

## ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE

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### MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 25 OCTOBER 2016 AT THE 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 Mike Hewitt, Cllr Jacqui Lay, Cllr Magnus Macdonald, Cllr Ian McLennan, Cllr James Sheppard, Cllr Tony Trotman and Cllr Bridget Wayman (Chairman)

#### Also Present:

Cllr Richard Clewer, Cllr Alan Hill, Cllr Julian Johnson, Cllr Alan MacRae, Cllr Jonathon Seed, Cllr Toby Sturgis and Cllr John Thomson

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#### 51 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Rosemary Brown.

Apologies were also received from Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, Councillor Philip Whitehead. Councillor John Thomson, Deputy Leader of the Council, would update the Committee as appropriate.

#### 52 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2016 were presented for consideration and it was,

#### Resolved:

**To approve and sign as a true and correct record.**

#### 53 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations.

#### 54 Chairman's Announcements

Through the Chair it was announced that discussions had been held regarding plans to revise the existing Waste Strategy. Workshops would take place for councillors from Spring 2017.

55 **Public Participation**

There were no questions or statements submitted.

56 **Highways Major Maintenance Programme - Annual Report**

In October 2013 Cabinet agreed to increase highway maintenance funding to £21 million for six years. This was subsequently included in the Council's future budget, and forms the basis of the 'Local Highways Investment Fund 2014 – 2020'. The increased investment in highways maintenance has enabled a large number of schemes to be progressed to improve the condition of the network and its infrastructure.

The previous Highways and Streetscene Contract was with Balfour Beatty Living Places (BBLP) and started in June 2013. In July 2015 Cabinet agreed to the early termination of the contract following a review of the potential benefits for the Council. The progress on terminating the previous contract and the procurement of the new contract was regularly reported to the Environment Select Committee. Arrangements were made for the Council to take over some of the existing sub-contracts between BBLP and specialist suppliers in key service areas, including grass cutting, litter picking and major road resurfacing. A procurement exercise was undertaken for a new Wiltshire Highways Contract for the other services, which was awarded to Ringway Infrastructure Services earlier this year and started in April 2016.

Councillor John Thomson, Deputy Leader of the Council, and Peter Binley, Head of Highways Assets and Commissioning, presented a report on the annual review of the Highways Service. Details of highways maintenance in each community area were provided, along with an indicative list of maintenance schemes for 2017/18 and other statistics as detailed in the agenda. It was stated the performance of contractors had been very good since the early termination of the previous contract.

The Committee discussed the report, seeking details of the allocation of the £21 million highways investment, which included some funding from central government. Queries were raised on the proposed schemes for 2014/18, and in respect of the A350 proposals, it was stated the route was the busiest under the council's responsibility in Wiltshire, and that funding for further dualling of the route was being sought from the Local Enterprise Partnership.

The Committee was informed Area Boards would be consulted on the proposed list of maintenance to be undertaken in the next year, and it was confirmed that Community Area Transport Groups could propose additional schemes, although this would mean other schemes could not be addressed, and it would be beneficial to list the schemes by priority, though some members raised examples of high priority schemes that had been left undone across several years. Other topics raised included identifying the need for traffic signalling prior to upgrading the network, working closely with parish councils to monitor need for work, customer reporting and emphasising pedestrian and cycling improvements to reduce pressure on Highways.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

**Resolved**

**To note the following:**

- (i) Good progress has been made on implementing the ‘Local Highways Investment Fund 2014 – 2020’, and there has been a substantial improvement in road conditions in Wiltshire.**
- (ii) The performance of all of the contractors currently delivering the highways service is good, and the transition to the new highways contract with Ringway Infrastructure Services has gone smoothly.**
- (iii) The new Parish Steward Scheme has been launched. The operation of the scheme will be monitored and reported to this Committee next year.**
- (iv) The Highways Consultancy contract was awarded to Atkins in December 2012. Performance has been good and they are being awarded an 18 month extension in accordance with the provisions of the contract. Performance will continue to be monitored and will be reviewed again next year regarding a further six month extension of the contract.**
- (v) A Performance Management Framework has been developed to help monitor future performance of the highways service and support good asset management.**
- (vi) An annual review of the highway service will be undertaken and reported to this Committee next year, which will include reporting on progress on implementing the ‘Local Highways Investment Fund 2014 – 2020’, and on the introduction of the Parish Steward Scheme.**

**57 Wiltshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy - Annual Report**

The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 requires Wiltshire Council to act as Lead Local Flood Authority, and to develop a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS). Councillor Jonathon Seed, Cabinet Member for Housing, Leisure, Libraries and Flooding, supported by Councillor Richard Clewer, Chairman of the Salisbury Operational Flood Working Group (OFWG) was in attendance to update the Committee on management of flood risk in Wiltshire.

It was emphasised that two years prior the county, particularly in Salisbury, had been at severe risk of a major event, and preparations had been put in place to improve the situation, although it was noted in some areas it would never be possible to eliminate flood occurrence completely. Details were provided of the parish emergency assistance scheme to provide emergency signage and

sandbags for communities, of grants received from the Wessex Coastal Committee and development of flood plans.

