

ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 14 APRIL 2015 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 Jacqui Lay, Cllr Magnus Macdonald, Cllr Linda Packard, Cllr Tony Trotman and Cllr Bridget Wayman (Vice Chairman)

Also Present:

Cllr Simon Killane, Cllr Jeff Osborn and Cllr Philip Whitehead

13 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Ian McLennan and Cllr Christopher Newbury.

14 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Resolved:

To confirm as a true and correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 17 February 2015.

15 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

16 Chairman's Announcements

One Card for Transport in Wiltshire

The Chairman updated that following a number of meetings since the 'One Card for Wiltshire' was raised at Full Council in July 2014 the Council needed to do further work to scope its requirement for One Card and this project had been incorporated into the wider Efficient Payments programme. The Committee was advised that a mobile phone application for payments would be trialled and then rolled out.

Community Resilience

Before 2014, community resilience had been undertaken by different teams in an uncoordinated way, a new approach was trialled in 2014/15, with multi-agency workshops delivered to the Parish and Town councils by Community Area Boards. The Committee was updated on community areas which had attended resilience workshops and the timelines for emergency planning by a written update available in the agenda pack.

Energy Resilience Plan and Energy Resilience Board

The Council was currently developing an Energy Resilience Plan (ERP) for the county which set out its approach to maximizing energy resilience. Part of the development of the plan was an engagement programme with communities and local businesses through the Area Boards. A report was to be taken to Cabinet on 21 April 2015 to report on progress in engaging with public and private sector partners to determine the viability of establishing a Wiltshire Energy Resilience Board.

Littering issues reported to Committee

In March 2015, a letter from a member of the public was sent for the attention of the Committee in relation to the state of littering on the A303 near Amesbury. A response was sent which explained that roads of over 50mph were planned to be litter picked by the end of June 2015.

The Committee noted that Cllr Liz Bryant was no longer a substitute member of the Committee.

The Committee welcomed Marie Gondlach as the new Senior Scrutiny Officer to support the Committee.

17 **Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

18 **Draft Highways Asset Management Policy and Strategy**

Parvis Khansari, Associate Director for Highways and Transport, introduced the report which included an update on the involvement of Area Boards in the road resurfacing programme and the draft Highways Asset Management Policy and Strategy for contributions by the Committee. The Chairman highlighted the recommendations in the report and invited the Committee to discuss.

During the debate, it was suggested that Area Boards should receive the costings for proposed road resurfacing. Officers confirmed that, since there were different road conditions in each area, no specific budget was set for each community area. Area Boards were currently asked to prioritise road resurfacing in their area, subsequently funding was allocated from the £21m per year

central budget. Members commented that the Committee should monitor prioritising to assess whether low-priority routes did eventually get resurfaced. It was commented that there was sometimes confusion over the level of damage that warranted road resurfacing and the Cabinet member agreed to produce a guide for Councillors to assist them. Councillors were encouraged to liaise with officers in advance of priorities being received by Area Boards if they felt particular routes should be included.

It was confirmed that skid resistant treatment was difficult to maintain on road bends and these locations were a priority. However, the long-term solution was to invest in high-quality road surfaces. It was noted that the current Salisbury UTC/SCOOT system needed a new communication system and this was being researched. It was highlighted that some small CATG projects had been delayed, the Cabinet member confirmed that Councillors should contact him if they were experiencing undue delays. During discussion on the maintenance of lighting columns, Peter Binley, Head of Highways Asset Management and Commissioning confirmed that trials of light switch-offs had worked well and this would be rolled-out across the county to save energy. New lighting columns were to be phased in, they would be computer controlled and automatically report when they were not working.

Members suggested that, on rural roads, the state of verges was of concern, this issue would be considered for inclusion in the Strategy. Small residential roads were generally a low priority for maintenance; however the Committee was reminded that Area Boards could prioritise these if necessary.

Officers acknowledged that increased investment in road maintenance would stretch resource nationally as a skilled workforce was required. The Committee agreed that significant improvement of the Highways network had already begun and officers advised that potholes were being filled as a short-term solution. Members stressed that footways and cycle-ways should be maintained and Area Board members should be proactive to ensure this. It was questioned whether the drainage of roads was part of the maintenance programme and officers explained that drainage data was being collected to help the Council more to be more intelligent in this area.

The Committee noted that the report would be presented to Cabinet on 19 May 2015 and the Chairman invited representatives from the Committee to attend.

Resolved:

To endorse the following recommendations:

- (i) The good progress on implementing the first year of the 'Local Highways Investment Fund 2014 – 2020' is noted, and the involvement of the Area Boards in identifying local priorities is welcomed.**

- (ii) The Wiltshire Asset Management Policy and Strategy should be adopted to help guide the delivery of asset management principles with regard to highway infrastructure.**
- (iii) Authority should be delegated to Philip Whitehead, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport and Parvis Khansari, Associate Director for Highways and Transport to approve revisions of the Highways Asset Management Policy and Strategy and the emerging detailed plans**

19 **Recyclable Waste**

19a Waste Task Group Final Report

On 28 October 2014 the Environment Select Committee agreed that Communications to householders regarding waste and recycling was a work priority and resolved to reconvene the Waste Task Group to review this area. The Waste Task Group met on four occasions and, following an update in February, the Task Group presented its final recommendations to the Committee.

Cllr Jose Green, the Chairman of the Waste Task Group, thanked Tracy Carter and other officers who had supported the work of the task group. The Councillors introduced the recommendations in the report and highlighted that the task group felt that the recommendation to investigate decals applied to bins was particularly important.

