

ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a MEETING held at COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE on WEDNESDAY, 13TH DECEMBER, 2000.

PRESENT: Miss MF de Rhé-Philippe (Chairman), Mr BE Atfield, Mrs NS Bryant, Mr PR Davis, Mr GJM Downes, Mr JNB Irving, Mr JP Johnson, Mrs JBP Savage, Mr WA Spiers and Mr TR Sturgis.

Mr PG Allnatt, Mrs MEM Groom, Mrs G Hill, Mr AG Peach, Mrs JH Seager and Mr KC Wren also attended the meeting in accordance with Standing Order No. 26.

The following minutes are not within this Committee's delegated powers and have been referred to the County Council or the Policy & Resources Committee as follows:-

Minute No. 119 – Policy & Resources Committee
Minute Nos. 132 to 136 – County Council

113. **Membership Changes** The Director of Corporate Services reported the membership of the Committee incorporating any changes since the previous meeting.

114. **Apologies** Apologies for absence were received from Mr TP Chivers.

115. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Resolved: To confirm and sign the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 21st November, 2000.

116. **Chairman's Announcements**

(1) **Wiltshire Wigglybus** The Chairman announced that the Wiltshire Wigglybus had won the 'Bus in the Countryside' Award, which had been presented by Keith Hill, MP, Minister of Transport, at the National Bus Industry Awards in London on 21st November, 2000 in recognition of its success in promoting the use of bus services by country residents. The Wigglybus' success had also been recognised by its inclusion by the Government as a case study in the recently published Rural White Paper.

- (2) Mrs Anne Bishop The Chairman reported that Mrs Anne Bishop, Personal Assistant to Mr RJ Lander, would be retiring from the County Council at the end of the month having completed 34 years' service with this Authority. Members of the Committee requested that their thanks and appreciation for Mrs Bishop's help and assistance over many years be conveyed to her together with the Committee's very best wishes for a long and happy retirement.
- (3) Mr JP Johnson The Chairman paid tribute to Mr Johnson, the Committee's immediate past Chairman, for the fair, courteous and efficient way in which he had conducted meetings of the Committee. These sentiments were endorsed by other members of the Committee.

Mr Johnson responded by thanking members for their kind remarks and the officers for their professional support and assistance at all times.

117. **Public Participation** A written statement by Rachel Skurczynski of Bradford on Avon Youth Council was received about the cost of bus fares for young people and particularly the lack of concessionary fares available to students over the age of 16 years. Lucy Coleman, a resident of Westwood and pupil of John of Gaunt School, Trowbridge spoke on the same subject which was also supported by Mrs G Hill.

The Chairman stated that a written response would be sent to Rachel Skurczynski, the text of which was available at the meeting.

118. **Revenue Budget Statement for October 2000** A statement of the Committee's revenue expenditure to 31st October, 2000 was received, together with the comments of the Director of Environmental Services.

Resolved: To note the contents of the Director's report.

119. **Revenue Budget 2001-2002** On considering a report by the Director of Environmental Services and a letter dated 10th December, 2000 from Mr M Connolly,

Resolved:

- (1) To draw to the attention of the Policy & Resources Committee the exceptional cost increases faced by this Committee, as identified in paragraph 6 of the Director's report, noting with regret that, despite these unavoidable costs, the Standard Spending Assessment for Wiltshire's Highway Maintenance had been reduced by 0.4% and proposing that the basis of this calculation should be challenged.
- (2) To welcome the proposed increase for structural highway maintenance through the Local Transport Plan settlement, whilst noting that the full extent of Government support for other elements of the County Council's Local Transport Plan was not yet known.
- (3) To advise the Policy & Resources Committee that an increase of £0.79m in the revenue budget allocation (together with a minimum allocation of £0.6m in the capital programme) for structural highway maintenance would avoid the

prospect of challenge by Central Government about the overall level of structural maintenance in the County's highway network. In such circumstances, this would enable the County Council to increase its expenditure for structural highway maintenance by 38% above that in the current year.

(4) *To invite the Policy & Resources Committee to amend the Environment & Transport Committee's budget by a further sum of £0.292m, to reflect the increased cost of the Education Transport Service.*

(5) *To recognise the concerns of young people about the cost of public transport and to seek a further £30,000 to be added to this Committee's budget, to avoid an increase in the cost of 16+ travel passes from September, 2001.*

120. **Capital Monitoring Statement for October 2000** A statement of the Committee's capital expenditure to 31st October, 2000 was received, together with the comments of the Director of Environmental Services.

The Director reported that the PFI – North Wilts Schools Project had sustained a £200,000 overspend on fees, which had not been recorded in his report. He agreed to circulate a revised report incorporating this information.

