

ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 7 JUNE 2016 AT THE KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Rosemary Brown, Cllr Brian Dalton, Cllr Tony Deane (Substitute), Cllr Dennis Drewett, Cllr Peter Evans, Cllr Jose Green, Cllr James Sheppard, Cllr Magnus Macdonald, Cllr Linda Packard (Substitute), Cllr Tony Trotman, Cllr Bridget Wayman (Chairman) and Cllr Philip Whalley

Also Present:

Cllr Richard Britton, Cllr Alan Hill, Cllr Simon Killane, Cllr Jonathon Seed, Cllr Toby Sturgis and Cllr Philip Whitehead

22 Election of a Chairman

Cllr Wayman was elected as Chairman for the Committee for the forthcoming municipal year.

23 Election of a Vice-Chairman

Cllr Edge was elected as Vice-Chairman for the Committee for the forthcoming municipal year.

24 Changes of Membership

The Committee noted the following changes to membership, following the meeting of Council on 10 May 2016:

Cllr Macrae had replaced Cllr Whalley as a member.

Cllr Brown had replaced Cllr Packard as a member.

Cllr Whalley had replaced Cllr Cuthbert as a substitute member.

Cllr Packard had been appointed as a substitute member.

25 **Apologies**

Apologies had been received from Cllr McLennan, Cllr Edge, Cllr Macrae and Cllr Lay.

Cllr Edge was substituted by Cllr Packard. Cllr Macrae was substituted by Cllr Deane. Cllr Lay was substituted by Cllr Whalley.

26 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

It was noted that the minutes of the meeting held on 12 April be amended to reflect that the objective of the Resident Engagement task group was to investigate whether there was a learning opportunity for Wiltshire Council.

Resolved:

To confirm as a true and accurate record the minutes of the Environment Select Committee meeting held on 12 April 2016. Subject to the inclusion of the accurate objective of the Resident Engagement task group; to investigate whether there was a learning opportunity for Wiltshire Council.

27 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

28 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman made the following announcements:

Litter Picking - The meeting was informed that the 'Clean for the Queen' initiative had attracted more than 1,500 volunteers across Wiltshire and that a total of 1,978 full bags of rubbish had been collected, weighing 19.87 metric tonnes. It was highlighted that this scheme had been covered extensively on both local and national media outlets. The Chairman noted that it would be beneficial for the Council to adopt a holistic approach to litter picking and several members reiterated her sentiment. It was signalled that an initiative that

encompassed the whole county and was similar to the 'Keep Britain Tidy' campaign would be taken further by the Committee.

Waste Storage and Collection: Guidance for Developers (SPDs) – the Chairman outlined that this decision had been made through the relevant Cabinet member's delegated decision authority. It was highlighted that the decision had authorised a public consultation on the draft waste guidance SPD and that this decision had come into force on 20 May 2016 and was published on 25 April 2016.

Update on Mobilisation of Future Waste Management and Collection Services – it was noted that the Waste Service Changes task group would be exploring this topic further.

29 **Public Participation**

The Committee noted the rules on public participation and that there had been no questions submitted.

30 **Budget 2016/17**

The Committee was invited to consider the budget set for 2016/17 for the service areas within its remit and to consider how the budget set would affect these service areas. The Chairman drew attention to the budget pages for the service areas under the Committee's remit, which were included with the agenda.

The Chairman noted that the presentation from leisure that had been received at the last meeting on 12 April had helped to explain and provide clarity on how leisure services wished to increase its income target by £100,000, as noted in the budget.

In terms of the budget set for Economy and Planning, several members signalled that they would be interested in exploring the 'planning enforcement' area detailed in the budget for economy and planning.

In terms of consideration of the budget for Waste and Environment, the meeting was informed that the Waste Service Changes task group had almost finished their work as a task group. It was noted that further information would be provided with the task group's final report, which would be received at the next meeting of the Committee.

Laurie Bell, Associate Director Communicates and Communications, confirmed that the Stock Fund listed on p.41 of the agenda was not entirely for books; as it

encompassed all aspects of helping to ensure that libraries ran effectively. It was explained that it was felt that savings could be achieved in this area through a reduction in the management of the service; however, the amount of library staff was to remain the same. The Committee was offered an account of the structure of the library service; both before and after the service restructure, should the Committee wish to view such information.

Those present were informed that should they have any further questions on the budget for the areas under the Committee's remit, then these questions should be sent to Natalie Heritage (Democratic Services Officer) who would ensure that the appropriate officers could provide a response in time for the next available Committee meeting.

31 **Executive Response to the Resident Engagement Task Group's Final Report**

Cllr Seed, Cabinet Member for Housing, Leisure, Libraries and Flooding and James Cawley, Associate Director – Adult Care Commissioning and Housing, were in attendance to provide the executive response to the Resident Engagement task group's final report; which was received at 12 April Committee meeting.

Cllr Seed detailed that the report had highlighted three main recommendations that centred on equality, the housing magazine and collating information. He highlighted that the resident engagement strategy appeared to be progressing well and that it had attracted a reasonable response from residents. It was also noted that the resident engagement strategy had won an award for its engagement with residents.