The Committee congratulated the councillors and officers for their work and discussed the annual report as detailed in the agenda, with details sought on work with the Environment Agency on modelling flooding in Wiltshire and the type of projects that were viable, with a drainage scheme list for each area to be provided by the end of the financial year

### **Resolved**

#### **To note that:**

- i. The Operational Flood Working Groups have proved to be a successful way of managing flood risk. They are particularly effective at working with local communities, the Environment Agency and other organisations to manage flood risk in Wiltshire.**
- ii. Local communities are encouraged to prepare Flood Plans and appoint Flood Wardens, and there are currently 82 communities with Flood Plans and 177 Flood Wardens.**
- iii. The Council's Parish Emergency Assistance Scheme (PEAS) continues to provide sand bags and equipment to local town and parish councils so that they can store these locally, and deploy them as necessary. There are 97 communities taking part in the scheme.**
- iv. 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.**

#### **58 Highways Service - Peer Review Action Plan**

In November 2016, Cabinet agreed to an independent review of the highways service through the Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme (HMEP) Strategic Peer Review process. The review took place in February 2016 and involved interviews with focus groups of members, staff, customers and partners, and individual interviews with Cabinet Members and senior managers, as well as reviewing service strategies and operational plans.

Peter Binley, Head of Highways Assets and Commissioning, presented the report, which noted the outcome of the Peer Review had been very positive, and that an action plan had been developed, with project teams set up to take forward the improvements identified as detailed in appendix 1 of the report.

The Committee discussed the report, congratulating the service for the positive outcome of the peer review, as well as seeking details on the potential role of Community Area Transport Groups and transformation of the Winter Maintenance Service.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

## **Resolved**

### **To note:**

- i. The positive results of the HMEP Peer Review earlier this year, and that progress is being made on implementing its recommendations.**
- ii. The progress on implementing the Action Plan will be reported to a meeting of this Committee next year.**

## **59 Municipal Waste Management Strategy**

Wiltshire's Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy was prepared by the Wiltshire Waste Partnership and adopted by the four district councils and the county council in 2006. This was then updated in 2012 following the formation of the Wiltshire Council unitary authority to reflect emerging legislation and changing council priorities.

Councillor Toby Sturgis, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Development Management, Strategic Housing, Operational Property and Waste, supported by Tracy Carter, Associate Director for Waste and Environment, presented a report explaining that due to legislative and policy changes the Strategy would need to be developed, and that an updated version of the current strategy had been prepared until that new draft, which would take place in 2017.

The Committee discussed the update and the effectiveness of the existing strategy. In response to queries it was confirmed the present recycling rate in the county was 47%, less below target than in the report, as the figure fluctuated from month to month, but that the new Waste Contract would introduce greater recycling range for plastics to help improve the figure. Details were also sought on encouraging people to sign up to Green Waste collection of compost green materials locally.

It was also noted that encouraging commercial operators to recycle was a challenge as there was no statutory duty for them to do so, and that potential implications arising from exiting the European Union, potentially the requirements of existing Directives, were being explored.

### **Resolved:**

**To note the contents of the updated Wiltshire Municipal Waste Management Strategy 2016.**

## **60 Executive Response to the Waste Task Group's Final Report**

On 13 September 2016 the Committee endorsed the final report of the Waste Service Changes Task Group and referred its recommendations to the relevant Cabinet Member, as detailed in the agenda papers. Councillor Toby Sturgis, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Development Management, Strategic Housing, Operational Property and Waste, was in attendance to present the Executive Response to the final report and its recommendations.

In relation to recommendation 4 and whether the Churchfields Depot could be included on the Regulation 123 list and funded through the Community Infrastructure Levy it was stated this was being considered, but that a priority list would be prepared in the new year. In relation to recommendation 12 regarding a communication strategy to raise public awareness of what can and cannot be disposed of and the cost of abusing the system, it was raised whether area boards were required to fund covert cameras to catch abuse. It was stated the service had no plans to purchase new cameras, but that did have access to some and officers would consider all requests. It was also confirmed that it was difficult to prosecute fly tippers as that required people to make witness statements, not merely report incidents.

At the end of discussion, it was,

**Resolved:**

**To note the Executive Response.**

61 **Task Group Update**

Updates from the Committee's Task Groups were provided as detailed in the agenda and as provided verbally at the meeting.

**Resolved:**

- 1) **To note the update on task group activity.**
- 2) **That Cllr Linda Packard be replaced on the Highways and Streetscene Task Group by Cllr Peter Evans.**

62 **Forward Work Programme**

The Forward Work Programme for the Committee as detailed in the agenda was received. It was noted the Wholly Owned Subsidiary proposal had still not reached a point where it could progress.

Following discussions with the Executive and Officers, it was also proposed that a Rapid Scrutiny Exercise be undertaken in respect of the Planning Service, with the focus to be confirmed at a later date.

**Resolved:**

**To note the updated Forward Plan.**

63 **Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 13 December 2016.

64 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 1.20 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Kieran Elliott of Democratic Services,  
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