

AT A MEETING of the ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORTATION SELECT COMMITTEE of the COUNTY COUNCIL held at The Castle, Winchester on Tuesday, 8 November 2011.

PRESENT

Chairman:

p Councillor Sharyn Wheale

Vice-Chairman:

p Councillor Geoff Hockley

Councillors:

p Ian Beagley

p Rupert Kyrle

p Adam Carew

p Steve Rippon-Swaine

p Vaughan Clarke

a Elaine Still

p Mark Cooper

p Marilyn Tucker

p Edward Heron

p Alan Weeks

Councillor Mel Kendal, Executive Member for Environment and Transport, and Councillor Ann Buckley were also in attendance.

88. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor Elaine Still.

89. **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Members were mindful that, where they believed they had a personal or personal prejudicial interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting, they should normally at the time of the debate declare their interest, and having regard to the circumstances described in paragraphs 9, 10, 11 and 12 of the County Council's Code of Conduct, consider whether to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 12 of the Code.

Councillor Alan Weeks declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in Item 5, as he is Chair of the 'Friends of Minstead Study Centre', who have been involved in the solar photovoltaic cells programme.

Councillor Edward Heron declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in Item 11, as he is Vice Chairman of Project Integra, which was mentioned in discussions.

90. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Committee held on 20 July 2011 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the

Chairman.

91. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The dates for the 2012/13 meetings of the Environment and Transportation Select Committee had been agreed and forwarded to all Members.

92. **CARBON REDUCTION PROGRESS REPORT**

The Select Committee received an update on the progress of carbon reduction plans and successes under the 10:10 campaign. The Committee received this from the Director for Culture, Communities and Business Services. Members heard:
(Take in report)

- That the report records the successes at the end of year one of what will be a five-year plan.
- That a part of the carbon reduction plan has focused on behavioural changes in schools and County Council offices, which will take time to implement. The fruits of this work should be reflected over the full five-year period.
- That the carbon reduction target expected for 2010/11 was 1,820 tonnes, but this has been exceeded to reach a total of 3,925 tonnes.
- That £0.55m in energy cost savings have been reached. To put this in context, the Council spends around £19 million on energy (including schools).
- That 10.7% of the corporate estate's carbon emissions have been saved over the past year, which has resulted in the County Council being a successful participant of the 10:10 campaign. Comparative local authorities have been in contact with the Council to discuss best practice sharing as a result of this.
- That the Carbon Reduction Commitment is now a straight tax on carbon emissions, which sees organisations pay £12 per tonne of carbon emitted. A league table of carbon emissions from local authorities is due to be published by the Environment Agency in the Autumn of 2011. The County Council have incurred less for 2011/12 owing to both a reduction in the amount of carbon emitted, and the removal of street lighting from the scope by central government.
- That the government have recently announced a reduction in the FIT (Feed In Tariff) of over 50%, which has created an urgent review of the business case for large scale solar photovoltaic cells being placed on county council buildings.

Following questions, Members heard:

- That the latest position in the acquisition and fitting of large scale solar photovoltaic cells is that the contracts have not yet been let, although the installation proposals

That a report on the impact of reduced Feed in Tariffs to the large scale solar photovoltaic programme is brought back to the Select Committee, when available

had been recently approved by Cabinet. The deadline for the consultation on the new FIT scheme is 23 December. As the original business case for the large scale solar photovoltaic cells was predicated on borrowing and generating an income, the Department is currently exploring all potential options as a result of the cut in Feed in Tariffs.

- That the County Council will write to the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change regarding the changes proposed to the FIT scheme.
- That the County Council is committed to the long-term reduction of carbon emissions and will work to ensure that the percentage reduction seen in 2010/11 is sustained throughout the rest of the five-year plan.
- That there is a behaviour change initiative in place with Hampshire schools, together with a carbon reduction toolkit and the use of school 'energy champions'. Websites depicting energy use from smart meters are displayable on school whiteboards, so that children can interact with the data illustrating how much energy buildings use.
- That informal benchmarking has taken place with comparative authorities on the amount of carbon emitted, but the results of this exercise were questionable based on the validity of the data used. The carbon reduction commitment league tables will provide a better picture in this respect. Future carbon tax rates are expected to be based on improvement to consumption and relative position on the league table.

RESOLVED:

That a report on the impact of reduced Feed in Tariffs to the large scale solar photovoltaic programme is brought back to the Select Committee, when available

93. **CONCESSIONARY FARES**

The Select Committee received an update on the first six months of the concessionary fares scheme, which was transferred to Hampshire County Council in April 2011. The Committee received this from the Director for Economy, Transport and Environment. Members heard:

(Take in report)

- That there are some concessionary fares scheme appeals outstanding with bus companies in Hampshire based on issues such as whether the costs prescribed nationally reflected the amount of subsidy needed to cover the cost of transporting local passengers and routes. Funding provision to meet the costs in year of these appeals if they are successful has been identified.
- The scheme agreed by the Executive Member for Environment and Transport in November 2010 will

That the Hampshire Concessionary Fares Scheme is monitored by the Chairman and brought back to the future meeting of the Environment and Transportation Select Committee if necessary.

continue as the Hampshire Concessionary Fare Scheme for 2012/13, with the same level of enhancements, subject to the final outcome of the County Council budget process.

Following questions, Members heard:

- That once the scheme has been in place for a year, a review can be conducted to see if the right level of enhancements have been set.
- That approximately 2,200 new users are joining the scheme each month, reflecting an average 4% rise in the number of passengers using concessionary fares, which is in line with demographic predictions.
- That all new scheme passes being issued have a smart chip, and buses are currently having smartcard readers installed.

