

Scrutiny Annual Report: April 2011 to March 2012

Select Committee: *Environment and Transportation Select Committee*

Report of Chairman: *Councillor Sharyn Wheale*

In-depth reviews undertaken / outcomes being monitored:

'Coordination and Regulation of all works on Hampshire County Council's Highways':

The Committee concluded a review which considered alternative methods of coordinating and regulating works on the highway, in order to minimise traffic disruption and improve the way in which such works are carried out.

The review group agreed that Hampshire County Council's current method of co-ordination had produced examples of good working, which had built on best practice and strong relationships with utility and internal contractors. However, the written evidence submitted to the review had highlighted areas where improvements can be made, particularly in ensuring that communication takes place between relevant stakeholders, and that there is parity of co-ordination and regulation applied to all of those undertaking works on the road. All of the recommendations made by the Committee were agreed by the Executive Member for Environment and Transport, and are now being monitored going into 2012/13.

Light-touch reviews undertaken / outcomes being monitored:

10:10 Campaign:

The Committee recommended that Hampshire County Council sign-up to the 10:10 campaign in 2010, following a real-time scrutiny of the outcomes that would need to be realised in order to reduce the County Council's overall carbon emissions by 10% in one year. Since this time the Committee has continued to monitor the Council's commitment to reducing its carbon emissions - pre-scrutinising the carbon management plan and the carbon reduction progress report. Members were pleased with the progress reported in 2011, with the Council and its staff having met and exceeded the 10% reduction target. Members will continue to monitor this area of the Council's work, scrutinising the energy strategy for Hampshire, as well as related topics such as the large scale solar photovoltaic cell programme, and electric car charging points.

Concessionary Fares:

Members have monitored the implementation of the Hampshire Concessionary Fares Scheme, since the Committee's initial pre-scrutiny of the proposals in November 2010. At this time, the Committee were satisfied that the Scheme suggested was fair and equitable, and met the needs of those with disabilities across the County, and this agreement was reiterated six months after the Scheme was introduced. The Committee will continue to monitor the scheme going into the future.

Pre-scrutiny of Significant Executive Decisions:

Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment:

Cabinet took a decision in November 2010 to commend the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment to the Committee for consideration, as part of its role holding flood risk management authorities to account through the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. As part of this role, the Committee invited District and Borough councils in Hampshire to make comment on the document. Written responses were received by both Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council and Rushmoor Borough Council, which went on to form some of the recommendations to the Executive Member from the Committee.

The Committee commended the Hampshire Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment to the Executive Member for Environment and Transport, with recommendations around flooding incident templates and the communications strategy for the Assessment. The Committee agreed that it would pre-scrutinise the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy in 2012.

Review of the Subsidised Bus Service:

The Committee contributed to, and conducted a pre-scrutiny of, the review of the subsidised bus service, which aimed to assess the existing subsidised bus services and the strategy for their support. The Committee scrutinised the outcomes of the consultation conducted as part of the review, as well as the proposed new routes to be operated in Hampshire. Members were assured that all withdrawn subsidised bus service routes would have a 'taxi-share' service in place, and that an engagement strategy had been written to help communicate the changes to members of the public.

The Committee agreed with the recommendations put to the Executive Member for Environment and Transport on changes to the subsidised bus service, and proposed to undertake a review of the 'taxi-share' service in 2012, following the introduction of five new routes in 2011.

Call-in of Significant Executive Decisions:

N/A

Scrutiny of Budgets and Performance:

Department Efficiencies – Economy, Transport and Environment:

The Select Committee received quarterly updates from the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment on the progress of the department efficiencies set out in the January 2011 budget, and the overall performance of the department throughout the financial year. Members were able to regularly monitor changes to the department's efficiency programme, leading up to the 2012/13 budget.

Revenue and Capital Budget 2012/13:

Members pre-scrutinised the revenue and capital budget for 2012/13 onwards at their January 2012 meeting. Following questions, Members agreed with the recommendations set out to the Executive Member for Environment and Transport in relation to both the revenue and capital budget.

Policy Review:

'Parking of Grass Verges, Footpaths and Pavements':

The Committee have formed a four-member working group who are tasked with exploring the current parking policy in relation to this issue. They are due to receive evidence from the department in relation to the current policy, the learning from other local authorities, and to give evidence on the problems that they have encountered within their own constituencies. The working group is due to report to the April 2012 formal Committee meeting.

Questioning and Exploring Areas of Interest and Concern:

- Carbon Management Plan
- Display Energy Certificates
- Minerals and Waste Plan
- Efficiencies, Innovations and Partnership Working (with Amey, the Highways Term Maintenance contractor)

Upcoming Topics:

- Review of the Taxi-share Service (Light-Touch Review)
- Local Flood Risk Strategy (Pre-Scrutiny and Statutory Scrutiny Responsibility)
- A Boards (Policy Review)
- Unadopted roads (Policy Review)
- Real-time scrutiny of the large scale solar photovoltaic cell programme (Questioning and Exploring)
- The future of Project Integra (Questioning and Exploring)
- A3 Zip Corridor Review (Questioning and Exploring)