

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 20 November 2012.

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

LEAD MEMBERS: Councillor Carl Maynard (Lead Member for Transport and Environment); Councillor Matthew Lock (Lead Member for Economy)

ALSO PRESENT Rupert Clubb, Director Transport and Environment; Mo Hemsley, Assistant Director Economy, Transport and Environment; Karl Taylor, Assistant Director Transport and Environment; Kieran McNamara, Assistant Director of Economy; Tony Cook, Head of Planning; Brian Banks, Road Safety Officer, Nick Claxton, Team Manager, Flood Risk Management; Stephen Potter, Waste Team Manager.

Scrutiny Manager: Paul Dean

22. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

22.1 RESOLVED – to approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2012.

23. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

23.1 None

24. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

24.1 Councillors Fawthrop and Howson declared personal, non-prejudicial interests as Members of East Sussex Fire Authority in respect of item 5 (Road Safety).

24.1 Councillor Maynard declared a personal, non prejudicial interest as Leader of Rother District Council in respect of item 6 (Draft East Sussex Local Flood Risk Management Strategy).

25. REPORTS

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

26. ROAD SAFETY

26.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment detailing responses to questions arising from a discussion of the Scrutiny Review of Road Safety at the meeting held on 19 June 2012.

26.2 The Chairman welcomed to the meeting: Sue Murdoch (SSRP); Phil Henty (SSRP); Brian Baker (SSRP), Gary Walsh (Fire and Rescue) and Mark Dunn (Sussex Police).

Sussex Safer Roads Partnership (SSRP)

26.3 The SSRP has a funded three-year business plan in place to the end of 2014/15. Its 'core' work is focused on reducing the number and severity of casualties on the roads through:

- the safety camera programme and introducing technology improvements;
- coordinating the driver diversion courses programme;
- coordinating Sussex-wide road safety education and producing 'off the peg' programmes for local delivery; and
- data collection and a basic analysis service for partners.

26.4 All parties agreed that the data and analysis provided by the SSRP is valuable as it helps to prioritise road safety activity across East Sussex. There is currently a high demand for SSRP data and analysis which is stretching the team's resources. In future, those requiring more than the 'core' service, such as detailed research or specialist data analysis, would need to pay for it probably through a service level agreement.

26.5 The County Council has agreed a reduced contribution to SSRP on a sliding scale to zero by 2015. Arrangements beyond this date would be subject to negotiation.

East Sussex Casualty Reduction Steering Group (ESCRSG)

26.6 All parties acknowledged that the ESCRSG has not achieved its objectives since it was formed two years ago. Its intended role remains unclear. Some considered it should have developed a strategic oversight of all East Sussex road safety activity, whilst others viewed it more as coordinating the efficient delivery of road safety activities locally.

26.7 In some parts of East Sussex, road safety campaigns have emerged from local community safety partnerships using their links between the police, fire services and different tiers of local authority. The remit of these partnerships is broader than road safety. Nonetheless, the Wealden Community Safety Partnership has developed a road safety education campaign targeted at 16 – 24 year old drivers, a key target group highlighted by SSRP data; the campaign has received support from the police and has attracted funding.

26.8 The Police mooted that ESCRSG had failed because it had tried to be 'too strategic' in its outlook. There are strengths, they argued, in local community safety partnerships developing locally targeted campaigns, citing the Wealden project as a good example. These partnerships have the required local knowledge and the links with key agencies to attract resources and support. To be successful, the ESCRSG needs a common or a local focus; if a district/borough based structure would result in too many disparate groups chasing diminishing resources, then two groups, focussed on urban and rural issues, might be a compromise.

26.9 The Fire and Rescue Service consider that there are significant problems with relying solely on local community initiatives as a basis for a road safety programme that is primarily concerned with reducing the number of KSIs on our roads:

- community initiatives are rarely targeted solely at reducing KSIs because they generally have wider aims;
- there is a high risk of fragmenting road safety activity which is more likely to result in duplication and waste;
- where local initiatives prove successful, there currently isn't a mechanism or the resources to evaluate and extend them to other parts of East Sussex;
- in many parts of East Sussex there isn't a sufficient level of agreement and co-operation at a local level for supported initiatives to emerge.

26.10 The parties considered that it would be useful to have an East Sussex Road Safety Strategy to indicate an evidence based, coordinated programme of activity that successfully attracts external funding and is targeted at reducing KSIs. The Committee questioned whether a re-invigorated ESCRSG would succeed if, say, there was no prospect of acquiring resources for it to deploy, or its participants continued to be unable to find a common focus.

