

Environment and Communities Scrutiny Committee

18 November 2020 – At a virtual meeting of the Environment and Communities Scrutiny Committee held at 10.30 am.

Present: Cllr Barrett-Miles (Chairman)

Cllr S Oakley
Cllr Baldwin
Cllr Barnard
Cllr Brunsdon

Cllr McDonald
Cllr Montyn
Cllr R Oakley
Cllr Oppler, left at
2.15pm

Cllr Quinn
Cllr Waight
Cllr Walsh

Apologies were received from

Absent:

Also in attendance: Cllr Elkins, Cllr Urquhart, Cllr Boram and Cllr O'Kelly

Part I

25. Declarations of Interest

25.1 In accordance with the Code of Conduct the following interests were declared:

Cllr Baldwin declared a prejudicial interest in items 6 and 7 as a member of the Cycling and Walking Task and Finish Group.

Cllr McDonald declared a prejudicial interest in items 6 and 7 as a member of the Cycling and Walking Task and Finish Group.

Cllr S Oakley declared a prejudicial interest in items 6 and 7 as a member of the Cycling and Walking Task and Finish Group.

Cllr Quinn declared a prejudicial interest in items 6 and 7 as a member of the Cycling and Walking Task and Finish Group.

Cllr Waight declared a personal interest in items 6 and 7 as a member of Worthing Borough Council.

Cllr Boram declared a personal interest in item 6 as Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing at Adur District Council.

26. Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee

26.1 Resolved – that the minutes of the Committee held on 14 September 2020 be approved as a correct record, and that they be signed by the Chairman.

27. Responses to Recommendations

- 27.1 The Committee noted the response to the recommendations made at the 14 September 2020 meeting regarding Serious Violence from the Cabinet Member for Communities and Fire and Rescue Service.
- 27.2 The Committee noted the response to the recommendations made at the 14 September 2020 meeting regarding the Highways and Transport Contract Delivery Update from the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure.
- 27.3 The Committee noted that a response to point 1 regarding what lobbying had been undertaken is still awaited to the Chairman's letter from the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People.

28. West Sussex Tree Plan

- 28.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director of Highways, Transport and Planning (copy appended to the signed minutes).
- 28.2 The report was introduced by the Cabinet Member who gave the detailed background to the report and how it links to the Climate Change Strategy.
- 28.3 Don Baker, Environment and Heritage Team Manager, Place Services gave a presentation (copy appended to the signed minutes), which gave more specific details.
- 28.4 The Committee made a number of comments including those that follow:
- Raised concerns about the impact of Ash Dieback, both on the County Council owned land and for West Sussex more generally and whether sufficient resources are available to tackle it.
 - Reassured to hear that we are working in partnership with the district and borough councils and the National Park Authority as well as other landowners to provide a consistent approach across the County with regards to trees and the planning system.
 - Glad to hear that the Cabinet Member has ensured that there will be funding in the budget to deal with Ash Dieback.
 - Asked that the importance of hedgerows in protecting biodiversity is acknowledged and added to the Plan.
 - Agreed that mapping for the current tree situation is critical to help protect trees from development and that where trees are planted, they are of the right type, in the right place.
 - Asked whether the plan could state that new tree stock should be UK grown to reduce the risk of diseases being imported, and support the domestic economy.

Resolved – That the Committee:-

1. Welcomed the Plan and acknowledged that it was needed.
2. Requested that hedgerows are included.
3. Requested that UK tree stock is used to reduce the risk of bringing in pathogens and to support the UK economy.
4. Noted the programme for dealing with Ash Dieback and welcomed that funding is in next year's budget.
5. Requested that members have a briefing note on Ash Dieback, when the information becomes available.
6. Asked whether we had adequate resources to implement the Plan and encouraged the Cabinet Member to pursue available external funding.
7. Supports setting up of the Forum and requested that some members of the Committee are members of the Forum. Would also like the Forum members to report back to this Committee.
8. Need to work with the local planning authorities, including the National Park as planning decisions could be in conflict with the Tree Plan.
9. Stated that it is important to get the survey and mapping work done to allow for serious dialogue on protection and future developments.
10. Through the work of the Forum, requested that drainage issues, impact of tree roots on structures, and the role of Tree Preservation Orders are considered on Council trees.
11. Requested that the Donate a Tree scheme is better publicised, and that the Cabinet Member satisfies herself that charges were appropriate.
12. Supported the idea of a leaflet/information sheet for members of the public who wish to plant trees.

