

## 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 19 June 2012

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PRESENT: Councillors Richard Stogdon (Chairman), Godfrey Daniel, Terry Fawthrop (Vice-Chairman), Jon Freeman, Pat Rodohan and Barry Taylor.

ALSO PRESENT Councillor Carl Maynard (Lead Member for Transport and Environment); Councillor Matthew Lock (Lead Member for Economy) and Councillor Roger Thomas.

Scrutiny Manager Paul Dean

Rupert Clubb, Director Transport and Environment; Mo Hemsley, Assistant Director Economy, Transport and Environment; Andy Robertson, Assistant Director, Economy, Transport and Environment; Brian Banks, Team Manager, Road Safety (for item 6, Road Safety in East Sussex); David Broadley, Emergency Planning Manager; Yvonne Riedel-Brown, Emergency Planning Officer (for item 7, Emergency Planning); and Nick Claxton, Team Manager Flood Risk Management.

### 1. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

1.1 RESOLVED – to approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2012.

### 2. APOLOGIES

2.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Philip Howson.

### 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 Councillor Daniel declared non-prejudicial interests as a Member of Hastings Borough Council in respect of item 5 (Olympics update) and as a Member of the Sussex Police Authority in respect of item 6 (Road Safety in East Sussex).

3.2 Councillor Maynard declared a non-prejudicial interest as Leader of Rother District Council in respect of item 5 (Olympics update) and item 7 (Emergency Planning).

### 4. REPORTS

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

## 5. OLYMPICS UPDATE

5.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment on the implications of the Olympic Torch Relay as it passes through East Sussex on the 17 and 18 July 2012.

5.2 RESOLVED - to note the implications of the Olympic flame coming through the County; and the road closures subject to the Torch Relay as identified in the report.

## 6. ROAD SAFETY IN EAST SUSSEX

6.1 The Committee considered the twelve-month monitoring report by the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment detailing the progress made in achieving the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review of Road Safety in East Sussex.

### *Current position and committee perspectives*

6.3 Roughly mirroring national trends, the East Sussex data shows a gradually improving overall picture of numbers of people killed and seriously injured (KSI) in East Sussex in recent years: for example, there were 25% fewer KSIs in 2011 compared to 2008. However, KSI figures for pedal cyclists, alcohol and speed related casualties show a worse picture from January to April 2012 compared to the same period in 2011. The small numbers involved may be statistically insignificant to be able to identify clear underlying causes.

6.4 With reduced resources available, there is increasing pressure to ensure maximum effectiveness of available road safety resources. Measuring effectiveness is relatively easy for engineering measures but continues to be problematic for education and enforcement initiatives.

6.5 The Safer Sussex Roads Partnership (SSRP) has become significantly *leaner* and now focuses primarily on the pan-Sussex camera programme and data collection and analysis. The County Council is much clearer now about what it expects and receives from the partnership compared to the position prior to the Scrutiny Review of Road Safety in 2010.

6.6 Road safety education is currently targeted at high risk *groups*. This approach continues to present challenges in demonstrating effectiveness in reducing KSIs. Road safety officers are suggesting an alternative approach of examining the underlying *causes* of collisions in more detail to identify more effective courses of action.

6.7 Members questioned whether we should cease our road safety education programme and redirect the resources elsewhere. Road safety officers acknowledge the difficulty of identifying a causal link between an initiative and reduced KSIs. This equally applies to other activities such as one-off enforcement campaigns which are supported by Members. However, there is evidence that education and enforcement operations do improve awareness and perceptions, which is inherently a good thing.

6.8 Road safety engineering is targeted less at specific locations, except where evidence shows it will reduce casualties, and more towards a *whole route* approach (with routes identified from SSRP data) as endorsed by the scrutiny review. It is still too soon to be certain that it's working, but the early signs are positive.

6.9 With fewer safety engineering schemes, the Committee remains concerned that some communities are becoming worried at the lack of visible road safety improvements. Increasingly *creative* ways are needed to respond to community requests for schemes that fall outside the selection criteria. Simply rejecting schemes without offering alternative ideas is not acceptable.

6.10 Public requests to reduce speed limits by introducing signage alone rarely works (as the review report noted). The police continue to oppose requests for lower speed limits that would rely solely on enforcement.

