

ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 19 SEPTEMBER 2017 AT KENNET COMMITTEE ROOM, COUNTY HALL, BYTHESEA ROAD, TROWBRIDGE, BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling, Cllr Derek Brown OBE, Cllr Matthew Dean, Cllr Peter Evans, Cllr Peter Fuller, Cllr Mike Hewitt, Cllr Tony Jackson, Cllr Bob Jones MBE, Cllr Jacqui Lay, Cllr Ian McLennan and Cllr Nick Murry

Also Present:

Cllr Jose Green, Cllr Alan Hill, Cllr Chuck Berry, Cllr Richard Clewer, Cllr Philip Whitehead, Cllr Jonathon Seed, Cllr John Thomson, Cllr John Smale and Cllr Bridget Wayman

30 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr Stephen Oldrieve and Cllr Sarah Gibson.

31 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2017 were agreed and signed as a true and accurate record.

32 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations.

33 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman made the following announcements:

1. **Planning Task Group**

The Committee were advised that, as agreed in the last meeting, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, Cllr Lay and Cllr Murry, met with Chuck Berry- Cabinet Member for Planning and Strategic Asset Management and Alistair Cunningham, Corporate Director for Growth, Investment and Place. At this meeting, it was decided that Overview and Scrutiny

Management Committee's Task Group could consider 'Planning Outcomes and Delivery'.

2. Capital requirement for new and replacement waste containers – Waste Services

The Committee were informed that following a meeting held between the Chairman and the Associate Director for Waste and Environment, Tracy Carter in July, it was agreed that this item could be removed from the Committee's Forward Work Plan, because scrutiny involvement is not deemed to add value.

It was also explained that the issue of waste bags and wheelie bins had been discussed in this meeting. The Chairman informed Members that refuse bins could not be issued to some properties, where there was no adequate storage for the bins, as they would obstruct the highway. However, it was emphasised that Waste Services were willing to work with Members to address any issues relating to waste containers in their divisions.

3. Housing Repairs Contract Extension

The Chairman advised that at Cabinet on 12 September 2017, it was resolved that approval be delegated to the Associate Director responsible for housing in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Housing, to agree contract extensions up to March 2020 for all the existing contracts that the Council held under this item, to give time to fully complete the review of the repairs and maintenance service and to implement any agreed changes.

4. Allocation of Pavement Funding:

The Chairman referred to the attached briefing note and advised Members that the money had been allocated proportionately, in the same way that CATG funds were allocated, and that the money was now available to be spent in community areas. After questioning by Members, it was confirmed that this fund was for discretionary improvements and not for work undertaken under mandatory safety duties.

34 **Public Participation**

There were no public questions or speakers,

35 **Municipal Waste Management Strategy**

The report was introduced by Tracy Carter- Associate Director Waste and Environment, which was described as an update report on the work done in the development of the new strategy. She announced that she was pleased to see the level of Councillors interest in the strategy and referred to the success of the well-attended Waste Workshops, held in July, with 43 Councillors having participated.

The Committee advised that as part of the Consultation, the Waste Team were making presentations at Area Board meetings, which were being well received.

It was explained that some Consultation questions were being put to audiences, and would be included in the overall response to Consultation. Members were informed that the Consultation was now live and would close on 14 November 2017, and were urged to encourage their divisions to participate.

A number of questions were raised by Councillors in response to the report. Firstly, a recognition of the efforts of Officers and the success of the Consultation, so far, was voiced by Members. The point was raised that the Strategy could be used as an ambitious piece of work in addressing the future long term impacts of household waste and climate change, amongst other environmental factors. Concern was also raised about the introduction of charges for non-household waste at Household Recycling Centres and how improper use could lead to an increase in fly-tipping.

In regards to the specific issue of Single-Use Plastics (SUPs), Tracy Carter advised Members that from July 2018, under a new contract, a wider selection of plastics would be recycled at the kerbside. However, it was also explained that the policy on SUPs was based on educating the public to minimise use, although it was recognised that without national legislation restricting packaging, the Council had limited influence over the producers of SUPs.

It was highlighted that events managed by the Council always have a waste management plan attached to them and independent traders have set waste management standards and legislative requirements to abide by. Furthermore, in response to questioning, Tracy confirmed that the Council manages its Single-Use Plastic waste properly and therefore, Single-Use Plastic waste collected by Wiltshire Council does not end up in the world's oceans.