29. Call-ins

- (a) **Call-in Emergency Active Travel Fund Cycle Lane Scheme in Chichester (HI10 20/21)**
- (b) **Call -in Emergency Active Travel Fund Cycle Lane Scheme A270 Upper Shoreham Road (HI11 20/21)**
 - 29.1 The Chairman decided that both call-ins should be heard together as the issues are similar for both schemes and that a separate vote on each scheme would take place at the end of the debate.
 - 29.2 Cllr O'Kelly introduced the request to call-in the decision by the Cabinet Member for Highways and

Infrastructure concerning the Emergency Active Travel Fund Cycle Lane Scheme in Chichester HI10 (20/21) (call in request appended to the signed minutes) and highlighted the following points:

- 29.3 The funding was awarded to provide an opportunity to improve mental and physical health and air quality but also to meet national climate change objectives by providing real alternatives to car driving.
- 29.4 That with the country now in a second lockdown this is not the time to be taking the scheme out and stated that the option of improving the scheme was not considered. Some sections of the scheme work really well and there is no commitment to keeping those but just the complete removal. The main issue with this scheme is around the lack of consultation rather than the scheme itself.
- 29.5 Cllr Boram introduced the request to call-in the decision by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure concerning the Emergency Active Travel Fund Cycle Lane Scheme A270 Upper Shoreham Road HI11(20/21) (call in request appended to the signed minutes) and highlighted the following points:
 - 29.6 This route had already been identified by Adur District Council in its Active Travel Plan as it provides a link the to the Downs Link, Shoreham Airport and Ricardo's. The route also features in the Government's promotional video.
 - 29.7 The route has proved to be very well used particularly by children attending the local schools and many of the schools are supportive of the retention of the scheme as it provides a safe cycling route not previously available.
 - 29.8 Cllr Elkins, Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure addressed the Committee, highlighting the following points:
 - 29.9 The purpose of the schemes was to offer an alternative to public transport use particularly buses at a time when the Government were asking people to reduce public transport use. This is no longer the case. Traffic demands have changed and the reductions in car use are no longer being shown.
 - 29.10 The schemes were designed to be temporary and were without engagement with stakeholders due to the tight timescales.

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

- Questioned why it was felt that these successful schemes needed to be removed. In particular, the Shoreham scheme which has exceeded expectations.
- Agreed that it was justified to remove the less successful schemes.
- Was disappointed that some data was not available due to the vehicle loop detectors not working in Chichester and that most of the survey responses were from motorists rather than from cyclists who used the scheme.
- Asked how long the Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders (TTRO) would be in place as the public assume that temporary means for the duration of the public health emergency and why it would not be possible to extend them.
- Asked whether the temporary schemes could be retained while a permanent scheme is prepared.

29.12 The Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure summed up by highlighting the difference in the schemes and the issues regarding extending the TTRO's.

29.13 Cllr O'Kelly summed up stating that the Cabinet Member and officers have not really evidenced how "Gear Change" is being processed and that removal at this time would cause a loss of confidence in the whole process.

29.14 Cllr Boram summed up and agreed that six weeks is not long enough to judge a schemes success and traffic levels are now almost back to pre Covid levels. The County Council needs to be encouraging people out of their cars and onto sustainable transport. Maintenance costs are small compared to the safety of children.

29.15 A vote was held on retaining the Chichester scheme and the proposal was lost.

Resolved - That the Committee:-

Rejects the call-in of the Emergency Active Travel Fund Cycle Scheme in Chichester but requested that the Cabinet Member considers the closeness of the vote before confirming his decision.

29.16 A vote was held on retaining the Shoreham scheme and the proposal was carried.

Resolved - That the Committee:-

Supports the call-in of the Emergency Active Travel Fund Cycle Scheme A270 Upper Shoreham Road and asks the Cabinet Member to reconsider his decision.

30. Update on Cycling and Walking in West Sussex

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

30.2 The report was introduced by the Cabinet Member.

30.3 Andy Ekinsmyth, Head of Transport and Network Management explained the lessons learned from Tranche 1 of the Emergency Active Travel Fund and how these will be used in the process for prioritising Tranche 2.