Road Safety Education

26.11 SSRP confirmed that it remains particularly hard to demonstrate a causal link between specific road safety education initiatives and reductions in KSIs when compared to the relative ease of measuring the impact of, say, a road safety engineering scheme. Reliable evidence as to the efficacy of particular education initiatives need to be evaluated over longer periods, possibly as long as 10 years. However, national research provides some evidence that road safety education does change individuals' behaviour. Furthermore, locally there has been a greater than average reduction in KSIs amongst 16-24 year olds over recent years, a group that has been particularly targeted with road safety education campaigns.

26.12 East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service remains committed to a road safety education programme, motivated by their first-hand experiences of dealing with the most serious crashes on our roads. They consider that the hard-hitting 'Safe Drive Stay Alive' events do affect their audiences and that the impact appears to be long term. They are concerned about the future funding for this kind of work. Less county wide coordination and greater reliance on local demand, funding and volunteer help will, in their view, lead to duplication and wastage of resources.

26.13 East Sussex County Council is to review its road safety activities as part of the forthcoming budget planning exercise (known as Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources). In future there will be a need to examine alternative, innovative approaches towards delivering road safety objectives that involve a wider range of partners such as schools and the voluntary and community sector. The Council is proposing an approach based around local road safety groups.

26.14 RESOLVED - To (1) welcome the progress in achieving the scrutiny review recommendations;

(2) endorse the good progress being made by the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership in achieving an efficient and focussed approach; and a continued involvement of East Sussex County Council officers in influencing the future direction of the partnership so as to benefit from the work undertaken by partner organisations; and

(3) endorse the continuing need to champion road safety activities based on a clear strategy, good evidence and effective communication.

27. DRAFT EAST SUSSEX LOCAL FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

27.1 The Committee welcomed a report by the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment setting out the progress made in preparing the Draft Local Flood Risk Management Strategy. The following points emerged from the discussion:

- The strategy is well presented and clear.
- The success of the strategy depends upon effective partnership working not least because of the broad range of information and skills required.
- Trying to engage the districts and boroughs so far has met with limited success probably because they have neither the direct statutory responsibilities nor, in most cases, a readily identifiable source of funding to contribute. However, they hold

essential information and expertise. Developing projects jointly can successfully access external resources such as the Local Levy funds administered by the Southern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee. Work to date with Lewes District Council has resulted in funded projects and their experience could be used to demonstrate the value of becoming involved to the other authorities.

- A Member awareness raising event, to include county and district/borough Members, is to be arranged in the summer of 2013 or earlier if necessary to minimise any delays in implementing the strategy.
- Highways gully management is incorporated into the highways asset management programme being developed by the Council's Highways team. The basic responsibilities for keeping highways gullies operational lie within current legislation; this new strategy is designed to join up the various surface water flooding management needs in a coherent way.
- Other elements of the legislation, such as the role of the Council as the drainage approval body, are still being developed by the government.

27.2 RESOLVED – To (1) endorse the proposal to publish the Draft Local Flood Risk Management Strategy for consultation for 12 weeks from December 2012; and (2) welcome the intention to hold a Member awareness event in 2013 to include district, borough and County Council Members.

28. WASTE MANAGEMENT

28.1 The Committee welcomed a presentation by the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment updating them on the current position in respect of Waste Management.

28.2 The following points emerged from the discussion:

- There are no plans for the Energy Recovery Facility (ERF) at Newhaven to accommodate waste from outside the County; an option being explored is whether there is capacity to accommodate some commercial waste from inside the County.
- The possibility of opening household recycling sites to some types of commercial waste would be explored.
- The South East 7 (SE7) initiative has helped us to compare practices and understand where there are opportunities to increase the value for money of the facilities we have, rather than to *share* facilities across the region.

28.3 RESOLVED – to note the update and welcome the exploration of opportunities for the ERF to accommodate commercial waste and household recycling sites to accommodate some commercial waste.

29. SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

29.1 The Committee noted its work programme.

30. FORWARD PLAN

30.1 The Committee considered the Forward Plan for the period 1 December 2012 to 31 January 2013. Members were 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.

31. NEXT MEETING

31.1 The meeting ended at 1.00 pm. The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday 18 March 2013.