The Committee was invited to comment and key points included that change to the opening hours of Household Recycling Centres should be widely communicated and pictorial information to explain recycling was more effective. The Committee was advised that examination of the waste overspend would be conducted by the Financial Planning Task Group and would likely commence in the summer.

Tracy Carter updated that currently 29% of households expected to sign up for the removal of garden waste had done so following a letter sent out, a follow-up leaflet would go out to those who hadn't responded. It was confirmed that, in the future, the public would be able to pay for the service by direct debit. Those who had not opted to pay were expected to home-compost or take waste to recycling centres. The hours of the recycling centres were being reduced however they would be open at peak times and one would be open each day of the week in each community area.

It was suggested that the task group continue to examine the impact of changes. The Chairman advised this would continue on the Forward Work Programme however this would not be under the current remit of the task group.

Resolved:

To endorse the following recommendations and refer the report to the Cabinet member for response at the next meeting:

That the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Development Management, Strategic Housing, Property and Waste;

- 1) Alongside the environmental benefits, considers promoting the financial benefits of reducing, reusing and recycling in council communications about waste and recycling.**
- 2) Considers illustrating Wiltshire's recycling performance in an engaging graphic form on the council website and at HRCs.**
- 3) In terms of kerbside collections, indicates how the following areas will be addressed:**
 - Ensuring clarity around which plastics are recyclable and can be placed in the blue-lidded bins to avoid contamination;**
 - Ensuring clarity around what recyclables can be placed in the black box;**
 - Promotion of the council's offer of a second blue-lidded bin and black box at no additional charge to residents;**
 - Early information that plastics other than bottles will be kerbside recycled from 2017 as part of new waste contract.**
- 4) Investigates whether decals (stickers) applied to bins are a cost-effective method of communicating waste collection arrangements and good recycling practices.**
- 5) Indicates how changes to garden waste collection arrangements will be:**
 - Effectively communicated to residents; and**
 - Used as an opportunity to provide information about alternative options for garden waste, for example, good garden practice, composting, household recycling centres and the safe and legal use of bonfires.**
- 6) Considers increasing communications around successful prosecutions for fly-tipping.**
- 7) Indicates how changes to HRC opening hours, their locations and opening hours will be widely communicated to avoid:**
 - inconveniencing customers;**
 - reducing overall recycling rates; and**
 - increasing incidences of fly-tipping.**
- 8) Provides further details of the recycling promotion work currently undertaken by Wiltshire Wildlife Trust under the joint venture agreement with the council and the implications for recycling of the Trust's business plan review.**
- 9) Provides any further details of the initiative being run by**

Westbury Area Board to develop a toolkit for recycling and composting and how other area boards might be supported to take forward similar initiatives and increase local recycling rates.
10)Notes the task group's comments on the waste and recycling pages of the council website and the improvements being made in the redesign.

20 Recycling Performance

An update was provided to the Committee on the latest performance figures for recycling in advance of a report to Committee examining the implication of the new waste contracts for recycling services and performance at a future meeting.

Tracy Carter advised that the update was a snapshot of performance up to January 2014 and that an annual review would be reported in June 2015. It was noted that a fall in composting was expected in 2015 due to weather conditions.

Resolved:

To note the update.

21 Task Group Updates

Car Parking Review Task Group

The Chairman drew attention to the written update available in the agenda pack. It was noted that the Task Group would now wrap up.

BBLP Task Group

The Chairman drew attention to the written update in the agenda pack. A key point was that BBLP had entirely outsourced the grass cutting service to The Landscape Group for this season. Cllr Jeff Osborne, the Chairman of the Task Group commented that since this decision improvement had been made in grass cutting. The Task Group was now preparing to monitor the contract overall.

Resolved:

To note the updates.

22 Forward Work Programme

The Chairman advised he had met with Georgina Clampitt-Dix, Head of Service for Place Shaping, and agreed that further discussions as to scrutiny involvement in monitoring the implementation of the Core Strategy and the

Neighborhood Planning Scheme would be had at a later date. It was noted that a Councillor's Briefing Note has recently been submitted on the Core Strategy (No. 233).

Public Transport review

Parvis Khansari, explained the Council was now reviewing public transport across the county. Matthew Croston, Programme Officer, gave a presentation outlining the scope and timetable for the review to date including effective scrutiny engagement. The review would be in five phases, commencing in April 2015 and relying on data collected and extensive consultation involving Area Boards. It was suggested that a Task Group be established and a member of this would also join the project board and the team at key meetings.

During discussions it was agreed that a clear list be produced to highlight services that the Council currently subsidises. Some members suggested that the Scrutiny member of the project board be a Councillor from one of the rural communities in Wiltshire as public transport was particularly salient in these areas. Officers confirmed that it was intended to make £0.5 million in savings this year in public transport however the review would aim for a large reduction overall once examining all of the evidence and consulting with other relevant bodies. The Committee agreed that rural services should be protected and an integrated transport strategy be developed.

Resolved:

To endorse the following approach to scrutiny engagement in the review of Public Transport:

Initial scrutiny engagement to look more closely at the scope and approach to the review to be in the form of a rapid scrutiny exercise with participation from the Chair and Vice Chairs of all the Select Committees. From that point, the usual process of seeking expressions of interest from all non-executive councillors be undertaken in order to form the longer-term task group and potential scrutiny representative appointment to the Project Board.

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

23 **Urgent Items**
There were no urgent items.

24 **Date of Next Meeting**

The next ordinary of the Committee would be held on 9 June 2015.

(Duration of meeting: 10.35 am - 12.18 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