Resolved:

The Committee agreed:

- 1. To note the update on the early development of a new household waste management strategy for Wiltshire Council; noting the key themes resulting from member workshops and how these have been used in shaping the questions for a public consultation.**
- 2. For the final report on the Wiltshire Council Waste Management Strategy, to be received by the Committee in January 2018, to include information on: why individuals choose not to recycle in Wiltshire; clearly defined and strategic goals for the Strategy, of a similar nature to those found in the 'Zero Waste Scotland' Strategy.**
- 3. For the Committee's consideration of the Notice of Motion on SUPs to be closed, as the Council's management of plastic waste ending up in the oceans is legally compliant and would ensure that this does not end up in the world's oceans and there is nothing further that the Council could do at present to combat the amount of plastic waste found in the ocean.**

36 **Amendments to the Wiltshire Local Transport Plan (LTP) - Car Parking Strategy 2011-2026**

Parvis Khansari- Associate Director for Highways and Transport introduced the report, which outlined 7 options for the Car Parking Strategy explaining that, at its meeting on 12 September 2017, Cabinet considered a report on possible car parking charging options for inclusion in a subsequent public consultation exercise. The report also included a number of technology and operational proposals. It was explained that the report was being considered in Environment Select to provide an opportunity for the Committee to consider its role in the process.

In the debate that followed, it was confirmed that the Consultation would start the week commencing 25 September 2017 and run for 8 weeks. It was agreed that the Committee should await the outcome of the Public Consultation and that the Strategy should come back to Environment Select at its meeting on 16 January 2018, prior to returning to Cabinet on 30 January 2018.

Resolved:

The Committee endorsed the contents of the report and the options presented for Public Consultation and agreed to await the outcome of the detailed Consultation before considering the Strategy again, at its 16 January 2018 meeting, prior to the Strategy returning to Cabinet on 30 January 2018.

37 **Final Report of the Public Transport Review Task Group**

Cllr Peter Evans- Chairman of Public Transport Review Working Group, introduced the report explaining that its purpose was to present the findings and recommendations of the task group for endorsement by the committee and referral to the Cabinet Member for response. The Committee were informed that the Consultation had attracted 11,000 responses and this had delayed work slightly.

Resolved:

The Committee agreed:

- 1. To endorse the report of the Task Group and refer it to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport for response at the Committee's next meeting.**
- 2. Receive an update in 12 months regarding the implementation of the options selected following the public transport review, which would mean receiving an update in the next Environment Select Committee in November.**
- 3. Cease the work of the Public Transport Review task group.**

38 **Flood Risk Management**

Cllr Jonathan Seed- Portfolio Holder for Flooding and the Military Covenant gave an update on the work of the Strategic Flood Risk Management Group (FRMG), as its Chairman.

It was explained that Group worked closely with the three Operational Flood Working Groups (OFWGs), covering the north and south of the county, with a separate group for Salisbury. Members were advised that most of the work was done on the ground, working with partner agencies, such as Environment Agency (EA) and other organisations having an interest in flooding and drainage matters. Members were informed that the Groups work with local communities on initiatives to reduce flood risk, and encourage the development of local Flood Plans and the appointment of Flood Wardens. Members were advised that there are now 148 communities with Flood Plans and Flood Wardens across the county. Cllr Seed also drew attention to the Council's Parish Emergency Assistance Scheme (PEAS) making communities less reliant on Wiltshire Council during flooding.

Questions were asked surrounding the capability of Wiltshire Council to respond to a major flooding incident. Cllr Seed assured Members that the Council was an exemplary model of Flood Risk Strategy and that emergency plans were in place to deal with flooding risks. It was confirmed that vast improvements had been made since the December 2013 and March 2014 flooding, although he acknowledged that people were still suffering from the lasting impacts of the flooding. Particular mention was made of the ability to provide emergency housing in Salisbury, in the event of a major incident. Cllr Seed, did however state that although Wiltshire Council were heavily invested in this area, they did not have the capacity to alleviate all flooding risks in the County. He urged Members to look at their own divisions and support their communities in taking their own precautions.

A further point was raised regarding the long term plans to tackle flooding risks caused by climate change and increased water levels. Cllr Seed advised Members that the strategy surrounding this policy was a living document and, therefore, it would naturally adapt to meet changing environmental needs. Cllr Seed identified a number of schemes in place across the County, such as purpose built properties and expert submissions in planning applications. In this respect, Alistair Cunningham- Corporate Director Growth, Investment and Place, confirmed that where planning applications involved flooding risks that could not be mitigated, those applications would not be approved.

Resolved:

The Committee noted:

- 1. The Operational Flood Working Groups continue to be a successful way of working with local communities, the Environment Agency and other organisations to manage flood risk in Wiltshire.**
- 2. There are currently 148 communities with Flood Plans and Flood Wardens, with 97 communities taking part in the Council's Parish**

Emergency Assistance Scheme (PEAS), which provides sand bags and equipment to local town and parish councils so that they can store these locally, and deploy them as necessary.

- 3. The Council carries out a large programme of flood alleviation and drainage projects which are managed and co-ordinated through the Operational Flood Working Groups, and bids for additional funding as opportunities arise.**

39 **Housing Board**

James Cawley, Associate Director for Adult Care, Commissioning and Housing introduced the report which concerned the Governance Management of the Housing Board. The Committee were asked to consider the options to follow for the Board's future arrangements, the remuneration level and whether recruitment to vacant positions on the Board could commence.

