

ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 17 FEBRUARY 2015 AT KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Brian Dalton, Cllr Tony Deane (Substitute), Cllr Dennis Drewett, Cllr Peter Edge (Chairman), Cllr Jose Green, Cllr Jacqui Lay, Cllr Magnus Macdonald, Cllr Ian McLennan, Cllr Christopher Newbury, Cllr Linda Packard, Cllr Tony Trotman and Cllr Bridget Wayman (Vice Chairman)

Also Present:

Cllr Simon Killane, Cllr Mark Packard, Cllr Toby Sturgis, Cllr John Thomson, Cllr Philip Whitehead and Cllr Jerry Wickham

1 **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr James Sheppard and Cllr Peter Evans who was substituted by Cllr Tony Deane.

2 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

Resolved:

To confirm as a true and correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 2014.

3 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

4 **Chairman's Announcements**

Attention was drawn to the written announcements in the agenda pack.

The Chairman highlighted key points from the update on flood preparations across the county and requested details of community areas which had attended Community Resilience Workshops and the timescales for supporting areas to develop Emergency Plans to be circulated to Members.

An update was provided on the Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document which was currently in the evidence gathering and informal consultation stage.

It was noted the Chairman and Vice- Chairman of Scrutiny Committees and the Chairman of Task Groups were expected to attend relevant Cabinet meetings. Other members of the Committee may be called upon to attend Cabinet when necessary.

5 Public Participation

There was no public participation.

6 Car Parking Review

6a Highways and Transport- Car Parking Strategy report

From 27 October 2014 to 19 January 2015 the Council had consulted on a draft revised Wiltshire Local Transport Plan (LTP) Car Parking Strategy. A sample of the initial results of the consultation was contained in the report available to the Committee. Using the consultation feedback, a set of recommended charges for each settlement was being developed to be proposed to Cabinet. It was explained that a review of car parking strategy was required every five years to assess if it met needs in Wiltshire.

Matthew Croston, Project Officer, provided an overview of the consultation process which involved workshops, review trials, assets reviews and questionnaires, receiving over 5,000 responses. Richard Mortimer, Parking Services Manager, advised review trials had triggered increased use of those car parks involved in the trials and, through assets reviews, twenty car parks in county had been identified as a drain on resources. One possibility for car park management would be for communities to take on the car parks themselves. 'Free parking' was a popular alternative, dialogue with the public and parish/town councils to discuss how it could be delivered financially would begin in March 2015.

Cllr Mark Packard, the Chairman of the Car Parking Review Task Group, expressed confidence in the review. The Task Group considered experimentation in car parking charges necessary, in addition to expanding the ability to pay for parking by phone. The Committee recommended mobile phone applications should be made increasingly user friendly to assist those hesitant to use this technology.

The Committee agreed dialogue with the community was needed to organise the funding of free parking. On-street parking was highlighted as a

continuing issue and it was noted that enforcement against illegal parking was a Police matter. Members expressed satisfaction with the review process and considered the reasons for varying levels of response across the different community areas. The Committee recommended graphs in the report be alphabetized for ease of comparison by Cabinet Members.

The Committee reflected on the effect that co-joined leases had on the Council's ability to charge for car parking and commented this was an important consideration. Division members from the Salisbury area requested to be involved in examination of Salisbury's Park and Ride scheme and expressed support for engaging with train companies and for the development of a metro line for the city. Officers confirmed there would be a strategy to manage transport demands in Salisbury however this was a separate piece of work. Members agreed that parking charges should not be increased to a high level to deter use of the car and some Members considered whether all areas in Wiltshire should be subject to the same charges and whether the reductions in charges would go far enough. Councillors described the benefits pay-on-exit parking could bring and were advised this would be in place in new multi-storey car parks. It was agreed that where free parking was in place in towns it should be promoted to encourage visitors. The Committee was advised that information on all car parks and permits would be in the full report for Cabinet and details of revenue from parking penalties was available on the Wiltshire Council website.

Resolved:

To note the initial results of the public consultation and express satisfaction in the review.

To endorse the proposed approach to revising the Wiltshire LTP Car Parking Strategy with the following key comments:

- **Smart technology should be promoted to pay for car parking and should be made increasingly user-friendly;**
- **Where there were options for hour/s of free parking this needed to be backed at a local level and promoted.**
- **The effect of co-joined leases of car parks should be investigated.**

6b Car Parking Review Task Group report

A report from the Car Parking Review Task Group was available to the Committee which set out the Task Group's position having considered the

consultation responses received and the proposals made as to amending the current car parking strategy.

The Committee considered the report and it was acknowledged that the recommendation to promote pay by phone systems may not have been compatible with providing alternative methods for those unable to use the technology.