30.4 West Sussex County Council has been awarded £2.35 million for Tranche 2 although the full details are not yet known. Gear Change and LTN1 has created a significant change in the Government's approach to active travel.

30.5 The Chairman asked the Chairman of the Cycling and Walking Executive Task and Finish Group for comments and he confirmed the Group's desire that cyclists will be separated from traffic in Tranche 2 schemes.

30.6 The Committee made a number of comments including those that follow:

- Asked if it will be possible to link up some of the piecemeal cycling infrastructure as some gaps are relatively short and whether cyclists could be encouraged through education to use paths that are already available.
- Raised concerns regarding the lack of local member involvement up to this point.
- Highlighted that parked vehicles are a serious concern for many cyclists, and raised concerns that in urban areas, where it is more difficult to ensure segregation, that our parking strategy is amended.

Resolved - that the Committee:-

1. Was supportive of the approach being taken and that lessons have been learned, particularly regarding better communication and consultation.

2. Would hope that the Strategy will include linking up some of the piecemeal cycling infrastructure that is already in place.
3. Would like the Strategy to include public education to persuade cyclists to use the cycle paths already in place.
4. Would like to see local councillors involved in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP).
5. Would like the opportunity to review the criteria for prioritising potential schemes and the resources required, and whether prioritising some projects would cause other projects to drop off the list.

31. Pavement Parking Consultation response

- 31.1 Miles Davy, Parking Manager gave some feedback on the response to the Department of Transport's Pavement Parking Consultation and confirmed that the Council's preferred option is to deal with "un-necessary obstruction".
- 31.2 The Committee made a number of comments including those that follow. It:
- Stated that although "un-necessary obstruction" was probably the best option it could be difficult to define and is a complex offence to prove.
 - Asked whether verge parking was included within this. This is currently outside of the scope as it is difficult to prove obstruction.
 - Asked that the issue of parking comes back to the Committee next year.

32. Requests for Call-in

- 32.1 Call-in requests were received for the proposed decisions by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure concerning the Emergency Active Travel Fund Cycle Lane – A286 Chichester ring-road HI10 (20/21), published on the Executive Decision Database on 23 October 2020 and in the Member's Bulletin on 28 October 2020 and concerning the Emergency Active Travel Fund Cycle Lanes HI11 (20/21) – specifically, as it pertains to the A270 Upper Shoreham Road scheme, published on the Executive Decision Database on 3 November 2020 and in the Member's Bulletin on 4 November 2020.
- 32.2 These requests were accepted by The Director of Law and Assurance and were heard in Item 6.

33. Forward Plan of Key Decisions

- 33.1 The Committee considered the Forward Plan dated 13 November 2020 (a copy appended to the signed minutes).
- 33.2 The Committee requested that the Integrated Parking Strategy returns once the review has been completed.
- 33.3 Resolved – That the Forward Plan be noted.

34. Possible Items for Future Scrutiny

- 34.1 A suggestion was made, and supported, to scrutinise a matter arising from Chichester District Council's developing Local Plan. To mitigate against the anticipated additional local traffic arising from a planned housing uplift, it was stated that CDC is preparing proposals for the five junctions of the A27 around Chichester. However, the Committee was told that this work has been undertaken somewhat in secrecy, further that County Council officers have been involved, and have no objection in principle to what is being proposed. As well as being the local highway authority, the County Council would also be involved as a landowner, yet County Council officers have not provided members any clarity on the availability of this land, despite having been asked for this information some time ago.

It was proposed to the Business Planning Group that these developing plans for the A27 at Chichester, together with the availability of the Council's land, are considered by the Committee at its meeting in January, in the interests of openness and transparency.

- 34.2 The Committee also asked for an update on the Horsham Regeneration project which is no longer part of this Committee's remit. The Chairman agreed to seek the views of the Chairman of Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee regarding the scrutiny of this issue.

35. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 11 January 2021 at 10.30am. Probable agenda items include:

- Climate Change Strategy Delivery Plan
- Savings Proposals

Any member wishing to place an item on the agenda for the meeting must notify the Director of Law and Assurance by 29 December 2020.

The meeting ended at 3.24 pm

Chairman