

Environment, Communities and Fire Select Committee

7 November 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)

Mr S J Oakley
Mr Barnard

Mr Jones, arrived at
10.33am
Mr McDonald

Mr R J Oakley
Mr Oppler, left at 1.15pm

Apologies were received from Lt Col Barton and Mrs Bridges

Absent:

Also in attendance: Mr Crow, Mr Elkins and Mrs Urquhart

Part I

128. Declarations of Interest

128.1 None declared

129. Minutes of the Last Meeting of the Committee

129.1 Resolved – that the minutes of the Environment, Communities and Fire Select Committee held on 21 October be approved as a correct record, and that they be signed by the Chairman.

130. Responses to Recommendations

130.1 The Committee is asked to note the responses to recommendations made at the 20 September 2019 meeting from the Cabinet Member for Environment and the Cabinet Member for Fire & Rescue and Communities

a) Recommendations on Limit the Use of Household Waste Recycling Sites to West Sussex Residents

The Committee noted the Cabinet Member's Response to the Committee's recommendations on the Limit the Use of Household Waste Recycling Sites to West Sussex Residents.

b) Review of Library Offer

The Committee noted the Cabinet Member's Response to the Committee's recommendations on the Review of the Library Offer and confirmed that it would like to receive more information once the results of the consultation are known.

131. Exploitation Strategy

- 131.1 The Committee considered a report by Acting Chief Executive (copy appended to the signed minutes).
- 131.2 Jim Bartlett, Contextual Safeguarding Manager, introduced the report with a presentation (copy appended to the signed minutes), which set out the Safer West Sussex Partnership current strategic priorities and how six of these seven priorities have links to County Lines.
- 131.3 Jo Banks, Detective Superintendent, Sussex Police, defined the term County Lines in more detail and explained the current situation in Sussex and its links to serious organised crime.
- 131.4 Georgina Bouette, Community Safety Manager, Arun District Council, spoke of the success in the multi-agency approach to reducing the County Lines harm, for example, reducing the risk to vulnerable individuals falling victim to "cuckooing".
- 131.5 Sara Pordham, Youth Offending Service Manager, spoke of the links to child exploitation and the impact that this has on the whole family and the training available to professionals. Also explained the ways in which children are vulnerable to exploitation.
- 131.6 Junior Smart, Business Development Manager, St Giles Trust spoke about the "SOS Project" and the intensive relationship-building work that is carried out as part of the intervention work.
- 131.7 The Committee made a number of comments including those that follow. It:
- Requested that future reports contain more detail on the evidence of scale of the problem to give the Committee more information in advance of the scrutiny.
 - Welcomed the fact that Sussex Police is working with the Metropolitan Police on the upstream activities and not just targeting the suppliers on the ground but with the purpose of dismantling a line as well.
 - Was concerned that there is no direct funding of the partnership.
 - Was pleased to hear that the performance of the 101 service was improving and that waiting times have dropped by 50%.
 - Noted the strong link between school exclusions and serious organised crime, including County Lines.

The Chairman asked the Cabinet Member to speak and he asked that a Member Day on this subject be arranged to raise awareness of what signs to look out for and who to contact.

Resolved – That the Committee:-

1. Requested that this work is properly resourced and that the Cabinet Member asks Cabinet to take this into account in budget discussions with particular focus on Not in Education, Employment or Training, (NEETS) which has also been highlighted by the Children and Young People Services Select Committee.
2. Welcomed the reintroduction of dedicated Police Community Support Officers for each area, given their vital role in gathering intelligence from communities.
3. Requested reinstatement of the Neighbourhood Panels (linked to 2 above).
4. Requested that West Sussex Connections is used to publicise the various reporting channels available to residents for reporting criminality and that the districts & boroughs are encouraged to do the same with their newsletters.
5. Requested that professionals and county councillors receive training in how to spot the early signs of exploitation, what to look for and how to report. For councillors this should be as part of the Member Day offered by Cabinet Member.
6. Welcomed the SOS Project events which work with young people exposed to or at risk of violence, vulnerability and exploitation, and requested that Committee members be kept aware of events arising in their areas, with aim for members attending.
7. Asked that district and borough councils look at the issue of high-density housing and what restrictions can be imposed on these, given that these are vulnerable areas.

132. Preview of the Draft Electric Vehicle Strategy

- 132.1 The Committee considered a report by Acting Chief Executive and Director of Environment and Public Protection (copy appended to the signed minutes).
- 132.2 Mr Jones was absent for this item as he was a member of the Task and Finish Group and Mr McDonald was seated with the Cabinet Member to answer questions if required, as he was also a member of the Task and Finish Group.
- 132.3 The Chairman welcomed the Cabinet Member for Environment to the meeting and asked her to speak. The Cabinet Member thanked the Task and Finish Group and Ruth O'Brien for the work in putting this strategy together.

