

ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 2 SEPTEMBER 2014 AT KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Brian Dalton, Cllr Dennis Drewett, Cllr Peter Edge (Chairman), Cllr Peter Evans, Cllr Jose Green, Cllr Mike Hewitt (Substitute), Cllr Magnus Macdonald, Cllr Linda Packard, Cllr Tony Trotman and Cllr Bridget Wayman (Vice Chairman)

Also Present:

Cllr Trevor Carbin, Cllr Terry Chivers, Cllr Jeff Osborn, Cllr Jonathon Seed, Cllr John Thomson, Cllr Philip Whitehead and Cllr Jerry Wickham

42 **Apologies and Membership Changes**

Apologies were received from Cllr Christopher Newbury, Cllr Ian McLennan and Cllr Jacqui Lay.

Cllr Jacqui Lay was substituted by Cllr Mike Hewitt.

Following the Council meeting on 29 July, it was noted that Cllr Mollie Groom had been removed as a full member of the Committee, with Cllr Tony Trotman added as a full member.

43 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 June 2014 were presented.

Resolved:

To APPROVE as a true and correct record and sign the minutes.

44 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

45 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman drew the Committee's attention to a public consultation ending on 29 September which proposed that free bus passes would only be valid from

either 9am or 9.30am Monday to Friday and all day at weekends. It could be possible that exemptions would be made for those in rural areas. The full details could be found on the Council's consultation page.

The Committee was made aware that a motion was brought to Council in July, asking that a 'One Card for Wiltshire' would be developed to enable a resident to use a single payment card to pay for both public transport and car parking across the county. Additionally, the possibility of adding the ability to pay for other Council services should be investigated. The item was referred to the Leader of the Council for consideration and to decide on any future action. The Chairman had requested that any report on the development on this system could come through the Committee as he believed it would be of interest to members. The Chairman added he was waiting for a response from the Leader and would update the Committee on her decision.

The Chairman advised the Committee that Senior Scrutiny Officer, Maggie McDonald would be leaving her position and expressed his thanks on behalf of the Committee for her hard work. Emma Dove was congratulated on her new position, taking over Maggie's role.

46 **Public Participation**

The rules on public participation were noted. There was no public participation.

47 **Highways and Streetscene Contract BBLP - Report on Annual Performance**

At the meeting of the Committee in April 2014, it was agreed that the Highways and Streetscene Rapid Scrutiny group should form a Task Group to undertake a review into the performance of the first full year of operation of the Highways and Streetscene Contract.

Prior to the end of the first year's operation, a number of issues were raised in relation to the grass cutting element of the contract. It was agreed that the issues around grass cutting would be raised within the meeting to review the first year's performance of the Highways and Streetscene contract.

Cllr Jeff Osborn, Chairman of the Task Group, introduced the report which addressed both the review of annual performance and the issues around grass cutting.

Thanks were given to members who served on the Task Group and officers who had assisted in its work. Attention was brought to the action points drawn from the service review and it was noted a response would be provided to the Committee at its meeting in October. It was advised that Hereford Council had experienced similar problems with BLLP demonstrating was it not unique to Wiltshire, however, whilst there had been public concern over grass cutting in Wiltshire, a vast improvement had been made. Focus was brought to

paragraphs 9, 11, 13, 14 in the report and that particularly the Atkins contract would be reviewed by the Task Group in the future and the need for BBLP to employ agency staff with local knowledge. The Councillor further explained 6 apprenticeships promised were in the process of being organised and would be pursued. A 'user-friendly' guide to key clauses of the contract was also stated to still be required.

The point was made that, with extra finance to invest in highways, BBLP would be able to improve roads in the county. The BBLP response to the winter floods was praised and it was emphasised that under current economic conditions it was essential the contract was delivered. Cllr Osborne explained the Council was still waiting on an audit for this contract. To conclude, the report recommendations were explained and questions and comments from the Committee were invited.

The Committee discussed the need for the contract to be fully audited, and it was stated that this had been scheduled by Internal Audit, although it had not yet been received by the Audit Committee.

BBLP was commended on its cooperation during the flooding period and the importance of the local knowledge of agency staff when dealing with flooding was reiterated. Problems with Atkins' work on the A30 were discussed with confirmation these had been taken up with its management, and the Task Group was encouraged to continue to investigate such issues. Positive and negative experiences of the MyWiltshire application were expressed.

Resolved:

To endorse the following recommendations:

- **Task Group to continue its work by monitoring the performance of certain elements of the contract throughout the year and reviewing the next Annual Report.**
- **The Task Group to meet in 2/3 months time to consider the actions/progress against the 29 action points, as well as the Year 2 plans for BBLP and Atkins, and report on these to the Environment Select Committee on 28 October 2014.**
- **For the Task Group to maintain regular contact with the Cabinet Member, Portfolio holder, officers and BBLP between meetings so that they are quickly informed of any slippage in performance.**
- **For the Task Group to give due attention to better understand and evaluate Atkins' activities.**
- **To give consideration to adding high risk contracts to the Council's Risk Register. The Committee delegated this task to the Cabinet.**

48 **To refer the report to the relevant Cabinet members for response.**
Climate Local Initiative Briefing

At its meeting on 16 September, Cabinet would be recommended to sign up to Climate Local and publish the action plan on the Council's website. In advance of Cabinet, the Committee received a briefing from Ariane Crampton, Head of Service – Account Management, and Clare Langdon, Green Economy Manager, on the Climate Local Initiative and an update on the Council's activity on climate change.