Resolved: *To note the contents of the Director's report and ask for a letter of congratulations to be sent to all those involved in the early successful completion of the Hawkeridge Link Road.*

121. **Capital Programme Bid 2001 – 2002** On considering a report by the Director of Environmental Services,

Resolved: *To approve the proposed prioritised programme, as set out in Appendix 1 of the Director's report, as the Committee's Capital Programme bid for 2001–2002, subject to the Wootton Bassett Station Feasibility Studies scheme being advanced to become Priority 12.*

122. **Salisbury Transportation Plan Joint Committee: Half Yearly Report** On considering a report by the Chairman of the Joint Committee and the comments of Mr JP Johnson as its Vice-Chairman,

Resolved: *To receive the first half-yearly report of the Salisbury Transportation Plan Joint Committee as required by the heads of terms agreed by the two Councils.*

123. **Debts Written-Off – April 2000 to September 2000** On considering a report by the Director of Environmental Services,

Resolved: *To note the write-off of the debts, as set out in the report, in accordance with Financial Regulations.*

124. **Wiltshire and Swindon Economic Partnership** On considering a report by the Director of Environmental Services,

Resolved:

- (1) *To agree to provide up to £10,000 in 2001-2002 towards the costs of the secretariat for the Wiltshire and Swindon Economic Partnership.*
- (2) *To authorise the Chief Executive or his nominee to represent the County Council in the appointment process.*

125. **South West UK Office in Brussels** On considering report by the Director of Environmental Services about the creation of a new European Office,

Resolved:

- (1) *To appoint Mr JP Johnson to represent the County Council on the Joint Committee of the principal funding partners for the South West UK Brussels Office.*
- (2) *To raise the issue of subscriptions to the Office with the Wiltshire Local Government Association.*

126. **Boscombe Down – Future Strategic Tanker Aircraft (FSTA) Project and other Strategic Planning Issues** On considering a report by the Director of Environmental Services and on hearing the views of Mr AG Peach and Mr KC Wren as local members,

Resolved:

- (1) *To express concerns about the considerable complexity and uncertainty regarding the various proposals in the Amesbury area and their potential lack of integration and co-ordination, by the Defence Evaluation and Research Agency and the Ministry of Defence, and to convey these concerns to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, and the Government Office for the South West.*
- (2) *To bring to the immediate attention of the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions and Salisbury District Council the fact that the County Council currently has inadequate information to come to a view on the acceptability of the proposed Future Strategic Tanker Aircraft Project, and consequently must retain major reservations about the proposal until adequate information can be made available.*
- (3) *To request the Defence Evaluation and Research Agency and the Ministry of Defence, or their consultants, to make a co-ordinated presentation to the County Council and Salisbury District Council on all their plans and proposals as a matter of urgency.*
- (4) *To forward a copy of the Director's report to the Joint Structure Plan Working Party (Wiltshire County Council/Swindon Borough Council) for*

consideration in determining the programme for the review of the Structure Plan - 2016.

127. **New Forest National Park Boundary: Public Consultation** On considering a report by the Director of Environmental Services,

Resolved:

- (1) *To agree that the New Forest Heritage Area boundary within Wiltshire should be the proposed boundary for the New Forest National Park as identified by the Countryside Agency.*
- (2) *To reserve the right for this Committee to reconsider its position in Spring 2001 in the light of the wider public consultation and the proposed special administrative arrangements.*

128. **Best Value Review – Planning Services** The Committee considered a report by the Director of Environmental Services, which had also been considered by the Policy & Resources and Environment & Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee at its meeting on 24th November, 2000.

Resolved:

- (1) *To agree the proposed scope of the Planning Services Best Value Review and that it proceeds to the next stage in the process, with final completion by June, 2001.*
- (2) *To note that the Scrutiny Sub-Committee also agreed the scope of the review at its meeting on 24th November, 2000, subject to a number of provisos which were being addressed by the Director of Environmental Services.*

129. **A350 Semington – Melksham Diversion – Statutory Procedures** On considering a report by the Director of Environmental Services,

Resolved: *To note the making of the following Orders:-*

- (i) *a Compulsory Purchase Order in respect of the land required for the scheme;*
- (ii) *a Side Roads Order in respect of the highways to be improved, stopped-up, provided and diverted, and the private means of access to be closed and created in connection with the scheme; and*
- (iii) *a scheme and Order in accordance with Sections 106 and 108 of the Highways Act 1980 for the construction of an aqueduct for the Kennet and Avon Canal and associated temporary Canal diversion.*

130. **Salisbury: A338 Eastern Bypass Planning Application for Extension of Tesco Site** On considering a report by the Director of Environmental Services,

Resolved:

