

Environment, Communities and Fire Select Committee

4 June 2018 – At a meeting of the Environment, Communities and Fire Select Committee held at 2.15 pm at County Hall, Chichester.

Present: Mr Barrett-Miles (Chairman)

Mr S J Oakley
Mr Baldwin
Mrs Bridges

Mr Jones, arrived at
10.40am
Mr McDonald
Mr Patel

Mrs Purnell

Apologies were received from Lt Col Barton, Mrs Brunsdon, Mr Oppler and Mr Purchase

Also in attendance: Ms Goldsmith, Mrs Hall, Dr O'Kelly, Mr Hunt, Mr Montyn and Mr Parikh

Part I

1. Declarations of Interest

1.1 In accordance with the Code of Conduct, the following personal interests were declared in relation to: the A27 Chichester Bypass Improvements: Submission to the Government's Roads Investment Strategy:

Mr Baldwin as a member of Horsham District Council

Ms Goldsmith as a local resident living within 6 miles of the A27

Mrs Hall as a member of the Development Control Committee at Arun District council

Mr Hunt as Cabinet Member for Finance at the County Council

Dr O'Kelly as a member of Chichester District Council

Mrs Purnell as a member of Chichester District Council and Selsey Town Council an attendee of the Build a Better A27 (BABA27) meetings and a local resident living within 10 miles of the A27

Mr S Oakley as a member of Chichester District Council and Tangmere Parish Council and a member of the County Council's Planning Committee

2. Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee

2.1 Resolved – that the minutes of the Environment, Communities and Fire Select Committee held on 16 March 2018 be approved as a correct record, and that they be signed by the Chairman.

3. Responses to Recommendations

a) County Council's Proposed Response to the Department for Transport's (DfT's) Consultation on the creation of a Major Road Network (MRN)

3.1 The Committee noted the Cabinet Member's Response to the Committee's Recommendations on the County Council's Proposed Response to the Department for Transport's (DfT's) Consultation on the

creation of a Major Road Network (MRN)

b) Fire & Rescue Service and Performance of the Substance Misuse Contract

3.2 The Committee noted the Cabinet Member's Response to the Committee's Recommendations on the Fire & Rescue Service and Performance of the Substance Misuse Contract

4. A27 Chichester Bypass Improvements: Submission to the Government's Roads Investment Strategy

4.1 The Committee considered a report by Executive Director for Economy, Infrastructure and Environment and Director for Highways and Transport (copy appended to signed minutes).

4.2 Lee Harris, Executive Director, Economy, Infrastructure and Environment and Darryl Hemmings, Planning and Transport Policy Manager introduced the report which outlined the conclusions and options drawn from the recent joint work undertaken by the County Council and technical consultants Systra, with input from various community groups involved in the 'Build a Better A27' BABA27 initiative. The report put forward three potential approaches to promoting a scheme to improve the A27 Chichester Bypass. Key points were:

- Following the cancellation in February 2017, by the Secretary of State due to lack of local consensus for the previous improvement scheme in the RS1 period, the County Council set up the BABA27 community group initiative. This involved the bringing together of various local community groups as a way of developing ideas and consensus for the improvements needed. Transport and engineering consultants Systra were also brought in to advise and develop the options.
- To promote a scheme to be included in the Government's second Roads Investment Strategy (RIS2 – 2020-25), Systra had conducted a high level assessment of options against the success criteria identified by the community group and wider delivery considerations. Although there was still no overall majority in favour of one of the options, officers recommended the County Council show preference for a route but present the other option as a reasonable alternative (Approach C). If no option was recommended, then the Committee was asked to note the fall back option would be that no major scheme would be delivered by Highways England and small scale improvements would be delivered as development takes place.
- Next steps involved a decision by the Cabinet Member which would then be sent to Highways England to consider. Further technical work by Highways England will be required on any options put forward before a future public consultation.

4.3 *The Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure thanked officers and the work of both Systra and the BABA27 community group. He advised that it was useful to keep in mind the core objective of identifying*

options that could compete with other schemes for inclusion in RIS2 and deliver solutions to local concerns. He was minded, without prejudice, that the County Council should present an option to Highways England in order to maintain traction.