Resolved:

To endorse the following recommendations:

- 1. That the use of automated pay by phone systems be made more attractive by ensuring the same charges are levied irrespective of the method of payment; for example they should be no surcharge on payments made using the automated phone service.**
- 2. Increased pressure should be levied on mobile phone companies to ensure that better mobile phone signals are achieved across the County's car parking areas.**
- 3. That the use of smart card technology be investigated.**
- 4. Additional consideration should be made as to educating members of the public who do not have the skills to use cashless technologies and ensure that alternative provisions are made for where this is not possible with due care and attention.**
- 5. That Council officers should continue their efforts to maximize use of Car Parks when they are less well used. This would be by means of cheaper or free periods when revenue has been proven not to be affected. Consultation responses were keen to encourage this sort of experimentation.**
- 6. The current Park & Ride scheme in Salisbury should encourage out of town city workers to use this service with a more attractive offering.**
- 7. The Council should be prepared to enter into discussions with Shopping Centre owners (in addition to Town and Parish Councils) to take over Council Car Parks.**
- 8. The issues of coach parking and residential parking provision need to be considered as part of an overall parking management strategy.**
- 9. That towns and parishes are actively given the opportunity to take on assets or top-up funding to enable reduced charges; and that they are properly supported in making any such decision through the provision of real and accurate information.**

7 **The Wiltshire Core Strategy**

Alistair Cunningham, Associate Director for Economy and Planning, advised on the development of Neighbourhood Plans across Wiltshire, the Wiltshire Core Strategy and future Scrutiny involvement in developing the Strategy.

Development Plan Documents (DPDs) would be used to find sites for an additional 5,000 homes, ensure a five year land supply and defend against inappropriate development in the county. It was confirmed the current settlement boundaries were effective, but were in the process of being updated. Consultation on the boundaries would run from 23 February- 31 March 2015. Chippenham DPD was being revisited and, provided no fundamental concerns were raised, would go directly to Council following consultation with Cabinet members. Proposals for Gypsy Site Allocations were expected to be developed by May 2015.

It was established that groups organising Neighbourhood Plans would be supported by officers, however some areas would be sufficiently protected by the Core Strategy therefore may not warrant a Neighbourhood Plan. It was suggested the Committee could contribute to the overview and scrutiny of the neighbourhood planning process following the adoption of the first Neighbourhood Plan, by examining how the process had been supported.

The Committee thanked Alistair Cunningham and his team for their hard work in delivering the Core Strategy. Questions were raised over the meaning of a reference to the provision of 'at least 42,000' new homes under DPD site allocations. The officer confirmed the authority had a duty to provide at least that number but this phrasing allowed flexibility to permit sustainable development where supported locally. The officer proposed that from May 2015 the Committee could examine the methodology behind allocating sites for development. It was verified that Members would be contacted for feedback in relation to site allocations in their division, and Councillors agreed local residents should also be involved. Councillors discussed that in some areas of the county it was difficult to allocate sites for new developments.

Cllr Trotman thanked Mr Cunningham for his attendance at Calne Area Board and questioned the progress of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). A consultation on the levying of CIL was expected at the end of February, followed by the Inspector's response in early March. A recommendation to Council was expected for May 2015.

Mr Cunningham apologised for a clash between a meeting for local stakeholders on the Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations DPD and Southern Area Planning Committee, he would make every effort to arrange a new meeting to discuss sites in the south of the county. It was confirmed that 'saved policies' were included in the Core Strategy and the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) was a constantly updated document.

Resolved:

- 1) To note the update from the Associate Director for Economy and Planning**
- 2) To agree that a Task Group be established, in the future, on the Wiltshire Core Strategy with the potential remit to examine the process supporting Neighborhood Plans.**

8 Executive Member responses

The Committee heard a response from Cllr John Thomson to recommendations endorsed by the Committee at its last meeting on 9 December 2014 following a report from the 20mph Policy Task Group. It was noted a report on 20mph policy outside of schools would be available to the Committee in due course.

The Committee received a response from Cllr Toby Sturgis to recommendations endorsed by the Committee at its last meeting following a report from the Adoptable Estates Task Group. It was confirmed a review of adoptable estates would be organized once the Task Group evidence and further evidence had been submitted and reviewed.

Resolved:

To note the Executive Member responses.

9 Task Group Update

A written update on the Waste Task Group and the Highways and Streetscene (BBLP) Task Group were available in the agenda pack.

The Waste Task Group would next meet on 2 March 2015 and it was suggested the Task Group could progress to examine the £2.5m overspend in the Waste service.

Dr Carlton Brand, Corporate Director, expressed support for the BBLP Task Group to examine community services before the grass cutting season began. Members expressed disappointment in BBLP issues remaining and were encouraged to report them; the Chairman advised an investigation into BBLP processes to explore why work was not being undertaken would be prioritized in the Task Group's Forward Work Programme. Members would receive confirmation of the details of the next meeting of the BBLP Task Group.

Resolved:

- 1) To note the updates from the Task Groups.
- 2) To agree that a revised remit for the existing Waste Task Group be scoped to allow examination of the Waste overspend.

10 **Forward Work Programme**

It was confirmed that 'Community Transport' had been agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee as a joint topic of work for all select committees.

Resolved:

To note the progress of items on the Forward Work Programme.

11 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

12 **Date of Next Meeting**

The next ordinary of the Committee would be held on 14 April 2015.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 1.10 pm)

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

Press enquiries to Communications, direct line (01225) 713114/713115

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