

## 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 September 2013.

---

PRESENT: Councillors Richard Stogdon (Chair), Michael Pursglove (Vice-Chair), John Hodges, Pat Rodohan, Bob Standley (substitute for Councillor Claire Dowling), Barry Taylor and Steve Wallis.

LEAD MEMBERS: Councillors Carl Maynard (Lead Member for Transport and Environment) and Rupert Simmons (Lead Member for Economy).

ALSO PRESENT Rupert Clubb, Director Transport and Environment; Karl Taylor, Assistant Director Transport and Environment; Geoff Mee, Assistant Director, Environment (for agenda item 5: Introduction to Environment); Roger Williams, Head of Highways; Simon Hall (for agenda item 6: Street Lighting in East Sussex).

Scrutiny Manager: Paul Dean

### 9. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

9.1 RESOLVED – to approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2013 (correcting the error in the spelling of the name of the Lead Member, Cllr Carl Maynard).

### 10. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

10.1 Apologies were received from Councillor Claire Dowling.

### 11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

11.1 Councillor Maynard declared a non-prejudicial interest as Leader of Rother District Council in relation to item 13 (Street Lighting) and item 14 (Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources).

11.2 Councillor Standley declared a non-prejudicial interest as Leader of Wealden District Council and as a member of the LEP Board and Executive in relation to agenda item 7 (Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources).

11.3 Councillor Rodohan declared a non-prejudicial interest as an officer of the Federation of Small Businesses in relation to item 7 (Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources).

### 12. INTRODUCTION TO THE ECONOMY, TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

12.1 The Committee warmly welcomed a presentation outlining the structure and operation of the Environment functions of the Economy, Transport and Environment department by Geoff Mee, Assistant Director Environment.

12.2 RESOLVED – to (i) welcome the presentation, and (ii) to request the opportunity for scrutiny to comment on the draft Gypsy and Traveller Strategy before a decision is taken by Cabinet or Lead Member to adopt the strategy.

### 13. STREET LIGHTING IN EAST SUSSEX

13.1 The Committee warmly welcomed Simon Hall (Street Lighting and Traffic Signals Team Manager) who presented a report on behalf of the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment. The report described the latest position with the street lighting changes that had been introduced across the County with a focus on: energy savings community safety and the public consultation elements of the programme.

13.2 In response to Members' questions, officers clarified:

- The estimated time for the part-night lighting project to generate a return on investment is currently 5.1 years – a slight improvement on the original estimate of 5.7 years;
- Maintenance costs associated with the new LED lighting is minimal;
- Health risks associated with the new technology, especially the type of lighting being introduced in East Sussex, are minimal;
- Discussions will take place (for example with Hastings Borough Council) to see whether appropriately styled LED lighting can be used where 'decorative' equipment is currently installed. Functional lighting from our chosen family of LED lanterns will be used to replace existing functional lighting to keep costs down;
- Crime levels are being actively monitored in each area where the new lighting programme has been introduced with positive results so far.

13.3 RESOLVED – to endorse wholeheartedly the street lighting changes being introduced in East Sussex and to welcome the good progress being made.

### 14. RECONCILING POLICY, PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES

14.1 The Committee considered a report by the Chief Executive which enabled the committee to begin its engagement in the Council's business and planning process, known as Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources, for 2014/15 and beyond. The committee made a number of comments and observations in response to the report and information provided.

14.2 The committee wished to explore the impact of savings identified previously and to understand better what services might 'look like' at the end of the three year period covered by the current portfolio and savings plans.

#### Economy

- Economic growth, jobs and prosperity are the highest priorities of the council; The Economy division accounts for only a small part of the ETE revenue budget, but the success of its programmes are dependent on securing capital, grants and loans and working effectively with partners.
- The investment in broadband is crucial for the local economy; the superfast broadband programme is anticipated to be completed in 2015.
- Key local business' priorities include: rollout out of 4G and addressing gaps in the workforce skills base.

