

Wiltshire Council

Environment Select Committee

15 April 2014

Update on the Highways and Streetscene Contract Rapid Scrutiny Exercise (Balfour Beatty Living Places - BBLP)

Background

- 1 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 concerns raised about aspects of the contract. The resulting report was to be presented to the Management Committee.

Progress to date

- 2 On 10 December 2013 members of the Rapid Scrutiny Group (the Group) met with the Cabinet member for Highways and Streetscene, the portfolio holder for Highways Contract, highways officers and representatives from BBLP to undertake the rapid scrutiny exercise.
- 3 A report was compiled following the meeting and presented to the Management Committee on 7 January 2014. In its report the Group identified a number of issues over which it had concerns and it was agreed that the Group would meet again to seek reassurance that progress was being made on these issues. It was also agreed that the second report of the Group would be presented to the Environment Select Committee.
- 4 The Group met with witnesses again on 27 March 2014, when it received an update report on the Highways and Streetscene Contract. Several members of the Group had also attended a Community Team Event on 11 March, organised by the Highways Team, which included how Community Teams, Community Days and the My Wiltshire App would operate.
- 5 The Group heard about developments that had been made in respect of the IT system, feedback from the reporting procedure on the App and the ability of the BBLP to fulfil its contractual commitments in respect of grass cutting. The Group was satisfied that progress was being made on the issues they had

identified. It was also satisfied that the Community Event was valuable and that it should be rolled out to all Communities in May.

- 6 A number of issues still require attention including streetworks noticing, the quality of some work and liaison with SSE over the power supply to street lighting. It was agreed that there was a need for continuing involvement in the Highways and Streetscene Contract and this view was endorsed by the Corporate Director and the executive.
- 6 The Group valued the opportunity to scrutinise the effectiveness of the Contract and, in doing so, had developed a detailed knowledge and understanding of the issues. It was therefore recommended that the Group be put on a more permanent standing.
- 7 The matter of contract performance over the winter period was treated separately and is reported elsewhere on this agenda.
- 8 Due to questions being asked as part of the exercise about how OS had engaged pre and post contract, the Management Committee agreed to consider how it might approach major contract scrutiny in the future. A report by the Scrutiny Manager covering previous approaches and potential future options was considered on 4 March. Following discussion it was decided to allow each of the select committees to determine its own approach. The proposal below is therefore timely in respect of the Highways and Street scene contract.

Proposal

- 9 That, having completed its work as directed by the Management Committee, the existing members of the Rapid Scrutiny Group form a Task Group to ensure that outstanding issues are addressed and to monitor the performance of the Highways and Streetscene Contract, including the report after the first full year of operation.
- 10 If supported, to recommend endorsement by the Management Committee and adjustment to the OS Work Programme.

Cllr Jeff Osborn, chairman, Highways and Streetscene Rapid Scrutiny Group

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