6.11 Targeted police enforcement campaigns, such as Operation Triangle, will continue to be supported by the County Council in future. In general, the police continue to prioritise their road safety enforcement activities where they deem it to have most effect on KSIs. Some divisions have been proactive at engaging in wider road safety activities, but this has not been consistently achieved across the county.

6.12 The East Sussex Casualty Reduction Group (ESCRG) aims to develop a collective approach to road safety issues specific to East Sussex and to fill the *gaps* left by SSRP. However, the Board has lost focus, currently comprises an imbalanced membership and lacks an action plan and strategy. These matters are to be addressed by re-focusing it into a largely practitioner group.

6.13 RESOLVED - to (1) note the report; and (2) request an update at the scrutiny committee in November 2012 that will address the outstanding issues highlighted above, and in particular:

- Ongoing work to review the balance of resources between enforcement, education and engineering;
- Resourcing engineering works and dealing with communities whose requests for road safety schemes cannot be met by the Council
- The SSRP – the speed camera programme, effectiveness and investment in East Sussex
- The ESCRG – future role and progress with work to make it more effective.
- Road safety resources for 2013/14 (to be included in the Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources report in September 2012).

## 7. EMERGENCY PLANNING

7.1 The Committee considered a report and presentation by the Head of Emergency Planning updating the Committee on the work of the Emergency Planning Team.

7.2 RESOLVED – to request that urgent consideration be given to:  
(1) Achieving improved cost effectiveness and better county wide emergency planning coordination by seeking to extend the County Council's emergency planning service to include Hastings Borough Council and Rother District Council in the service level agreement that currently only encompasses Lewes, Eastbourne and Wealden Councils.

(2) Ensuring that the same version of the *Guide for elected Members* is available to all Members across East Sussex and that:

- the guidance is geared to Members' roles in their distinct tier of local government; and consideration given to the role of parish councillors who are not currently mentioned in the guide; and
- whilst the primary role of elected Members in an emergency is acknowledged to be during the recovery phase, the information needs of councillors *during* an emergency should not be overlooked.

(3) Bringing forward the service review of emergency planning (currently scheduled for 2013) to achieve organisational clarity about the role of the emergency planning team.

(4) undertaking a training or *desktop* exercise with interested Members to illustrate, in a practical way, a step by step approach to various emergency scenarios.

## 8. DELIVERING THE LEAD LOCAL FLOOD AUTHORITY ROLE

8.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment which detailed the progress made to date on implementing the Flood and Water Management Act (2012).

8.2 RESOLVED: to (1) note progress made in (a) meeting the requirements of the Flood and Water Management Act and amendments to the Land Drainage Act and (b) the preparation of a local flood risk management strategy and the supporting stakeholder event to be held on 4 July 2012;

(2) endorse the way forward outlined in the report in delivering this new service with emphasis on county and borough/district council Members being encouraged to help provide a 'sense check' of the proposals by means of a pan Sussex Member awareness event; and

(3) request that the Chairman of the scrutiny committee be invited to the stakeholder event on 4 July 2012.

## 9. SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

9.1 The Committee reviewed its work programme as follows:

Highways maintenance re-procurement: Noted that further visits of the Member Reference Group were being planned to Hertfordshire and Surrey. The Reference Group would report to the Committee in March 2013.

Utility companies and the highways of East Sussex: With continuing Member concern at the high level of unacceptable reinstatements of our highways by utility companies, the committee established a Scrutiny Review Board to investigate the matter further and make recommendations. Councillors Stogdon, Daniel, Fawthrop and Freeman shall comprise the Board. A new network manager with responsibilities in this area would be starting work in July; the Committee therefore agreed to plan for a meeting of the Board in September 2012, to report back to the committee either in November 2012 or March 2013.

Water shortages / drought: The scrutiny review, established at the last meeting (19 June 2012), is to be put on hold. The danger of drought has receded for the time being because of the substantial amount of rain from April to July.

Economic development: Further scrutiny work on economic development is to be put on hold pending the outcome of the SMEs' Commission.

## 10. FORWARD PLAN

10.1 The Committee considered the Forward Plan for the period 19 June 2012 to 30 September 2012. Members are reminded of the need to monitor the Forward Plan when published online to identify any queries or concerns early. Requests for information should be raised with the listed contact officer and any scrutiny issues with the Scrutiny Manager.

## 11. NEXT MEETING

11.1 The meeting ended at 13.15. The next meeting of the Committee will be held on **12 September 2012**.