

AT A MEETING of the ECONOMY, TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT
SELECT COMMITTEE of the COUNTY COUNCIL held at The Castle,
Winchester on Thursday, 17 March 2016.

PRESENT

Chairman:
p Councillor Sharyn Wheale

Vice-Chairman:
p Councillor Geoff Hockley

Councillors:

p Graham Burgess	p Peter Latham
p Charles Choudhary	p Martin Lyon
p Brian Gurden	p Steve Rippon-Swaine
p Edward Heron	a Frank Rust
p Roger Huxstep	p David Simpson
a Rupert Kyrle	a Mark Staplehurst

Also in attendance: Cllr Sean Woodward, Executive Member for Economy
Transport & Environment

129. **BROADCASTING ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Chairman announced that the press and members of the public were permitted to film and broadcast the meeting. Those remaining at the meeting were consenting to being filmed and recorded, and to the possible use of those images and recording for broadcasting purposes.

130. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

It was noted that Cllr Mark Staplehurst had given his apologies. The UKIP substitute Member Cllr Tim Rolt attended in his place. Cllr Rupert Kyrle had also given apologies. The Liberal Democrat substitute member had been invited but did not attend. Cllr Frank Rust had also given his apologies (that day, so there had not been time to contact the Labour substitute Member).

131. **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 Personal interest in a matter being considered at the meeting they considered whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 4 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.

132. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Matters Arising: On Minute 126 regarding consultation on proposals affecting Household Waste Recycling Centres, it was announced that the public consultation had been launched earlier that week and was open for responses until 25 May.

133. **DEPUTATIONS**

No deputations were received at this meeting.

134. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman reported that a referral had been made to this Select Committee by County Council, following a request for a Member forum regarding oil and gas exploration in Hampshire. A statement was circulated indicating the proposed way forward, which was to provide a briefing on this topic at the member briefing scheduled for 26 April, at which Members could ask questions. Subsequent Member briefings would be provided if there were significant developments in oil and gas exploration in Hampshire.

135. **PRE-SCRUTINY: REVIEW OF NON-STATUTORY HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT SERVICES**

The Committee considered a report and presentation from the Director of Economy, Transport & Environment regarding proposals to review the subsidy for 'school special' bus services that convey non-entitled pupils to schools (see Item 6 in the Minute Book). The report was due to be considered at the Decision Day of the Executive Member for Economy Transport and Environment due to take place on 21 March 2016.

Members heard that:

- Home to School Transport is provided for children

travelling to a school where the journey is over 2 miles up to age 8, or over 3 miles after age 8

- The proposed changes would not affect provision for those entitled to Home to School Transport. The budget for entitled provision would be transferred to the Childrens Services budget

- It was proposed to withdraw the subsidy provided for non-entitled pupils, to achieve estimated savings of £450,000 per annum

- It was proposed to make the change from the new school year in September 2016

- All schools affected had been notified, and public consultation had been undertaken from 22 January to 19 February 2016, which had been promoted via leaflets handed out to those using the buses affected

- Responses to the consultation indicated the preference for the future of the services was for the County Council to liaise with the bus operators regarding retaining services on a commercial basis

Following questions Members heard:

- That of 26 schools served 18 responded to the consultation, 179 individuals responded, and 241 people signed a petition to 'save the Foxhills school bus service'

- Pupils using the buses already paid fares, however these did not cover the costs of providing the service therefore the subsidy currently covered the difference. The difference varied across the routes e.g. in some cases fares are 50p but the cost is £3 per passenger

Members commented:

- That the level of responses to the consultation was disappointing

- That as the Economy Transport and Environment Department had to make savings of £14million from a budget of £103million, some difficult and unpopular decisions were going to have to be made

- Some Members did not support the proposals as they did not agree with the policy to reduce public services

- That the Executive Member should bear in mind that the decision was being taken based on information which did not represent the views of all schools affected

- That the County Council should use it's influence to encourage the bus operators to retain services on a commercial basis

The following recommendations were proposed, seconded, and carried by majority vote.

RECOMMENDED:

That the Economy, Transport and Environment Select Committee support the recommendations being proposed to the Executive Member for Economy, Transport & Environment in section 5 (page 3) of the report.

Recommendations notified to Executive Member

With the following additions:

5.3 to add: based on the responses received to the consultation, which may not have represented all schools and parents affected

The Select Committee strongly support the County Council doing all it can to encourage bus operators to retain services.