James Cawley outlined that the Housing Board encompassed nine individuals; three of whom were classed as independent from both the Housing Associations and Wiltshire Council, three of whom were tenants of the relevant housing associations and three of whom were Wiltshire Councillors. Mr Cawley signalled that the issues raised by the task group would be explored and incorporated into the future programme of work of the Housing Board.

It was confirmed that the resident engagement strategy would be considered by the Housing Board in July and from this, the strategy would then be progressed through to the Housing Board. It was also highlighted that establishing how the Council's current resident engagement strategy could become more focused could be pursued through the Housing Board.

In terms of recommendation 3 of the report, which was provided with the agenda, Cllr Seed stated that the budget for resident engagement would be further considered as time progressed and that until discussions had been had

with the main tenant group, the aims and objectives of the budget would remain the same.

For recommendation 4, Cllr Seed clarified that the Council had a statutory duty to ensure that there was an opportunity for tenant participation and that, although some members may have felt that attendance levels at such meetings had been low, since the strategy for resident engagement had been updated, there had been an increase in participation at such meetings. A discussion was then had where the point was raised that resident engagement was entirely possible; however, the best possible form of engagement would demand different strategies be put in place and that a partnership of Wiltshire Police, Housing Associations and their residents, as well as Wiltshire Councillors be formed. Several members noted that they felt that it was important that the task group met with the Housing Board; in order to help ensure that resident engagement could be maximised.

The offer was proposed by the Executive and subsequently accepted by the Chairman of the task group for the organisation of a meeting between the Housing Board and the Task Group. It was agreed that such a meeting would focus on how to achieve the greatest value from the Housing Board meetings themselves; in order to ensure that the resident engagement strategy could be accurately and appropriately focused and provide the best possible service to residents.

In regard to recommendation 5, Cllr Seed commented that it was felt that a publication was needed more than once annually, in order to ensure that all tenants were engaged effectively; as many tenants did not have access to the internet. It was noted that the executive would consider the cost benefit of publishing one annual publication, in light of the task group's ideas. The chairman of the Task Group commented that obviously an annual publication would be supplemented by more cost-effective newsletters providing any important new information. It was explained that webpages had to be user friendly and updated in line with the Council's corporate priorities. It was confirmed that the tenants who formed a part of the Housing Board had been recruited through an extensive process that had involved all Housing Associations.

Resolved:

- i. That the Committee note the executive response to the Final Report of the Resident Engagement Task Group;**
- ii. That a meeting be arranged between the Task Group and members of the Housing Panel to review the Resident Engagement Strategy and ensure that Housing Panel meetings provided the best possible service to residents;**
- iii. That the Resident Engagement Task Group review whether the Council's Housing webpages are user friendly and in line with the Council's corporate priorities;**

iv. That the Environment Select Committee receive an update report on the progress of Wiltshire Council's resident engagement strategy and its outcome in twelve months.

32 Update on Gypsy and Traveller Plan

Cllr Sturgis, the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Development Management, Strategic Housing, Operational Property and Waste and Georgina Clampitt-Dix, Head of Service – Spatial Planning, were in attendance to introduce the report on the Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document (G&TDP).

Cllr Sturgis outlined that there had been new definitions circulated by the government on the definition of travellers and traveller sites; for example, those who resided on house boats had now been included in the government's definition of a traveller. He also explained that a new planning and housing bill had been passed into law and, as a result, further work was required to be undertaken on the Gypsy and Traveller Plan.

The point was raised that regulations for the Avon and Kennet Canal dictate that one cannot moor for longer than 14 days in any one location and that, occasionally, one is required to move more than 20 miles as a part of the responsibility to moor in a different location. Cllr Sturgis highlighted that work was being undertaken with Wiltshire's neighbouring counties to share best practise over this regulation and to ensure that such a regulation did not cause disruption to the schooling of children who resided on house boats.

A discussion was had over the provision of emergency stop-over sites in the County and it was confirmed that following the exploration of potential sites, there had been no obvious Wiltshire Council sites that had leant themselves to this purpose; therefore Wiltshire Council may need to purchase some land to provide for a suitable emergency stop-over site.

It was explained that consultants were undertaking an assessment of the Gypsy and Traveller Plan and that this assessment had helped ensure that a broad and large engagement with the Gypsy and Traveller community had been achieved. It was noted that a full Gypsy and Traveller Plan for Wiltshire Council would likely become available in 2017.

Resolved:

- i. The Committee noted the report received on the Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document;**
- ii. The Committee would maintain an interest in the progress of the plan and would receive further information on the plan, as and when it becomes available in 2017.**

33 **Review of complaints, compliments and comments**

Sarah Butler, Corporate Complaints Manager, was in attendance to present a report on complaints made to the Council in 2015/16 on the areas under the Committee's remit; most notably for the departments of Transport, Environment, Leisure, Economic Development, Planning and Housing.