4.4 The Committee invited the following non-committee local Members to address the Committee for five minutes and give comment:

4.5 Mrs Hall – She raised concerns that any major improvements to the existing A27 Chichester Bypass could cause disruption to already congested access routes to Pagham and the surrounding areas. She was in favour of the 'Mitigated Northern Route' as the preferred option.

4.6 Mr Hunt – He noted a correction was needed on page 45, Figure 2 of the Systra report, illustrating the suggested route alignments. In his view, the South Downs National Park (SDNP) boundary could be misleading and should be just south of the dotted line in the figure. He believed that it would be a mistake to put forward a single concept as the community was still split between a Northern and Southern option. He felt it was too early to confirm a choice or preference as there was still a huge amount of work to be done by Highways England to see what was practicable. He felt that improving the existing A27 Chichester Bypass was preferable and that the fairest approach was to go for proposing both routes and to consider both options. Officers advised that a revised Systra report with corrections and amendments would be published in due course.

4.7 Mr Montyn – He believed that a 'Mitigated Northern Route' was the best long term solution, which would affect fewer residents. In his view, the 'Full Southern Route' was likely to produce costly, engineering challenges, demolition of properties and changes to the structure of the canal which could do wider economic harm. He believed the work could take around 5 years to construct and cause further congestion to residents on the Manhood Peninsula. He urged the Committee to support the 'Mitigated Northern Route' as it offered the best capacity for economic growth and was a long term solution.

4.8 Dr O'Kelly – She believed that any new development would mean a worsening situation for the current congestion issues on the A27. In her view, the Mitigated Northern Route was the best option, with the Full Southern Route only as a preferred back-up. She advised that it was important to show consensus by putting forward just one option to Highways England, otherwise the County Council could be in danger of losing the project altogether. She hoped that improved cycle routes and lower bus fares would be looked at alongside this project.

4.9 Mr Parikh – He believed that local residents had major concerns over traffic and congestion and although in his view, both routes had pro's and con's, he recommended that members support the Mitigated Northern Route, with the Full Southern Route as a back-up.

4.10 Ms Goldsmith – She emphasised that she was speaking in her capacity as a local member and not as the Leader. She advised that the report had been based on 15 months of joint working undertaken with a 'bottom up' community led approach. In her view, the community

remained polarised, but she supported the Mitigated Northern Route as she believed it gave greater capacity, produced minimum disruption and was a better long term solution. She highlighted concerns associated with the Full Southern Route including increased delays and congestion brought about by construction work, increased air pollution and significant challenges and expense over changes to the canal and existing problematic junctions. The length of these works could also have a detrimental impact on businesses and the city centre.

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

- Welcomed the community led approach taken by the County Council, and understood that both options would cause concerns for local residents, noting that a proposal needed to be balanced with overall public interest.
- Noted the concerns raised over the Full Southern Route including: increased congestion on the local roads network due to diverted traffic, major engineering costs, in particular at the Stockbridge and Whyke junctions, air quality issues, environmental concerns and the financial risk of engineering works associated with the canal. Impact on the economy was also of major concern.
- Noted that even though the Mitigated Northern Route would be less disruptive to traffic than the Full Southern Route during construction, more detail was needed concerning important points, such as the possibility of a slip road connecting to the A286 road. An officer advised that the proposed Mitigated Northern Route currently didn't include plans for an A286 junction, mainly due to the fact that this would increase the area of land required for the scheme in the setting of the SDNP and would have further visual impacts. It was also likely that this would put additional pressure on local road network junctions such as the Northgate Gyratory, but when more detailed work had been carried out by Highways England such issues would be investigated further.
- Highlighted that it was important to keep pushing Highways England to deliver an option and to take into account the output from the BABA27 community group in regards to mitigations such as air quality and visual impacts; and to keep the County Council on board when plans were being defined. Also concerns were raised that by putting forward the Full Southern Route as a reasonable alternative, it could make it easier for Highways England to rule out the Mitigated Northern Route if it were to come under pressure again.
- Queried the process and next steps once the County Council had put forward a recommendation. An officer advised that it was expected that Highways England would carry out its own technical reporting alongside viewing the proposals in the Systra report and come back to the County Council with a view before the end of the year. This would then be shared with the BABA27 community group and local members. It would not be known until late 2019 when RIS2 is finalised whether the A27 Chichester scheme would be included.

