

AT A MEETING of the ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORTATION SELECT COMMITTEE of the COUNTY COUNCIL held at The Castle, Winchester on Tuesday, 5 November 2013.

PRESENT

Chairman:

p Councillor Sharyn Wheale

Vice-Chairman:

p Councillor Geoff Hockley

Councillors:

p Graham Burgess

p Roger Huxstep

p Charles Choudhary

p Rupert Kyrle

p Shaun Cully

p Peter Latham

p Philip Fawkes

p Steve Rippon-Swaine

p Brian Gurden

p David Simpson

p Edward Heron

p Mark Staplehurst

Also in attendance:

Councillor Sean Woodward, Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment

Councillor Adam Carew, in relation to Minute 20

Councillor Jonathan Glen, Chairman of Policy & Resources Select Committee

13. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence were reported.

14. **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter considered at the meeting they must declare that interest at the time of the relevant debate and, having regard to the circumstances described in Part 3 Paragraph 1.5 of the County Council's Members' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 1.6 of the Code.

Furthermore Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Non-Pecuniary interest in a matter being considered at the meeting they considered whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 2 of the Code, considered whether it was appropriate to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with the Code.

15. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Environment & Transportation Select Committee held on 11 June 2013 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

16. **DEPUTATIONS**

A deputation was received from Mr David Budd regarding Item 6 on the agenda, specifically the County Council's policy in relation to implementing 20 mile per hour speed limit schemes. The deputation questioned the need for pilot schemes and called for 20mph limits to be implemented where there was evidence of strong community support.

17. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman reported that following the briefing to Select Committee Members in September on Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs), the Department had taken on board Members suggestion that Members be consulted on future options for HWRCs, and would be holding two Member workshops. It was anticipated that the feedback from these workshops would be reported to Select Committee Members, to support the Committee's scrutiny of the emerging proposals. It was intended that the Select Committee pre scrutinise the strategy for future HWRC service provision, prior to decision by the Executive Member for Economy Transport & Environment in Spring 2014.

18. **TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT POLICY & GUIDANCE**

The Committee received a report from the Director of Economy Transport & Environment on the draft Traffic Management Policy & Guidance document (Take in report, Item 6 in Minute Book). This was a new document designed to clarify the County Council's position on the use of traffic management measures. The Committee's views were being invited prior to the document being approved by the Executive Member for Economy Transport & Environment in early 2014. Members heard that a consultation had been held from 23 August to 6 October 2013 to invite comment on the document from the public and relevant interest groups.

The Chairman went through each traffic management policy and invited Members questions and comments:
Regarding TM2 Speed Limits;

- Members noted that there were costs to implementing 20mph schemes above the signage costs

e.g. staff time

- Nine pilot 20mph schemes were taking place including one rural location. These would be reviewed after the pilot period, which provided the opportunity to withdraw the schemes if they were not well supported following implementation

- Members commented that each area is different, and 20mph schemes would be suitable in some locations but not others, based on the views of the local community and practical issues

- The Department were holding a list of areas that have requested 20mph limits, but would not be taking action on these until the pilot schemes have been assessed

- National Guidance and Regulations on use of 20mph limits and zones had been changed to make it cheaper to implement such schemes (by reducing the requirements for physical speed reduction measures and traffic signs). The guidance makes suggestions regarding when such schemes could be used, however the Local Authority can choose whether to implement 20mph limits, it is not required to do so. The County Council had responded to this change by implementing the pilot schemes in order to assess the impact and community reception to 20mph limits.

Regarding TM3 Traffic signs and road markings;

- Some Members welcomed the opportunity to add signs for shops based in villages. However a number of Members also supported the policy to minimise sign clutter

Regarding TM5 Movement restrictions;

- Members commented on the benefits of bus lanes only applying at peak times, in order for other road users to make use of the space at other times of day. The policy allows for use of part time bus lanes, but all day restrictions are the default as they are simpler for drivers to understand and for the police to enforce

RESOLVED:

That the committee note the report, including the results from the consultation and the proposed amendments to the Traffic Management Policy and Guidance document.

RECOMMENDED:

The proposed Traffic Management Policy and Guidance document is commended for approval by the Executive Member for Economy Transport and Environment in January 2014, except the Speed Limit Policy, which the committee wish to review further at the January meeting.

Further information on the speed limits policy be provided to the January meeting of the Select Committee

19. **EFFICIENCY SAVINGS UPDATE**

The Committee received a verbal update from the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment regarding progress with meeting the planned savings for the department in the 2013/14 financial year.

Members heard:

- That the £1.4million savings for the Economy Transport & Environment Department would be met in full before the end of the financial year
- Savings had been achieved in various ways including: the safer roads partnership was now funded by income from charges for safe driving courses where it had previously been supported by the County Council, savings from co-locating contracted staff with highway staff at depots, savings on the street lighting contract and implementation of street lights that can be dimmed, and savings in the administration of concessionary fares as there was now one scheme across Hampshire where previously each District administered a scheme
- The next step was to plan for the savings required in the next financial year

RESOLVED:

That the Director be thanked for the update.