136. **PRE-SCRUTINY: STREET LIGHTING DIMMING POLICY REVIEW**

The Committee considered a report from the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment regarding proposals for further dimming of street lighting on residential roads (see Item 7 in the Minute Book). The report was due to be considered at the Decision Day of the Executive Member for Economy Transport and Environment due to take place on 21 March 2016.

Members heard that:

- As part of the Shaping Hampshire Spending Review consultation undertaken in summer 2015, dimming street lighting was identified by the public as a preferable area to make savings
- Further consultation on options to make savings in street lighting was undertaken in November 2015. The preference from responses was to dim lights rather than turn them off completely, with support for up to a 20% reduction in power
- Previous decisions to dim street lighting meant that lighting levels were currently dimmed by 35% up to midnight, 60% from midnight to 5am, and by 35% from 5am to switch off
- It was proposed to reduce this further by dimming by 45%, 65% and 45% respectively, which would be a reduction of 10%, and achieve estimated savings of around £116,000
- Further work would be required to develop plans to extend dimming further

Following questions Members heard:

- That it would be possible to vary lighting output in particular areas on request, e.g. if a route for children

walking to school was felt to be too dark in the winter

- That the Police had not expressed any concerns regarding the impact on urban areas. The evidence did not suggest that crime and light levels were correlated

The following recommendation was agreed:

RECOMMENDED:

That the Economy, Transport and Environment Select Committee support the recommendations being proposed to the Executive Member for Economy, Transport & Environment in section 4 (page 3) of the report.

Recommendation notified to Executive Member

137. **PRE-SCRUTINY: FUTURE TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT POLICY**

The Committee received a report from the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment regarding proposals for a new policy regarding traffic management measures (see Item 8 in the Minute Book). The report was due to be considered at the Decision Day of the Executive Member for Economy Transport and Environment due to take place on 21 March 2016.

Members heard that:

- In order to make savings on the traffic management budget, it was proposed to change the policy to only implement traffic management measures where this was linked to casualty reduction
 - Responses to the spending review consultation in summer 2015 supported making savings by reducing work on traffic management schemes which are not safety led or legal requirements
 - Casualty data suggests there has been an increase in serious accidents on Hampshire roads, therefore it was planned to focus the limited resources available on locations where there was greatest scope to treat the causes of injury accidents
 - As part of the revised approach it was proposed to implement a moratorium on speed limit changes (unless part of a casualty reduction scheme). It was noted that a large number of speed limits had been changed in recent years following the village 30 project, residential 20 pilots, and the review of A and B road limits, therefore it was considered that speed limits were broadly set at appropriate levels
 - It was also proposed to introduce a moratorium on HGV environmental and width restrictions. Those already in progress would be implemented if they could be delivered by the end of March 2017
 - The revised policy would affect new

developments, and would impact on works undertaken by district and borough councils under agency agreements

- The proposals were anticipated to make savings of 40% in the County Council's spend on traffic management (£220,000), and 60% savings in spend through agency agreements (£400,000)

Following questions Members heard:

- That accident reduction was not only achieved through traffic management measures; enforcement by the police and education of drivers also played a part. With limited resources available, spend has to be prioritised
- The moratorium would be reviewed on an annual basis
- Infrastructure projects would still take place e.g. where required as a result of development

Members commented:

- That they were concerned about the moratorium on traffic management measures, for example where large housing developments contribute to volume of traffic
- Other Members were concerned that there are cases where local people are aware of dangerous stretches of road, but under this policy nothing would be done unless a serious accident occurred, limiting the opportunity to take pre-emptive action

The following recommendation was carried by majority vote, with Cllr Simpson requesting it be recorded that he voted against.

RECOMMENDED:

That the Economy, Transport and Environment Select Committee support the recommendations being proposed to the Executive Member for Economy, Transport & Environment in section 7 (pages 8 and 9) of the report.

Recommendation notified to Executive Member

RESOLVED:

That a Briefing on Traffic Management Measures and Road Safety be provided for Members of the Select Committee.

Briefing be arranged

138. **PRE-SCRUTINY: HIGHWAYS DEVELOPMENT CONTROL ARRANGEMENTS**

The Committee received a report from the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment regarding

proposals to achieve savings from the Highway Development Control service (see Item 9 in the Minute Book). The report was due to be considered at the Decision Day of the Executive Member for Economy Transport and Environment due to take place on 21 March 2016.

