

TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

DECISIONS made by the Lead Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment, Councillor M Lock, on 7 February 2005 at County Hall, Lewes.

Councillor Tidy spoke on item 4 (see minute 37 below)

Councillor Simmons spoke on items 4 and 5 (see minutes 37 and 38 below)

35. MINUTES

35.1 Councillor Lock approved as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2004.

36. REPORTS

36.1 Copies of the reports referred to in the minutes below are contained in the minute book.

37. NATIONAL CYCLE NETWORK ROUTE 21: CUCKOO TRAIL TO FOREST WAY

37.1 Councillor Lock considered a report by the Director of Transport and Environment.

37.2 Councillor Tidy presented a report to the Lead Member, which had been prepared by some local residents, expressing their concerns about the report and its recommendations. Councillor Tidy explained his views on the proposals. He suggested that paragraphs 3.3 and 3.4 of the Director's report could lead to a bias by the consultants in favour of one particular route and asked that they be withdrawn from the report.

37.3 Councillor Simmons spoke in favour of the proposals contained in the report.

37.4 The Director of Transport and Environment considered that the content of paragraph 3.3 was factual and therefore should remain, but indicated that he was prepared to withdraw paragraph 3.4 from the report. His offer was accepted by the Lead Member and paragraph 3.4 was withdrawn from the report.

DECISIONS

37.5 To (1) approve the consultants' brief contained in Appendix A for a Feasibility Study of route options for the National Cycle Network Route 21 between the Cuckoo Trail and the Forest Way;

(2) authorise the commissioning of the Feasibility Study;

(3) ensure that the report prepared by the Mayfield residents is made available to the consultants together with all other available relevant material; and

(4) agree that, once the consultants Feasibility Study is completed and the consultation period underway, the Lead Member will carry out appropriate site visits.

Reasons

37.3 The Director of Transport and Environment considers there is a need to take a completely fresh look at all the possible options for the final alignment of Route 21 between the Cuckoo Trail (south of Heathfield) and the Forest Way. In order to achieve this, it is of paramount importance that the study is carried out by impartial consultants with an expertise

in the field and that total transparency is guaranteed both during the conduct of the study and at the decision making stage.

37.4 The Director of Transport and Environment also recommends that, whilst the selection of the routes should not be unduly influenced by previous studies or consultation exercises, the four options that have been identified in co-operation with the Heathfield Partnership should be included in the study and be explored alongside other alternatives as suggested by the consultants. The project brief, which aims to deliver this advice, is set out in Appendix A to the report.

38. PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY AND ACCESS TO THE COUNTRYSIDE: MILESTONES STATEMENT

38.1 Councillor Lock considered a joint report by the Director of Transport and Environment and Director of Law and Performance Management.

38.2 The Lead Member noted that the Rights of Way Officer and Countryside Manager would be retiring in the Autumn. He thanked him for all his hard work over the years and for the progress made with rights of way and access to the countryside.

DECISIONS

38.3 To (1) approve the submission of the Milestones Statement, attached to the report as Appendix B, to the Countryside Agency as a fair reflection of progress made towards meeting the Agency's targets in relation to public rights of way and access to the countryside within East Sussex;

(2) note the progress of the public rights of way Public Service Agreement (PSA) in supporting the rural economy;

(3) note the progress made on updating the Definitive Maps and Statements of Public Rights of Way;

(4) note the progress made on the promotion of rights of way and access to the countryside; and

(5) note the maintenance backlog for public rights of way and the progress that is being made to reduce this, detailed in Appendices C and E of the report.

Reasons

38.3 Under the Milestones process, the County Council is required to report on progress towards the Countryside Agency's target, adopted by East Sussex County Council, of having all public rights of way properly recorded, promoted and maintained.

38.4 Reasonable progress has been made towards meeting the target of having the network properly promoted. Steady progress is being made towards clearing the backlog of claims needed to achieve the target of having the network properly defined, but with the likely increase in claims arising from the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 this progress is likely to fall behind demand. The final element relates to all paths being properly maintained. Good progress is being made to reduce the maintenance backlog and this has been helped by the additional funding for the PSA. Consideration needs to be given when reconciling policies and resources for 2006/07 as to the future level of this service when the PSA ends in March 2006.

39. EASTBOURNE ON AND OFF-STREET PARKING CHARGES

39.1 Councillor Lock considered a report by the Director of Transport and Environment.

DECISIONS

39.2 To (1) inform the Borough Council that the County Council does not object to the proposed increases in parking charges in the Borough Council's off-street car parks and other changes; and

(2) agree that the County Council will increase charges in the existing on-street parking scheme in line with the increases made by the Borough Council.

Reasons

39.3 The County Council should not object to the proposed increases in charges in Eastbourne Borough Council's off-street car parks. The Borough Council has provided written assurance that the charges in its off-street car parks would be brought into line with on street charges following the possible introduction of decriminalised parking.

39.4 If the Borough Council increases off-street parking charges, it would be sensible for the County Council to introduce similar increases in its on-street parking charges in order to minimise any short term instability in parking patterns in advance of the possible introduction of decriminalised parking.