

Environment, Communities and Fire Select Committee

9 May 2019 – At a meeting of the Environment, Communities and Fire Select Committee held at 10.30 am at County Hall, Chichester.

Present: Mr Barrett-Miles (Chairman)

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|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Mr S J Oakley | Mrs Bridges, Left at | Mr R J Oakley, Left at |
| Mr Barling, Left at | 3.40pm | 3.00pm |
| 2.45pm | Mr Jones | Mr Purchase, Arrived at |
| Mr Barnard | Mr Jupp | 11.35am and left at |
| Lt Col Barton, Left at | Mr McDonald, Left at | 1.30pm |
| 1.30pm | 1.05pm | |

Apologies were received from Mr Oppler

Absent:

Also in attendance: Mr Elkins, Ms Goldsmith, Ms Kennard and Mrs Urquhart

Part I

80. Declarations of Interest

80.1 In accordance with the Code of Conduct the following interests were declared

- Mrs Bridges declared a personal interest as a Member of Adur District Council and as a Member of Lancing Parish Council.
- Mr S Oakley declared a personal interest in the Draft Guidance on Parking at New Developments as a Member of Chichester District Council.
- Mr Jupp declared a personal interest in item 6 as a Member of Horsham District Council.
- Mr Jones declared a personal interest in item 6 as a Member of Crawley Borough Council.
- Lt Col. Barton declared a personal interest in item 7 as a Member of Adur District Council.

81. Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee

81.1 Resolved – that the minutes of the Environment, Communities and Fire Select Committee held on 13 March 2019 be approved as a correct record, and that they be signed by the Chairman.

82. Responses to Recommendations

a) Recommendations of the A29 Realignment Scheme

- 82.1 The Committee noted the Cabinet Member's Response to the Committee's Recommendations on the A29 Realignment Scheme.
- 82.2 The Committee hoped that the Cabinet Member had learnt from this experience and that, in future engagement with the Committee will happen earlier in the process.

b) Highways and Transport Improvement Schemes

- 82.3 The Committee noted the Cabinet Member's Response to the Committee's Recommendations on the Highways and Transport Improvement Schemes

c) Draft Guidance on Parking at New Developments

- 82.4 The Committee noted the Cabinet Member's Response to the Committee's Recommendations on the Draft Guidance on Parking at New Developments
- 82.5 The Committee asked that the Cabinet Member ensures that the Committee has sight of the revised document as requested at the last meeting and that the Planning Authorities are consulted first on this revised document.

d) Community Hubs and Plans for Worthing Library

- 82.6 The Committee noted the Cabinet Member's Response to the Committee's Recommendations on the Community Hubs and Plans for Worthing Library. In response to questions about future locations, the Leader anticipated that more information would be shared with members within weeks.

83. Appointment of new member to Business Planning Group

- 83.1 Resolved – that Mr Barling be appointed to the Group to fill the vacancy.

84. Economic Growth Plan 2018 - 2023 Action Plan

- 84.1 The Committee considered a report by Executive Director Economy, Infrastructure and the Environment (copy appended to signed minutes).
- 84.2 Carolyn Carr, Economic Growth Manager and Sue Cooper, Principal Insight Analyst introduced the report with a presentation (copy of slides appended to the signed minutes), which highlighted the work that has been carried out and showed where the County Council was best placed to make a positive difference.
- 84.3 The Committee made comments including those that follow. It:

- Welcomed the report and was broadly supportive. It asked to be kept up to date with progress monitoring at a future Business Planning Group. The Committee wanted to be assured that the money is making a positive difference.
- Raised concerns that the night-time economy was not emphasised strongly enough but was particularly pleased to hear of the success of "Let's Talk about our Towns" which did include this issue.
- Concerns were raised about the length of time it is taking to get the "The Track" Creative Digital Hub in Bognor Regis in place. The Committee would like to have more details.
- Concerns were raised whether the funds spent in support of the Plan might have been better spent on basic infrastructure.
- With regards to Theme Three: Growing the Green Energy County, the Committee would like to see a greater emphasis on the links with Climate Change.

84.4 Resolved – That the Committee:-

1. Broadly supports the Economic Growth Plan but requests that officers attend a future Business Planning Group to provide update on performance measures.
2. Supports a greater emphasis on the development of the night-time economy, with the County Council taking a lead coordinating role.
3. Request more details on "The Track" from officers particularly regarding the reasons for the delay.
4. Requests that Theme Three strengthens the link with Climate Change and the commitments made at the County Council on 5 April 2019.

85. Halewick Lane Battery Storage Project

85.1 The Committee considered a report by Executive Director Economy, Infrastructure and Environment and Director of Energy, Waste and Environment (copy appended to signed minutes).

85.2 Following comments from Mrs Urquhart, Cabinet Member for Environment, Tom Coates, Senior Advisor, Daire Casey, Business Development Manager, Siobhan Walker, Programme Manager and Steve Read, Director of Energy Waste and Environment introduced the report with a presentation (copy of slides appended to the signed minutes). This report gave an overview of the project and the business case behind the estimated income that will be generated. The report also detailed the consultation work that has been carried out. Mrs Urquhart clarified that energy storage schemes such as the one proposed operate by purchasing electricity when it is cheap at times of low demand, store it in large

batteries and sell it back to the National Grid at a significantly higher price at times of high demand. This helps to balance supply and demand on the grid and reduces overall generating requirements.

