Task Group recommended closer working between Scrutiny and Audit in the future.

The Chairman of the Highways and Streetscene Task Group drew attention to the recommendations in the Task Group report and commended them to the Committee.

The Cabinet member for Highways and Transport drew attention to Recommendation 1 of the Task Group report and echoed the positive nature of scrutiny, the executive, and officers working in partnership. It was confirmed that the report proposed an extraordinary meeting of the Environment Select Committee in January in order to obtain the input of scrutiny before the new contract was taken to Cabinet in January. It was also clarified that Recommendation 5 of the Task Group report aimed to reflect the fact that highways issues were a priority for the public.

It was clarified that a Wiltshire Council lawyer had been involved in the drawing up of the Highways and Streetscene contract and had been a member of the project team throughout the process. It was also noted that the Legal Team was involved in all contracts entered into at Wiltshire Council. Some members requested a summary of key clauses in the Highways and Streetscene Contract for the next Committee meeting. The Chairman of the Task Group highlighted that issues of communication were dealt with under Recommendation 6 of the Task Group report.

It was confirmed that the quality assessment questionnaire had been sent out and that the European and UK Procurement Regulations were being followed. It was anticipated that the shortlist would be announced in mid-November; this would be followed by the tendering process.

Resolved:

To endorse the recommendations from Task Group report:

- 1. To welcome the positive and open engagement with overview and scrutiny shown by the executive and officers in bringing reports to the Task Group and Environment Select Committee for discussion pre-Cabinet and the further opportunities for O&S involvement outlined in Recommendation 2.**
- 2. Highways and Streetscene Task Group to meet in December 2015 and monitor the development of the tendering process and Environment Select Committee to hold an extraordinary meeting in January 2016 to consider the proposed contract decision.**
- 3. To welcome the inclusion of Parish Stewards within the new Highways contracts.**
- 4. To welcome the move away from an integrated model and towards more separated contracts for highways and amenities functions when they are retendered.**
- 5. To note that the 2016/17 budget setting process will allow a considered and robust debate around what funding levels are needed to provide highways and amenities that meet expectations, particularly in service areas considered a priority by the public.**
- 6. Arrangements for the delivery of highways and amenities services, both until and after new contracts commence in April 2016, are clearly communicated in order to maximise awareness amongst councillors, affected employees and the public.**
- 7. Environment Select Committee and the Highways and Streetscene Task Group to be involved in the HMEP Strategic Peer Review to be held in the coming months.**
- 8. O&S Management Committee to determine overview and scrutiny's involvement in the development of the My Wiltshire app as it becomes an increasingly important conduit through which residents can report a range of issues to the council.**

63 Task Group Update

The Chairman drew attention to the written updates available in the agenda pack.

Cllr Peter Evans, Chairman of the Public Transport Review Task Group, highlighted that the next meeting of the Task Group would take place on 17 November 2015, instead of 4 November 2015.

The Committee also noted that it would be beneficial for the Waste Task Group to investigate the impact of reduced Household Recycling Centres' hours and traffic management issues. It was also suggested that the Waste Task Group could investigate the impact of the new green waste collection service particularly in relation to flytipping.

Resolved:

- 1. To agree the proposed membership of the Resident Engagement Task Group.**
- 2. To ask the Waste Group Task Group to investigate the impact of reduced Household Recycling Centres' hours and traffic management issues and to investigate the impact of the new green waste collection service particularly in relation to flytipping.**
- 3. To note the updates on Task Group activity.**

64 Forward Work Programme

It was explained that a meeting had taken place on 6 October 2015 regarding the Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan and that the position for consideration by the committee, or referral to task group, would be better known after January 2016.

Resolved:

To note updates on the progress of items on the forward work programme.

65 Urgent Items

There were no urgent items.

66 Date of the Next Meeting

An additional meeting would be organised to January 2016 to consider the proposed contract decision as recommended by the Highways and Streetscene task group (minute item 62).

The next ordinary meeting would take place at 10.30am, 16 February 2016 in the Kennet Room.

67 Exclusion of the Press and Public

Resolved:

In accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public from the meeting for the business specified in Item Number 17 because it is likely that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act and the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information to the public.

68 **Highways and Streetscene Contract**

The considerations of the committee have been recorded in minute item 62.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 1.20 pm)

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