Ms Butler outlined the complaints procedure and explained that there was a two-stage process for complaints; the first stage of the process was dealt with directly by the relevant service area and the second stage was dealt with by Ms Butler and her complaints team – who would undertake a full and comprehensive investigation into the matter. Ms Butler highlighted that there was also a third stage of the process; where the individual could take their complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman, however, she stressed that she had not experienced a complaint which had led to a Local Government Ombudsman decision published against the Council in at least 6 years. Ms Butler informed those present that her report and attached appendices demonstrated no particular or worrying trends.

It was confirmed that, as the complaints procedure was a two-fold process, the complaints team would not necessarily be aware of all the complaints that the Council had received. It was stated that service areas had hugely improved in the way that they dealt with complaints and that Associate Directors should be applauded for the way in which they always sought to place the customer first. Ms Butler commented that, despite the pressure on budgets, positive feedback had been received for the Council's service areas.

It was further confirmed that any complaints received by the complaints team would either receive an acknowledgement response on the same day, or on the next working day and that there was a lead officer responsible for each case. It was stated that the Council had a duty to respond to customers within 10 working days and that, occasionally, this deadline was not always feasible and members commented that it was important to make the public aware of what the Council could do with the resources that it had available.

34 **Public Transport Review**

Jason Salter, Head of Service – Passenger Transport Unit, and Cllr Whitehead, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, were in attendance to present on the 'Public Transport Review' and detailed the outcome of the public consultation that was held between 7 January and 11 April 2016.

The meeting was informed that the public transport review had been a part of a wide ranging review that had encompassed school transport and SEND transport. It was highlighted that the consultation was the second consultation of the review. The first consultation had included key stakeholders and the second consultation centred upon how services impacted upon the consumer.

It was relayed that 11,000 questionnaires had been received and that the responses collected represented the second largest interaction with a consultation that Wiltshire Council had ever seen. Attention was drawn to the fact that the consultation had been very successful and that Wiltshire Council had ensured that the consultation was open for a lengthy period of time, in comparison with neighbouring counties. Cllr Whitehead explained that 3000 paper questionnaires had been completed on the bus services. The meeting was informed that over 5000 responses had included comments in the free-text option; each comment had been read and grouped by officers and were included with the appendices, attached with the agenda.

Several members congratulated Cllr Whitehead and officers for their outstanding work on the consultation and it was acknowledged that the officers working on the Public Transport Review were hugely knowledgeable of transport in Wiltshire and had been committed to working towards the best options for Wiltshire.

Resolved

That the Environment Select Committee:

- (i) Note the results of the public consultation on supported bus service savings options as part of the review of the Wiltshire Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2011-2026 Public Transport Strategy review;**
- (ii) Note that a report on a proposed way forward for public transport in Wiltshire will be presented to Cabinet at a future meeting;**
- (iii) Note that over 11,000 individuals and organisations responded to, and took part in, the public consultation;**
- (iv) Note that due to the volume of consultation responses received only the majority or main consultation points have been outlined at this time; the analysis and consideration of more detailed points will be undertaken if and when changes to individual supported bus services are proposed and consulted upon.**

The Chairman drew attention to the reports contained in the agenda pack. The Committee endorsed the election of Cllr Jones MBE as Chairman of the Highways and Streetscene Task Group and the appointment of Cllr MacDonald to the task group.

The meeting was informed that the Highways and Streetscene Contract task group had recently met with a representative from Ringway; who had confirmed that appointments were being made to cover any gaps in the service area. It was highlighted that the task group would attend a workshop on 15 June to start work on performance KPIs for the service area, as recommended following the peer review; this would be a challenging experience for the task group as it had not been done before. Cllr Jones MBE stressed that the Wiltshire Council App was crucial to ensuring that the Highways contract was operating effectively and relayed that every effort was being made by Wiltshire Council and Ringway to ensure that the mobile phone app operated as efficiently as possible.

Cllr Evans, Chairman of the Public Transport Review task group, detailed that the group had reviewed the outcome of the Public Transport Review consultation and would carry on its work when the options to be presented to Cabinet were available.

Cllr Green, Chairman of the Waste Service Changes task group, explained that the group had met with Ian Brown and other senior environment officers and that a discussion had been had on permits for HRCs, as well as the mobilisation of future waste management and collection services. The meeting was informed that further information on these areas would be provided in the task group's final report to be presented to the Committee at its next meeting.

Resolved:

That the Committee

- i. Note the update on the task group activity provided;**
- ii. Endorse the following for the Highways and Streetscene Contract Task Group:**
 - a. The appointment of Cllr Magnus Macdonald;**
 - b. The terms of reference for the task group**

36 **Forward Work Programme**

There were no comments on the Forward Work Programme.

37 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

38 **Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next scheduled meeting was confirmed as 30 August 2016.*

**After the close of the meeting and at the Chairman's approval, the 30 August meeting was re-scheduled to be held on 13 September 2016. The next meeting of the Environment Select Committee from 7 June 2016 will thus take place on 13 September 2016.*

(Duration of meeting: 10:30am-12:43pm)

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