132.4 Ruth O'Brien, Sustainability Advisor, introduced the report with a presentation (copy appended to the signed minutes), which set out the background regarding the desire to improve air quality by providing the infrastructure to assist people who are unable to charge up their vehicles at home.

132.5 The Committee made a number of comments including those that follow. It:

- Welcomed the Strategy.
- Agreed that a network of fuel stations will provide a lot of the in-transit charging.
- Raised concerns that this Strategy related just to residents and not visitors. Was reassured to hear that the TFG had considered this and that it is anticipated that the commercial sector will be providing this infrastructure in response to market need.
- Requested that information regarding grants available to purchase an electric vehicle or for the infrastructure is publicised to householders more widely.
- Raised concerns regarding grid capacity which was acknowledged and was reassured to hear that work will be undertaken with the supplier.
- Welcomed the caution in the Strategy as the record on modal shift in West Sussex has not been good in the past.

132.6 Resolved – That the Committee:-

1. Supports the Strategy.
2. Would like more information to be publicised on the government grants available for cars and for charging points, using West Sussex Connections and other communication methods.
3. Would like a progress report next year on the commercial/private sector situation.

133. Highways Maintenance Service Procurement

133.1 The Committee considered a report by Acting Chief Executive and Director of Highways, Transport and Planning (copy appended to the signed minutes).

133.2 The Chairman invited the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure to speak and he reminded the Committee that this matter had come to the Committee on 9 May 2019 and that this report was the update that Committee had requested. He also thanked Matt Davey, Peter Smith and the rest of the team for their detailed work.

133.3 Peter Smith, Project Manager introduced the report with a presentation (copy appended to the signed minutes), and he explained the progress that had been made since 9 May 2019 meeting. There were 70 expressions of interest which led to 18 tenders and there is confidence that the tender process has been robust.

133.4 The Committee made a number of comments including those that follow. It:

- Raised concerns regarding the small number of bidders for Lots 1, 2 and 3 and questioned how the authority could therefore be confident it was getting the best value for money, and what aspects of the tenders might have deterred potential bidders.
- Clarified that the successful bidders could mobilise in time for 1 April 2020, and asked what levels of innovation had been evident from the bids.
- Sought reassurance that the Service had sufficient staff in-house to properly manage the contract.
- Welcomed that the bids that were received were within the expected pricing levels and that they were of high quality.
- Welcomed that Lots 4, 5 and 6 did receive tenders from small and medium sized businesses as had been hoped.

Resolved – That the Committee:-

1. Noted the good progress made.
2. Noted that the procurement process has been robust.
3. Noted with disappointment the limited number of bidders for lots 1, 2 and 3.
4. Noted that lots 4, 5 and 6 had attracted small and medium sized businesses as expected.
5. Would like officers to request feedback from those who decided not to bid, so that the reasons could be better understood.
6. Would like to review performance of the contract and the team managing the contract.

134. Review of Consultant's Report, and Recommendations for Future Improvements of Major Projects Cost Estimating

134.1 The Committee considered a report by Acting Chief Executive and Director of Highways, Transport and Planning (copy appended to the signed minutes).

134.2 The Chairman invited the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure to speak and he confirmed that as budget variations had come before this Committee he had felt that it was appropriate to carry a review.

134.3 The Director of Highways, Transport and Planning confirmed that from concept to delivery takes time and Provelio Ltd have looked at both costings and delivery and that this is a significant piece of work that is ongoing.

134.4 Jeremy Sneddon, Director, Provelio Ltd, introduced the report with a presentation (copy appended to the signed minutes) which set out the background to what had been reviewed. Three projects were used as case studies, A29, A259 and A2300. These were investigated to establish what had happened and how this compared best practice in the industry.

134.5 The Committee made a number of comments including those that follow. It:

- Asked if the adoption of these recommendations would delay projects.
- Welcomed that Highways, Transport and Planning would continue to receive training through a variety of methods including on the job training.

134.6 Resolved – That the Committee:-

Supports the report and its implementation.

135. Forward Plan of Key Decisions

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

135.2 Resolved – That the Forward Plan be noted.

136. Possible Items for Future Scrutiny

136.1 The Chairman noted that there was a vacancy on the Fire and Rescue Service Task and Finish Group and therefore with the Committee agreement asked for a volunteer. Mr Barnard confirmed that he would be happy to join the Task and Finish Group.

137. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 13 January 2020 at 10.30 am at County Hall, Chichester. Probable agenda items include:

- Fire and Rescue Service Update
- Draft Response to Consultation on the Transport for the South East Strategy.

- Restructure of Highways, Transport and Planning
- Road Safety - Safer Sussex Roads Partnership

Any member wishing to place an item on the agenda for the meeting must notify the Director of Law and Assurance by 31 December 2019.

The meeting ended at 3.40 pm

Chairman