Much of the discussion surrounded the issue of remuneration of the Housing Board Members, particularly the Chairman. Cllr Clewer- Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Heritage, Arts and Tourism, spoke in this regard, having previously been Chairman of the Housing Board. He detailed that the role entailed a vast amount of work and commitment, and he made the case for the proposed levels of remuneration.

An issue was raised with some Members voicing a discomfort with the Portfolio Holder of Housing Stock also being the Chairman of the Housing Board, and receiving remuneration for both roles. However, in the debate that followed it was agreed that the roles entailed their own significant responsibilities and duties, which justified remuneration, and there was nothing improper with a Councillor holding both positions simultaneously. Cllr Chuck Berry- Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Housing spoke to this effect and gave his support to Cllr Smale- the current Portfolio Holder for Housing Stock Chairman to the Housing Board.

Resolved:

The Committee noted this report and agreed the following:

- 1. For Housing Services to pursue the 'As is structure with revised Terms of Reference's' option, subject to the Terms of Reference being developed by Housing Services in collaboration with the Housing Board members.**
- 2. Remuneration level to be continued for the second term of the Housing Board (on and from 4 May 2017).**
- 3. Recruitment to commence, as soon as reasonably practicable, via the Elected Wire, Housing Matters magazine and Wiltshire Council's website.**

40 **Task Group Update**

Traveller Reference Group

Steve Maddern- Acting Consultant in Public Health introduced the update report on the progress of the Traveller Reference Group and Traveller Strategy.

Firstly, he gave apologies for Carolyn Gibson, Spatial Planning, who was unable to attend the meeting. He then explained that progressive work was being done under the strategy and that they were one year into the four year strategy, as detailed in the report, but that more work was needed. He advised Members that the precise number of Travellers in England and Wiltshire is unclear, due to definitional and identification problems, however, according to the 2011 Census, 757 people in Wiltshire identified themselves as being of gypsy or of Irish traveller ethnicity.

There was discussion around the historical, and current, perceived discrimination against these groups and what measures the Council is adopting to counteract this prejudice. Members recounted their own experiences with Traveller Groups in their divisions and gave support to the ambitions of the strategy. Members were advised that despite a lack of statistical data to evidence the improvements, those working in the Traveller Reference Group believed that they were achieving the objective outcomes, identified in the 23 point action plan of the Strategy.

Resolved:

The Committee agreed to note the report and the Wiltshire Traveller Strategy.

41 **Forward Work Programme**

Cllr Nick Murry raised the point of the Committee receiving information on the Council's current Climate Change strategies. It was relayed that the current FWP meetings between the Committee's Chairman and Vice-Chairman and Members of the Executive would present an opportunity for this to be raised. A full update on each of these portfolio meetings would be received by the Committee at the next appropriate meeting.

Resolved:

The Committee agreed to note the Forward Work Plan.

42 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items raised in the meeting, (see next item).

43 **Urgent Item- Proposed Changes to the Council's Allocations Policy**

As included as a late supplementary item, with consent of the Chairman, the Committee was asked to consider the proposed changes to the Council's Allocations Policy.

Nicole Smith, Head of Housing Operations and People Services introduced the report, to allow the Committee to consider the recommendations to amend the Council's Allocation Policy. It was explained that there had been a 9 week consultation from January 2017 to April 2017.

There was a consensus that Recommendations 1-11 were non-contentious. However, Recommendation 12- 'Options for a proposal to make the system more efficient', (regarding definition of local connection) attracted criticism from some Members. Members expressed support for the Local Connection aspect of allocation. A number of options were presented and in a motion proposed by the Chairman, and seconded by the Vice-Chairman, the Committee passed a motion in support of Option Two – 'Retain current wording but discontinue with the authorisation process and just conduct random checks'.

Similarly, Recommendation 13- 'Rural allocations of new build developments', attracted discussion, having identified the problem of local families moving out of villages, due to no available housing, but then not being considered to have a housing need when properties become available in the said village at a later date, it was felt that this recommendation of the policy required amendment. The options associated with Recommendation 13 were presented to the Committee and in a motion proposed by the Chairman, and seconded by the Vice-Chairman, the Committee passed a motion in support of Option Four- 'Allow for bids from Band 1-4 and Open Market Register (OMR) at stage 1 on all allocations, but to include the allocations of all rural properties in Local Service Centres, Small and Large Villages, as described in the core strategy'.

Resolved:

The Committee agreed:

- 1. Recommendations 1-11**
To endorse the recommendations to amend the council's housing allocation policy and make a recommendation to Council to update the policy.
- 2. Recommendation 12**
To endorse Option Two– Retain current wording but discontinue with the authorisation process and just conduct random checks
- 3. Recommendation 13**
To endorse Option Four- Allow for bids from Band 1-4 and OMR at stage 1 on all allocations, but to include the allocations of all rural properties in Local Service Centres, Small and Large Villages, as described in the core strategy.

44 **Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Tuesday 21 November 2017.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 1.45 pm)

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