

## SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR ECONOMY, TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

MINUTES of a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee for Economy, Transport and Environment held at County Hall, Lewes on 14 September 2011

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PRESENT: Councillors Stogdon (Chairman), Fawthrop (Vice-Chairman), Freeman, Howson, Rodohan and Taylor.

ALSO PRESENT Councillor Carl Maynard, Lead Cabinet Member for Economy, Transport and Environment  
Councillor Carolyn Lambert (see minute 14)

Scrutiny Manager Paul Dean

Rupert Clubb, Director of Economy, Transport and Environment  
Mo Hemsley, Assistant Director, Resources, Economy, Transport and Environment  
Andy Robertson, Assistant Director Economy Transport and Environment  
Karl Taylor, Assistant Director, Economy, Transport and Environment  
Kieran McNamara, Assistant Director, Economy. Transport and Environment.

Also in attendance: Tony Cook, Head of Planning and Brian Banks, Team Manager, Road Safety for item 7 (see minute 16)  
Roger Williams, Head of Highways for item 8 (see minute 17)

### 10. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

10.1 RESOLVED – to approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2011.

### 11. APOLOGIES

11.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Daniel and from Councillor Glazier.

### 12. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

12.1 Councillor Freeman declared a personal non-prejudicial interest as Chairman of the Cuckmere Partnership Board in respect of the Cuckmere Estuary item.

12.2 Councillor Howson declared a personal non-prejudicial interest as Chairman of a District Council Planning Committee in respect of the Cuckmere Estuary item.

12.3 Councillor Rodohan declared a personal non-prejudicial interest as an officer of the Federation of Small Businesses in respect of discussions on economic development matters.

### 13. REPORTS

13.1 Copies of the reports referred to below are included in the minute book.

### 14. MANAGEMENT OF THE CUCKMERE ESTUARY

14.1 The Scrutiny Committee considered a report by the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment which updated Members on proposals for the future management of the Cuckmere Estuary in the light of the decision taken by the Lead Member on 21 July 2011.

14.2 The Committee considered accounts of the Cuckmere consultation events, noting the scale of the community involvement. It received representations from Councillor Carolyn Lambert; and local residents Dr Jill Rosser and Mr Tristram Hodgkinson whose comments are detailed in two emails dated 20 July 2011 to the Lead Member.

14.3 The Committee was impressed by the extent of the consultation initiated by officers which appeared to have been thorough in its scope. The Committee was satisfied that, in broad terms, the report by officers to the Lead Member reflected the outcome of the consultation. The Committee looked forward to noting progress with exploration of the various options bearing in mind the importance to the local economy.

14.4 RESOLVED – to note the progress made in working with the community towards a consensus on future management of the Cuckmere Estuary and the marked enthusiasm of the community to consider and explore some interesting options.

### 15. RECONCILING POLICY, PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES (RPPR)

15.1 The Committee considered a report by the Chief Executive setting out the detailed planning for 2012/2013 and beyond as outlined in the State of the County report.

15.2 The discussion triggered proposals for further scrutiny work as follows:

15.3 Further scrutiny into economic development to be undertaken to include an overview of:

- o Background information about East Sussex businesses and business needs, including the East Sussex annual business survey results and the Cambridge analysis, particularly in relation to SMEs (small and medium sized enterprises)
- o The challenges involved in 'branding' East Sussex
- o Economic development investment to date and outcomes achieved in East Sussex
- o The differences between East Sussex and elsewhere in respect of economic development support for, and promotion of, agriculture.

15.4 Further scrutiny of waste issues to be undertaken as part of a forthcoming site visit to the Energy Recovery Facility (ERF) at Newhaven to include an overview of:

- o Short, medium and long term ambitions for waste collection and management
- o Outcomes and ambitions for South East Seven (SE7) discussions and other initiatives, seeking to achieve economies and efficiencies of managing waste across the south east area.

15.5 RESOLVED – to (1) inform Cabinet that the Committee endorses all the proposed revisions to the policy steers as set out in the report with the following observations:

- Improvements to the rights of way network are subsumed within the revised policy steer: “To improve the condition of our roads”; rights of way improvements will now need to compete with all other highways priorities.
- There have been tangible and visible benefits from the additional investment in the structure of our roads (£8.5m over two years from April 2010). Given that the future level of investment in road maintenance is uncertain at this stage of the RPPR process, the committee would try to ensure that the achievements currently being observed are not compromised by, say, a significant reduction in spending in this area of activity.