Members heard that:

- Agency Agreements were in place with eight of the district and borough councils to provide highway advice on planning applications on the County Council's behalf
- Annual expenditure on this service through agency agreements was around £735,000 and it was proposed to make savings of £300,000 from this budget
- It was proposed to standardise the advice provided for applications covering five dwellings or less
- It was proposed to enable district and borough councils to charge for pre-application advice
- The proposed changes would be implemented from April 2017

Following questions Members heard:

- That a planning authority could still seek specific advice in some cases if the standard advice didn't cover the situation
- While the average reduction required to departmental budgets was 14%, this could not be applied evenly across all service areas as some costs were tied up in contracts, therefore some budgets would see proposals for savings of greater magnitude

The following recommendation was agreed.

RECOMMENDED:

That the Economy, Transport and Environment Select Committee support the recommendations being proposed to the Executive Member for Economy, Transport & Environment in section 6 (page 4) of the report.

Recommendation notified to Executive Member

139. **PRE-SCRUTINY: PARISH LENGTHSMAN SCHEME FOR 2016/17**

The Committee considered a report from the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment regarding proposals to continue the Parish Lengthsman Scheme for 2016/17 (see Item 10 in the Minute Book). The report was due to be considered by the Executive Member for Economy Transport and Environment on 21 March 2016.

Members heard that:

- It was proposed to continue the Parish Lengthsman Scheme in 2016/17 at £1000 per parish plus a 10% administrative cost, and to enable new parishes to join the scheme if they formed or joined a cluster
- The scheme had received a contribution of £30,000 from the Culture Communities and Business Services Department as lengthsman could assist with maintenance of Rights of Way
- 99 parishes currently participated in the scheme, with 26 on a waiting list. The budget for 2016/17 could accommodate up to 130 parishes taking part
- The funding for the scheme was discretionary, and therefore would need to be further reviewed for the 2017/18 financial year
- The proposals reflected recommendations made by the Economy Transport and Environment Select Committee, following a Task & Finish Group which had considered the issue during 2015

Following questions Members heard:

- That Fleet Town Council received a larger sum (£3,000) to reflect the fact that there was significantly longer length of highways in that parish compared to the others (121,813m compared to 52,135m in the next largest)

Members commented:

- A Member suggested payments to parishes should either be proportional to the length of highway covered or a flat rate. Other Members suggested this issue could be considered for future years
- Members welcomed the proposal to retain the scheme, noting that it gave local areas the opportunity to spend on local priorities, to mitigate reductions being made by the County e.g. in grass cutting

The following recommendations were agreed:

RECOMMENDED:

That the Economy, Transport and Environment Select Committee support the recommendations being proposed to the Executive Member for Economy Transport and Environment in section 7 (pages 3 and 4) of the report.

Recommendation be passed to Executive Member

RESOLVED:

That the Select Committee Task and Finish Group be re-convened to consider the proposals for the Parish Lengthsman Scheme for next year (2017/18), to provide

Arrangements made for Task & Finish group to re-

their input prior to the Executive Member's decision.

convene

140. **UPDATE: EMERGENCY AND URGENT UTILITY WORKS**

The Committee considered a report from the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment providing an update on immediate works undertaken by utility companies on the highway (see Item 11 in the Minute Book).

Members heard that:

- In January 2015 the Select Committee had considered urgent and emergency works on the highway undertaken by utility companies, following referral of a motion to Full Council by Cllr Simpson
- Two water companies had been identified to have particularly high levels of immediate works, and the Chairman and Cllr Simpson met with them in April 2015
- It had been determined that not all utility companies use the powers available to them to the fullest extent, choosing to undertake minor leaks as planned rather than urgent works
- South East Water had taken this approach on board, which had reduced their levels of immediate works from 70% to 50% during 2015, and it was anticipated levels would come down further during 2016
- Thames Water had not responded to requests to adopt this approach, and consequently their levels of immediate works remained high at 60% during 2015

The following recommendations were agreed:

RECOMMENDED:

To welcome the changes made by South East Water, which have resulted in a 20% reduction in the number of urgent works on the highway they have undertaken. That the Chairman of the Select Committee write to South East Water to thank them for responding to the County Council's request on this matter.

Chairman write to South East Water

To express disappointment that Thames Water's levels of urgent works remain the same, and to request Thames Water attend a future meeting of the Select Committee to explain why they are unable to adopt the practices used by the other water companies to reduce levels of urgent works affecting the highway.

Chairman write to Thames Water

141. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chairman presented the Committee's forthcoming work programme (Item 12 in the Minute Book).

The Chairman proposed that following the briefing on road safety requested under the Traffic Management item, consideration be given to the opportunity for a task and finish group to be established on road safety.

Work Programme
be updated

RESOLVED:

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

Chairman, 30 June 2016