- (1) *To make no objection to the planning application submitted for the extension of the Tesco store adjacent to Road A338 at Salisbury.*
- (2) *To note the need to reconsider the Salisbury Eastern Bypass connection to Trunk Road A36 at Petersfinger should the scheme be further developed.*

131. **Establishing the Long Term Delivery Structure in the South West Region for the 'Passenger Transport Information 2000' Project** On considering a report by the Director of Environmental Services,

Resolved:

- (1) *To approve the structure proposed, and obligations and responsibilities established, for the continued delivery of Passenger Transport Information 2000 for the South West Region.*
- (2) *To authorise the County Council's entry into the South West Association of Public Transport Officers (SWAPTO) and into the South West Public Transport Information (SWPTI) – a company limited by guarantee – as a member, and to approve the preparation of the necessary legal documentation for this matter on terms to be agreed by the Director of Environmental Services and the Solicitor to the Council.*

132. **Notice of Motion from Mr PG Allnatt: Western Wiltshire Sustainable Transport Strategy** On considering a report by the Director of Environmental Services in response to Mr PG Allnatt's notice of motion and on hearing the views of Mr Allnatt,

Resolved: *To recommend the County Council to note that:-*

- (i) *depending on the success of the Local Transport Plan Bid, it was hoped to consider the provision of pedestrian crossing facilities in London Road, Chippenham at an early date;*
- (ii) *a full safety assessment was carried out at the site of the new Abbeyfield Secondary School, Chippenham;*
- (iii) *the preferred scheme for highway safety measures in the proximity of the new school met the necessary safety regulations and was the most suitable that could be appropriately achieved; and,*
- (iv) *it would be reviewed after a period of 12 months' operation from the opening of the school, as was the case with all such schemes.*

133. **Notice of Motion from Mr PG Allnatt: Corsham: Pockeredge Farm and Peel Circus** On considering a report by the Director of Environmental Services in response to Mr PG Allnatt's notice of motion and on hearing the views of Mr Allnatt, Mrs JH Seager and Mr TR Sturgis,

Resolved: To recommend the County Council to:-

- (i) note the size of the proposed housing development on land at Pockeridge Farm and Peel Circus, Corsham,
- (ii) note that there has been strong opposition to the proposed development,
- (iii) note that determination of this particular planning application is the preserve of North Wiltshire District Council as the relevant local planning authority,
- (iv) note that all major residential development has potential service implications for the County Council which have to be addressed,
- (v) accept that it is impracticable to obtain committee reaction to planning applications on which the County Council is consulted,
- (vi) express confidence in present arrangements whereby County Council officers provide professional advice in respect of new development, and
- (vii) make no change, therefore, to current delegated authorities to officers in respect of responses to referred planning applications.

134. **Notice of Motion from Mr PG Allnatt: Rural Buffers and New Schools** The Committee noted that Mr Allnatt submitted the following Notice of Motion to County Council on 21st November, 2000 which was referred to this Committee for consideration and report:-

"Council congratulates the Salisbury District Council on its robust defence of the countryside and calls for a full inquiry by the appropriate Scrutiny Sub-Committee into the action by the Leader of the Council, Councillor P. Chalke, in promoting such penetration without a committee decision of this Council."

At the suggestion of Mr Allnatt and with the agreement of the Chairman,

Resolved: To refer the motion back to the County Council without comment.

135. **Notice of Motion from Mr JNB Irving: Floods** On receiving a report by the County Emergency Planning Officer in response to Mr JNB Irving's notice of motion, and on the suggestion of Mr Irving,

Resolved: To refer the County Emergency Planning Officer's report in response to Mr Irving's motion, back to the County Council without comment.

136. **Notice of Motion from Mr JNB Irving: Crisis Management** On receiving a report by the County Emergency Planning Officer in response to Mr JNB Irving's notice of motion, and on the suggestion of Mr Irving,

Resolved: To refer the County Emergency Planning Officer's report in response to Mr Irving's motion, back to the County Council without comment.

137. The Downlands Conference 'Future Management of the North Wessex Downs'

Resolved: To approve the attendance of Mrs M Boulton and Mrs C Crisp at the Downlands Conference 'Future Management of the North Wessex Downs', due to take place on Thursday 11th January 2001 at Marlborough Town Hall at a cost of £12.00 per delegate and to regard the attendances as an approved duty for the purposes of the payment of attendance, travelling and subsistence allowances.

138. Reports of Sub-Committees

Resolved: To receive the minutes of the following Sub-Committee meetings:-

- Environmental Services Sub-Committee – 6th December, 2000.
- Policy & Resources and Environment & Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee – 27th October and 24th November, 2000.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30am – 12.30pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Roger Bishton, of the Committee Services Unit, direct line (01225) 713035.

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