RESOLVED:

That the Hampshire Concessionary Fares Scheme is monitored by the Chairman and brought back to the future meeting of the Environment and Transportation Select Committee if necessary.

94. **ECONOMY, TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT EFFICIENCIES UPDATE**

The Committee received a verbal update from the Director for Economy, Transport and Environment Department on efficiency savings. Members heard:

- That savings were still on track as anticipated and previously reported.
- That currently 86% of the 2011/12 financial year savings have been achieved, a total of £5.7m.
- That the Department are ahead in terms of staff savings due to ongoing impacts of the recruitment freeze, and will meet the contract savings target in 2011/12 in part through one-off savings, but that the programme for finalising contractual savings in relation to the Amey contract will now see completion by March 2012 for implementation in 2012/13, as previously reported

In response to questions, Members heard;

- That the Department are able to make a case for recruiting to the position of key front line officers who have left the organisation. For example, school crossing patrol officers are excluded from the recruitment freeze.
- That the main risk for the Department is unexpected announcements by central government on new fiscal policies.
- That the Amey contract is being reviewed as part of the contract savings workstream to ensure that the

agreement in place is the most efficient for the Council. As previously reported, one of the strands of the contract renegotiation is the co-location of Amey and Hampshire County Council highway officers at the Depots.

95. **PARKING ON GRASS VERGES, FOOTPATHS AND PAVEMENTS**

The Committee received a report from the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment on the upcoming review of parking on grass verges, footpaths and pavements.

Members heard:

(Take in report)

- That the current policy dates back to November 2008.
- That the 2008 policy encourages members of the public to report any parking issues to the highway authority, such as obstructions or damage caused by parking on grass verges, footpaths and pavements. Once the authority is in receipt of this information, they can assess the issue and prescribe a treatment. Examples of treatment include parking permits and, if possible, creating additional parking spaces.
- That the County Council receives a large number of requests to solve grass verge parking issues.
- That it is proposed that the Department conduct a review to update the parking policy to take into account new issues, such as the abolishment of certain parking standards, which has increased the number of vehicles parking on grass verges, footpaths and pavements.

Members heard from Councillor Ann Buckley, who described some of the issues local constituents in the Havant and Leigh Park areas of Hampshire had experienced in relation to parking on grass verges, footpaths and pavements.

Following questions, Members heard:

- That some planning applications for new housing do not include off-road parking spaces, which adds to the problem of on-street and other parking.
- That the highway authority does have the opportunity to comment on new house builds in relation to parking, and had recently abandoned its previous policy which sought to strictly limit off-street parking in new development.
- That the legal implications of the public parking on Hampshire County Council owned pavements and footpaths needs to be explored.

RESOLVED:

That:

- (a) the Select Committee receive the current grass verge, footpath and pavement parking policy, and

That the Select Committee receive the current grass verge, footpath and pavement parking policy, and that this is circulated after this meeting.

That the Select Committee are involved in the review of the grass verge, footpath and pavement parking policy, and discuss the possibility of setting up a small working group to scrutinise proposals with the Economy, Transport and Environment department.

that this is circulated after the meeting;

- (b) the Select Committee are involved in the review of the grass verge, footpath and pavement parking policy, and discuss the possibility of setting up a small working group to scrutinise proposals with the Economy, Transport and Environment department.

96. **REVIEW OF THE SUBSIDISED BUS SERVICE**

The Select Committee resolved at the 20 July 2011 meeting to receive details of the timeline for implementation of the changes to bus subsidies and supported services, and the Council's engagement plans for informing stakeholders of such changes. This information was presented by the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment. Members heard:

(Take in report)

- That bus companies involved in the review are responsible for informing passengers of changes to bus timetables and routes, although Hampshire County Council have been able to help some of the small companies to spread these messages.
- That all changes to bus timetables and routes have been published on the County Council's webpages, and information can be sent through the post to those residents who request it.
- That Hampshire County Council has received just under £270,000 in one-off community transport funding, which will support a number of schemes outlined in the report.
- Any schemes that do receive funding must be able to self-finance in future if they wish last longer than one year.

Following questions, Members heard:

- That one of the lessons learnt from the review of bus subsidies was that the detail of the changes agreed at Decision Day should be forwarded to town and parish councils so that they could engage with residents about changes to local timetables.
- That there had been anecdotal evidence from local Members of timetables not being replaced in bus shelters and residents not being informed of changes to services. This is the responsibility of the bus operator but the Department have two inspectors who will follow-up on any reports from Members similar to these.

97. **MINERALS AND WASTE PLAN**

The Select Committee elected at the 20 July 2011 meeting to receive an update from the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment on the progress of the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan. Members heard:

- That since the Plan was agreed at the Special County

Council meeting on 13th October , the formal consultation on the 'soundness' of the Plan had begun, and would last until the 19th December 2011.

- That the South Downs National Park Authority and Southampton City Council have now both agreed the plan completing the approval process from all partners.

Following questions, Members heard:

- That Natural England had confirmed that they would make formal submissions on the Plan at the 'soundness consultation' stage.

98. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chief Executive presented the Committee's forthcoming work programme (Item 11 in the Minute Book).

Members were made aware of one amendment to the work programme, which is that the Committee would now be meeting on the 17 January 2012, rather than 10 January as currently stated.

The Chairman had added the topic of 'Flooding' back to the work programme for 2011-12. as the Environment and Transportation Select Committee would have the responsibility for scrutinising flood management authorities.

The Chairman agreed to consider the topic of 'Project Integra' at the next Select Committee planning meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme is agreed.

Chairman, 17 January 2012