(2) Establish a Scrutiny Board to act on behalf of the Committee to provide ongoing input into the RPPR process until March 2012 and, in particular, to consider the detailed departmental portfolio plans when available;

(3) Agree that the membership of the Scrutiny Board shall comprise Councillors Stogdon (Chairman), Fawthrop, Freeman and Howson.

## 16. SCRUTINY REVIEW OF ROAD SAFETY: PROGRESS

16.1 The Committee considered a six-month monitoring report by the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment detailing progress made on the Scrutiny Review of Road Safety Action Plan recommendations. The Committee focussed on specific points as follows:

- The Safer Sussex Roads Partnership (SSRP) has become a much ‘leaner’ organisation and now focuses mainly on managing the network of enforcement cameras across Sussex. Evidence suggests that cameras are effective in reducing casualties in the spots where they are located. This arrangement is welcomed by the Committee.
- SSRP communications activity has been significantly curtailed.
- Shoreham Police station now accommodates both traffic enforcement coordination and road safety data collection and analysis. This co-location will lead to greater efficiencies and other benefits compared to previous arrangements. In future it ought to be possible to prove clearer links between road safety data/evidence and specific road safety initiatives on the ground. Progress with the development of a single shared road safety data service covering the whole of the Sussex area will be reported in the Committee’s next update.
- Despite some initial queries about the logic of locating the County Council’s road safety activity within the Planning Team, the Committee welcomed the appointment of Brian Banks as the Council’s road safety officer champion.
- The East Sussex Casualty Reduction Board is gradually taking on the role of reviewing all East Sussex road safety education activity to ensure that a) what is being done is demonstrably effective at improving road safety and b) there is coordination between the activities of all the partner agencies to avoid duplication. This work is funded by income from diversion courses. More detail about the activities of the East Sussex Casualty Reduction Board will be available at the next Committee update.
- Scrutiny’s views on the effectiveness of police enforcement would be welcome in the light of the Chairman’s observation that there appears to be less visible police

enforcement on the roads of East Sussex this year compared to last. The County Council has retained a budget for specific enforcement initiatives as required.

16.2 RESOLVED – To (1) note the contents of the report, supporting material and presentation;

(2) To receive the final monitoring report (June 2012) which will additionally address the specific points identified above.

## 17. SCRUTINY REVIEW OF WINTER SERVICE IN EAST SUSSEX

17.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment which reported progress against the recommendations agreed by Cabinet on 12 October 2010 following the Scrutiny Review of the Winter Service in East Sussex.

17.2 The Committee expressed its gratitude to Department officers for having achieved demonstrably clear improvements in the winter maintenance service over the last 18 months. It highlighted a few miscellaneous outstanding points as follows:

- Ongoing high profile communications and information dissemination is likely to be required to ensure that the *community self help* message continues to make an impact.
- Officers are requested to approach May Gurney to assess whether there is any scope to reduce snow plough blade heights safely to reduce the amount of snow left after ploughing; this is primarily a problem on secondary routes.
- The Committee requested a map showing the Council's published gritting routes overlaid with farmers' and contractors' snowplough equipment locations to enable better visualisation of any gaps in winter service provision.
- Officers undertook to investigate the feasibility and benefits of contacting farmers and independent contractors who are prepared to use their own equipment voluntarily to help their communities during periods of heavy snow.

17.3 RESOLVED – To note and welcome progress made over the last 18 months with the winter maintenance service and to request that officers respond directly to Committee Members in respect of the above outstanding points.

## 18. SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

18.1 The Committee updated the Committee's work programme for the forthcoming year with the questions at minute 15.3 (economic development) and 15.4 (waste).

## 19. FORWARD PLAN

19.1 The Committee considered the Forward Plan for the period 6 September 2011 to 31 December 2011. Members were reminded of the need to monitor the Forward Plan when it was published online to identify any queries or concerns at an early stage. Requests for information should be raised with the listed contact officer and any scrutiny issues with the Scrutiny Manager.

## 20. NEXT MEETING

20.1 The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 23 November 2011.