85.3 The Committee made comments including those that follow. It:

- Welcomed the report, but wanted reassurance that this is the best use of the site. It was acknowledged that, as this is a closed landfill site options for development are limited and this use had the support of the South Downs National Park Authority. Assurances were given that the proposal was based on a strong business case, ultimately marketable. Other sites are being considered for similar projects.
- Raised concerns over the surface water flooding event that occurred in August 2018 and requested reassurance that this project would not add to the fears of the nearby residents. It was noted that no letters of objection were received to the planning application. The timing of the demolition and construction will be crucial as a neighbouring landowner is carrying out works currently and this is impacting on the access road.
- Supported the reuse of recycled electric car batteries as an exemplar of best practice but queried the warranty on the battery life and whether this project will be able to take advantage of advances in technology over the life of the project. It was noted that the business case assumed the batteries would be routinely replaced after 7 – 8 years and would be upgraded accordingly.
- Raised concerns around noise from the site. A risk assessment was carried out as part of the planning process and found that the noise impact would be minimal as is the case with the operational Westhampnett project. There is already some screening around part of the site.

85.4 Resolved – That the Committee:

1. Supports the project but requests that the timing does not conflict with work already taking place on the neighbouring site.
2. Request that a comprehensive traffic management plan is produced.
3. Requests that the costs are clearly set out for the final decision report.

86. Highways Maintenance Service Procurement

86.1 The Committee considered a report by Executive Director Economy, Infrastructure and Environment and Director of Highways and Transport

86.2 Matt Davey, Director of Highways and Transport and Peter Smith, Programme Manager introduced the report with a presentation (copy of slides appended to the signed minutes). The report detailed the reasons

for seeking an independent options appraisal study and the lessons learned following withdrawal of the earlier procurement.

86.3 The Committee made comments including those that follow. It:

- Welcomed the report and the opportunity to seek a better way forward subject to there being a clear audit trail of decision making.
- Raised concerns that this approach could still lead to a greater risk of legal challenge but was reassured that although this wasn't the primary reason to change there is a genuine belief that this would be more resilient and result in better outcomes. This approach would also mitigate against contractor failure such as in the case of Carillion.
- Questioned staffing levels required and although no increase in staffing numbers is envisaged, it noted that Highways, Transport and Planning is currently going through a restructuring process and this is looking at those staff who have experience of procurement to support this work.
- Reiterated its request for a summary of the costs associated with the abandoned procurement, including the costs of extending the contract with the existing contractor.
- Queried the role of communities in this process and whether town and parish councils could have access to the contractors or buy additional services. It was confirmed that this would be the case.
- Requested details of Chief Executive's involvement in the process, hoping that he will have an overview of the process.

86.4 Resolved – That the Committee:-

1. Agrees with the way forward suggested in the report with a request that the Chairman seeks clarification on the involvement of the Chief Executive. Agrees that the split between contracts is appropriate and supports the business case.
2. Requested that information on the new structure of Highways, Transport and Planning be tabled at the next Business Planning Group on 1 July 2019.
3. Requests that Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport reassures the Committee that there is a clear audit trail for decision making for the procurement.

87. West Sussex Crowd

87.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director of Law and Assurance (copy appended to the signed minutes).

87.2 Nick Burrell, Senior Advisor introduced the report with a presentation (copy of slides appended to the signed minutes), which

addressed some of the highlights and issues that have occurred during the first year of the West Sussex Crowd process and that this will be the focus for the Governance review. He also shared some of the feedback that had been received from applicants about the process.

87.3 The Committee made comments including those that follow. It:

- Supported the idea of micro funding but queried why the total of £750 had been agreed as this was felt to be too low. Responses from the County Local Committee Chairman also support the micro fund but would like to be a higher amount and for the percentage figure to be removed as this was felt to be an artificial barrier which would put some groups off from applying.
- Raised concerns around the number and distribution of successful projects. Could the Committee see a breakdown of successful projects by division as there is a perception that deprived divisions are lagging behind. Also it was suggested that larger groups like the West Sussex Crowd platform but smaller groups can find it quite challenging especially for small amounts of funding.
- Raised concerns that there has been a significant rise in organisations dropping out of the process. The Cabinet Member for Safer, Stronger Communities, added that some of the projects had been successful without receiving any CIF funding.
- Requested details of the amount of commission that Spacehive have received.

87.4 Resolved – That the Committee supports the idea of a micro fund in principle but that it should be set at £1000 and have more flexibility in the percentage available.

88. Business Planning Group Report

88.1 The Committee considered a report by the Chairman of the Business Planning Group (copy appended to the signed minutes).

88.2 Resolved – That the report be noted.

89. Forward Plan of Key Decisions

89.1 The Committee considered the Forward Plan dated 1 May 2019 (copy appended to the signed minutes).

89.2 Resolved – That the Forward Plan be noted and that the A259 Littlehampton Corridor Improvements be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

90. Possible Items for Future Scrutiny

- 90.1 The Committee requested further details regarding the changes to the Executive Leadership Team and how this will impact on the service of the Chief Fire Officer.
- 90.2 Resolved – The Committee asked the Chairman to raise this issue with The Leader and Chief Executive through Democratic Services.
- 90.3 The Committee requested that it carries out the annual review of the County Council’s role in Community Safety and decided to focus on the issue of “County Lines” drug network.
- 90.4 Resolved – The Committee ask that Emily King, Principal Manager, Community Safety and Wellbeing attend the next Business Planning Group on 1 July 2019.

91. Date of Next Meeting

The Committee noted that its next scheduled meeting will take place on 20 June 2019 at 10.30am at County Hall, Chichester.

The meeting ended at 3.55 pm

Chairman