20. **FRACKING MOTION**

A motion made at County Council on 23 May 2013 was referred for consideration by this committee: 'in view of the potential environmental risks, this Council considers the controversial impact of fracking'. The Committee received a report from the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment to support their consideration of this topic, and a briefing note on the potential risks provided by the Scrutiny Officer (Take in report, Item 7 in Minute Book). Councillor Adam Carew, proposer of the motion, was in attendance and was invited to speak on the motion. He indicated that the motion had been put forward to reflect the concerns of the public regarding hydraulic fracturing ('fracking') to access shale gas.

Members heard:

- That while operators may have a licence covering an area of Hampshire, this gave exclusive rights to that area but no rights to drill – if operators wish to undertake shale gas extraction and associated fracking, planning permission would still be required from the Minerals Planning Authority (Hampshire County Council for land

within the administrative area of Hampshire excluding the National Parks), as well as other associated consents from other regulatory bodies

Members commented:

- Members noted that recovery of oil and gas through conventional methods also carried risks, and a number of Members commented that a possible energy source should not be ruled out, given current concerns about energy security and energy costs.
- A number of Members wished to see renewable energy pursued in preference to the extraction of shale gas.
- Members were concerned about the negative impacts experienced in the United States. However Members heard that the industry was much more closely regulated in the UK. As a result of the seismic activity experienced in the Blackpool area in 2011 associated with exploratory fracking activity, further safeguards are now required including real time monitoring. This means that if fracking causes a seismic event, this would be captured by the live data monitoring and this would lead to the activity being adjusted or halted if the impact exceeded acceptable levels.

The Chairman summed up the debate, noting that a number of Members initially had concerns about shale gas extraction and associated fracking, but after being briefed on the subject had been reassured that there were suitable and robust regulations in place to manage the risks, particularly the prospect of continuous monitoring of planning permissions, environmental permits and seismic activity. She noted that the evidence base about the effects of shale gas extraction and associated fracking would increase over time, and this would help inform future decisions. She noted that should there be planning applications for fracking in Hampshire in future, the County Council would have the opportunity to put requirements in place to mitigate the impact through the Regulatory Committee and any planning permissions granted.

The recommendation set out below was put to the vote and carried, with Councillor Kyrle wishing to have it recorded that he voted against:

RECOMMENDED:

That the following be reported to County Council:

(a) Having considered the executive summary of the independent review into major risks, and carefully reviewed the national and the local position, the

The recommendations of the Committee be reported to the next available County Council

Committee conclude that no further County Council action is required at this stage.

(b) The Committee is satisfied that rigorous regulations and controls are in place to manage the potential risks from shale gas extraction and associated fracking, and that the County Council now has an up to date planning policy framework in place (through the adopted Hampshire Minerals & Waste Plan).

(c) However, the Committee also recognise that the potential for shale gas extraction is still at an early stage in the UK and therefore the regulatory framework and Government guidance need to be kept under review.

(d) The Committee supports the development of guidelines by the UK's health and safety and environmental regulators that are specific to shale gas extraction, in order to help operators to carry out appropriate and robust goal based risk assessments according to the principle of reducing risks to As Low As Reasonably Practicable (as per recommendation 7 of the Royal Academy of Engineering Independent Review).

21. **CONTROL OF WEEDS ON THE HIGHWAY**

This item was deferred for consideration at a future meeting (report Item 9 in Minute Book).

22. **HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The Committee received a report from the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment setting out highway policy and procedures (Take in report, Item 8 in Minute Book). Members comments were invited prior to the document being considered by the Executive Member for Economy Transport & Environment in early 2014.

Members heard:

- That this is a high level policy document which does not provide detailed information regarding; levels of service, process and procedure. These documents are being developed and will provide, for example, details regarding frequencies of routine operations.

Following questions, Members heard:

- That drainage assets were in the process of being reviewed to improve mapping information. It was intended that this would support more efficient cleansing that was targeted

Members commented on the efficient response of highways staff to removing fallen trees from roads during the recent high winds. The committee wished to formally record their thanks to officers for their excellent response.

Thanks be passed on to relevant staff

RESOLVED:

That the Select Committee note the report, including the results from the consultation and the proposed amendments.

RECOMMENDED:

That the Select Committee endorse the proposed Highway Maintenance Management Plan policy document for approval by the Executive Member for Economy Transport and Environment in January 2014.

23. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chairman went through the Committee's forthcoming work programme (Item 11 in the Minute Book).

- Potential future area of interest (from the Chairman): sign clutter

RESOLVED:

That the Committee's work programme be approved subject to any amendments made at this meeting.

Work Programme be updated

Chairman, 21 January 2014