- The rural economy is of increasing interest and possible strategies are being developed.
- The Bexhill-Hastings Link Road will be critical in opening up access to new sites for development.
- The South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) is pivotal for managing central government funding as a single pot, to include funding for some transport schemes; it is critical that East Sussex focuses on identify priorities that can be realised from this source.
- Trading Standards is increasingly economic development orientated in its outlook.
- The delay with the completion of the Newhaven Access Road is due to delays with the developer progressing their plans.
- A working party has been established with districts and boroughs to address the differences in approach towards the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) between authorities.
- There is no longer a need to undertake a business survey annually; every three years is now deemed appropriate.

### Transport

- There has been approximately £42m capital investment in roads since 2010. The Committee requested further clarity about the nature of this funding and how it fits with our Asset Management Plan; they argued that the nature and long term impact of this considerable investment is poorly understood by the wider community.
- In recent years, the highways investment focus has been primarily on the classified road network; the condition of unclassified roads, which accounts for 55% of the network, has deteriorated. The Committee is now particularly concerned about this trajectory because the nature of the East Sussex road network means that unclassified roads have undue significance in the County. The Director indicated that the RPPR process will be used to:
  - Review the condition and maintenance backlog in the light of the forecast capital and revenue investment programme
  - Review capital investment to begin to address the current state of unclassified roads.
  - Consider whether to reduce the target timescale (currently one year under the current policy) for the repair of non-urgent potholes many of which are on unclassified roads. A reduction in the target timescale will cost more but is considered more likely to be in line with public and Member expectations.
- Alongside service improvements, significant efficiency savings have resulted from the highways transformation project and associated restructure, the highways hub, the introduction of highways stewards and other 'lean' process improvements. Future efficiency savings in this area are likely to arise from closer working with other authorities.
- The impact of proposed future savings on supported bus services and concessionary bus fares is not yet clear.
- Numbers of people killed and seriously injured (KSI) on East Sussex roads is of concern. The Committee questioned whether the successful enforcement campaigns from two years ago should be considered for reinstatement. Road Safety is on the scrutiny agenda in November and this question could be discussed then.

## Environment

- A significant £27m of the revenue budget is accounted for in the Waste Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contract; this considerably increases the pressure on the other ETE budgets from which savings can be made. The contract has resulted in the building of the Energy Recovery Facility (ERF) at Newhaven and other waste facilities.
- The Waste PFI, together with a new waste collection partnership with four districts and boroughs, will ultimately enable ESCC to obviate the need for landfill in future. However, the full impact of these arrangements may take some ten years to materialise.
- A new approach towards the management of countryside sites is being proposed for Cabinet's consideration; scrutiny will be able to examine the proposals in due course.

### RESOLVED:

(1) To note the process for scrutiny's involvement in the Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources process.

(2) To consider an update on the elements identified above at the November scrutiny committee where available.

(3) To invite all Members of the committee to participate in the RPPR scrutiny board on 10 December with final confirmation of membership to be agreed at the November committee.

## 15. SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

15.1 RESOLVED: To amend the scrutiny work programme as follows:

15.2 Road safety is an item on the November committee agenda. It will include an update on the evolving road safety strategy for East Sussex; how all the partners (Councils / Police Fire & Rescue / Sussex Safer Roads Partnership (SSRP) are working together. The Committee's concern about the numbers of people killed and seriously injured (KSI) on East Sussex roads and the suggestion to consider a renewed targeted enforcement campaign can be included in the discussion (see item 14 above).

15.3 Changes to the supported bus network will be considered by scrutiny when proposals have been developed.

15.4 Highways contract re-procurement will be considered further by the whole committee at a date to be fixed in November. The meeting will be at Ringmer Depot where Members who haven't been on the induction visit can visit the Highways Contact Centre and 'Hub'.

15.5 Highway's repair manual: The Lead Member, Transport & Environment requested Scrutiny to review the Highways Repair Manual specification for pavement alignments and repairs. This will be pursued.

15.6 Grass cutting and weed spraying: A scrutiny review board was established at the last committee. Initial preparatory research is underway and a date for the scoping meeting will be agreed shortly.

15.7 The Committee requested the inclusion of the draft *Gypsy and Traveller Strategy* in its work programme (see item 12 above).

16. FORWARD PLAN

16.1 The Committee considered the Forward Plan for the period 1 September to 31 December 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.

17. NEXT MEETING

17.1 The meeting ended at 12:45pm. The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Wednesday 20 November 2013.

CLLR RICHARD STOGDON  
Chair