4.12 *The Cabinet Member summed up by adding that the debate had shown that the Mitigated Northern Route was a superior option. Members had commented on costs and budget, although both cost estimates for both options indicated that additional funding would be required beyond the RIS1 budget range of £100-250m. Much had been made of consensus and less so around identifying some form of single approach. He believed that the County Council should put both options forward to help build local consensus as they are developed.*

4.13 Mr Patel made the following proposal, seconded by Mr McDonald which the Committee considered: -

That the Committee proposes that the 'mitigated northern route' should be identified as the County Council's preferred option.

4.14 A vote was held and the proposal was carried

4.15 Resolved – That the Committee proposes that the 'mitigated northern route' should be identified as the County Council's preferred option.

5. Growth Deals

5.1 The Committee considered a report by Executive Director Economy, Infrastructure & Environment and Director of Economy, Planning & Place (copy appended to signed minutes).

5.2 Duncan Barrett, Strategic Manager, Economy, introduced the report which highlighted the progress made to date, and the current status of programmes being delivered through the deals and proposed next steps. Key points were:

- Deals were currently in place with five of the district and borough councils, with the overall target being to secure twelve deals by March 2022.
- Although some projects had been historically challenging to get off the ground, a long process of work had now been carried out in partnership with district and boroughs councils. The next steps were to ensure the County Council, along with its partners, delivered the outcomes.

5.3. Lee Harris, Executive Director, Economy, Infrastructure and Environment added that the alignment of priorities by the County Council and the district and borough councils had been critical to progress being made.

5.4. Ms Goldsmith thanked the officers involved and advised that the Growth Deal concept came about from observations taken from Staffordshire County Council. In her view, current investment in the Crawley area showed the strength and innovation of joint partnership working.

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

- Welcomed the current progress being made on the Growth Deals and its positive benefits for the Economy.
- Queried the governance and management of each deal. An officer advised that the programme of governance in place included reporting to each respective growth board. In addition, each project would have a project manager.
- Queried whether all partnerships that were required for the successful implementation of projects were in place and what risks or barriers had been encountered that could prevent delivery or delay to the projects. An officer advised that some areas had been challenging, but there was clarity with the district and borough councils over each project and what the priorities were.
- Noted that a majority of the funding had been allocated to only three deals, with the remaining receiving smaller amounts.

5.6 Mrs Goldsmith added that partnership working was important, with people beginning to see results in areas where investment had already taken place. There had been a collective focus on key areas and projects to ensure delivery of the deals.

5.7 Resolved – That the Committee notes the progress made to date and the next steps identified in paragraph 2.1 of the report.

6. Business Planning Group Report

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

6.2 Resolved – That the Committee endorses the contents of the report and particularly the Committee's Work Programme for 2018/19, revised to reflect the Business Planning Group's (BPG's) discussions.

7. Appointment of Business Planning Group Members

7.1. The Committee considered the political group requirements for the membership of the Business Planning Group.

7.2. The Committee approved the membership by majority.

7.3 Resolved – That the Committee appoints Mr Barret-Miles (Chairman), Mr S Oakley (Vice-Chairman), Mr Baldwin, Mr Jones, and Mr Purchase to the Business Planning Group.

8. Forward Plan of Key Decisions

8.1 The Committee considered the Forward Plan dated 23 May (copy appended to signed minutes).

8.2 Resolved – That the Forward Plan be noted.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The Committee noted that its next scheduled meeting will take place on 13 June 2018 at 10.30am at County Hall, Chichester.

10. Exclusion of Press and Public

Resolved - That under Section 100(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I, of Schedule 12A, of the Act by virtue of the paragraph specified under the item and that, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption of that information outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

11. Highways Contract Update

Summary of Matters discussed in the absence of the Press and Public

(Exempt, paragraph 3, Financial or business affairs of any person (including the authority))

The Committee noted the update on the Highways Contract and members gave comment.

The meeting ended at 5.05 pm

Chairman