The Head of Service presented the report, drawing attention to paragraph 8 which detailed the significant achievements the Council had made, including 661 planning applications for renewable technologies and engaging over thirty schools in programmes to reduce their carbon emissions.

The Committee then discussed the report and, in response to queries, it was confirmed that, if deemed appropriate, new Campus buildings would use renewable energy sources but that at present there were no confirmed plans to roll out energy saving schemes into Council housing. The officer suggested a lack of certainty over longevity of Council involvement with certain buildings would explain the lack of projects in the Calne area. Concerns were raised around a lack of households to engage with the Green Deal. The impact of transport emissions were considered and the Committee was advised that the mapping of the charging points for electric cars, would be carried out, and that currently the Council paid for these points. High carbon emissions detailed in paragraph 13 of the report were noted as due to the lack of public transport across the county. It was also raised that targetting green projects at leisure centres could be an efficient low-carbon investment.

Resolved:

To note the report and recommend the Cabinet to sign up to the Climate Local Initiative.

The Committee adjourned at 11:05 due to a fire alarm.

The Committee reconvened at 11:22.

49 **Wiltshire Council Post Incident Report - Learning from the Emergency Response to Flooding**

In April 2014 the Committee was updated on progress of the comprehensive review of the Flood Plan. The Committee supported and noted the update, it was agreed that the Committee would receive the findings of a review carried out in light of this year's extreme weather period.

The Committee now received the Council's response to the flood events that took place between December 2013 and March 2014. The report informed the

overall review of the Flood Plan on the emergency planning aspects of dealing with flooding during and after the event. The Chairman expressed disappointment that a full review of the Flood Plan was not available and sought reassurance the report would be available for the October meeting. Cllr Jonathon Seed advised that the review would likely come after the October meeting.

Cllr Jonathon Seed presented the report which explained the nature of flooding made it difficult to eradicate, the problem was multifaceted and there was a need for greater householder involvement in reducing flooding. The report also highlighted the efficient response of Wiltshire Council to the winter flooding and the ambition to improve resilience to flooding. Key lessons learnt included: the need for a coordinated responses and better targeting of flood relief funding, and most importantly there had been a good response to encouraging communities to manage flooding themselves, for instance stockpiling sandbags.

The Committee was invited to ask questions and comment.

During the discussion Cllr Mike Hewitt spoke on behalf of the Southern Flood Defence Committee and identified the local Flood Warden as key to reducing flooding in their area. Fallen trees in rivers was considered a catalyst for local flooding and the need for local dialogue and partnership surrounding their removal was stressed. The Committee was advised that the Corporate Director, Dr Carlton Brand, would meet with Salisbury City Council the next day to discuss partnership working. It was confirmed only 15% of those effected by flooding took the £5,000 compensation available to help improve their resilience, possibly due to insurance concerns. Concern was raised over the lack of flood plans in place in the local councils and it was agreed they should be aware of what they can do to ease flooding.

Resolved:

To note the report and its actions to reduce flood risk and support plans for improving the Council's ability to response to future emergencies.

To distribute data on the number of local flood plans to town and parish councils, encourage them to create one and advise them of funding available to assist them.

50 **Forward Work Programme**

Resolved:

To note the Forward Work Programme

The Committee received an update on meetings with the Executive:

The meeting with Cllr Fleur de Rhé-Philippe, Cabinet member for Economic Development, Skills and Strategic Transport, planned for 26 August had been postponed due to the level of activity in her portfolio, this would ensure the accuracy and relevance of information provided at the future meeting.

A meeting would take place on 2 September with Cllr Toby Sturgis, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Development Management, Strategic Housing, Property, Waste, and Cllr John Thomson, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Highways and Streetscene and Broadband, on 9th September. Cllrs would report back to the Committee following the meetings to agree topics for the Forward Work Programme.

Resolved:

To note the update.

The Committee considered major contracts.

Resolved:

To review the major contracts lists annually.

The Committee considered a piece of work on Investing in Highways.

Resolved:

To endorse removal from the Forward Work Programme

51 **Task Group Update**

Written updates on Task Group activity were included in the Agenda pack.

It was anticipated that the Waste Task Group would be asked to undertake further work following the meeting with the Cabinet member that afternoon, which would be brought to the Committee for approval at the next meeting.

The Committee noted disappointment it was not made aware of the Green Waste consultation.

The Corporate Director, Dr Carlton Brand, advised the Committee that on 30 September 2014 there would be one further day of consultation on the Core Strategy and it could be expected to be approved a few weeks later.

The Chairman of the CIL Task Group requested that, while the Core Strategy was undergoing examination, the Task Group would reconvene as necessary.

Resolved:

To reconvene the CIL Task Group to consider:

a) The way the Council is going to access and record monies gained from CIL;

b) The possible distribution of monies to towns and parishes with and without established neighbourhood plans.

52 Urgent Items

An enquiry was raised over the progress on whether the Gypsy and Traveller plan should be considered at the Committee.

53 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 28 October 2014.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 12.23 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Libby Beale, of Democratic Services, direct line 01225 718214, e-mail elizabeth.beale@wiltshire.gov.uk

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