

Environment and Communities Scrutiny Committee

11 January 2021 – 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 McDonald	Cllr Quinn
Cllr Baldwin	Cllr Montyn	Cllr Waight
Cllr Barnard	Cllr R Oakley	Cllr Walsh
Cllr Brunsdon, arrived at 10.44am	Cllr Oppler, arrived at 10.48am, left at 1.15pm	

Also in attendance: Cllr Crow, Cllr Elkins and Cllr Urquhart

Part I

36. Declarations of Interest

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

Cllr Walsh declared a personal interest in item 5 as Leader of Arun District Council.

Cllr S Oakley declared a personal interest in item 5 as a member of Chichester District Council.

37. Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee

37.1 Resolved – that the minutes of the Committee held on 18 November 2020 be approved as a correct record, and that they be signed by the Chairman.

38. Part II Matters

38.1 The Chairman confirmed that he was minded to move this to Part I and for it to be discussed under item 5.

39. Responses to Recommendations

39.1 The Committee noted the response to recommendations made at the 14 September meeting from the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People.

39.2 The Committee noted the response to recommendations made at the 18 November meeting from the Cabinet Member for Environment and the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure.

- 39.3 The Committee noted that the first meeting of the Tree Forum is being held on 15 February and that two places are available to members of the Committee.
- 39.4 The Committee noted the response from the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure regarding a matter arising from Chichester District Council's developing Local Plan.
- 39.5 The Committee made a number of comments including those that follow:
- That similar issues may affect other local plan proposals and so be of wider interest to members across the Council.
 - That, at the point Chichester District Council choose to consult on their local plan there may need to be scrutiny of the County Council's intended response.
 - There is a need for engagement with officers responsible for responding to any formal consultation.

Resolved – That the Committee

- Agreed to setting up a group to consider the issues arising from this matter and that Cllr Montyn will Chair the group. Cllr Baldwin, Cllr Brunsdon, Cllr S Oakley and Cllr Walsh also confirmed their wish to be part of the group.

Post meeting note

Following discussion between the Director of Law and Assurance and the Chairman, the following way forward was agreed:

- *Any group of members dealing with this matter would need to be self-supporting. There is no defined scrutiny work to warrant a formal task and finish group.*
- *The group would comprise whichever members choose to come together in response to the invitation from the appointed chair.*
- *The appropriate officer lead would be Darryl Hemmings, Transport Planning and Policy Manager or whichever officer is responsible for responding to any formal consultation by Chichester District Council in relation to its local plan in due course.*
- *That activity would arise at the point Chichester District Council choose to consult on their local plan.*
- *Referral back to Environment and Communities Scrutiny Committee would not be expected in the absence of substantive committee business on the matter.*

40. Climate Change Strategy Delivery Plan

- 40.1 The Committee reviewed the Climate Change Delivery Plan (including the Carbon Management Plan).
- 40.2 The Delivery Plan was introduced by the Cabinet Member.

- 40.3 Steve Read, Director of Environment and Public Protection, Catherine Cannon, Sustainability Team Leader, Andrew Edwards, Director of Property and Assets and Ruth O'Brien, Sustainability Advisor gave a presentation (copy appended to the signed minutes), which gave more specific details.
- 40.4 The Committee made a number of comments, including those that follow:
- Asked for the differences between carbon neutral, carbon negative and zero carbon, and these were explained.
 - Was pleased to hear that there were 2000 responses to the consultation but was disappointed to hear that there were fewer responses from younger people. Asked that the team continue to explore different methods for engagement.
 - Was pleased to hear about Southern Water being keen to work in partnership with the Council around water saving.
 - Requested that we work to understand barriers to change, especially as many residents are struggling with basic needs at the moment and cannot afford upfront costs for more efficient products.
 - Acknowledged that the decarbonising of our Corporate Estate will be a long-term target.
 - Acknowledged that electric vehicles may be an interim solution until hydrogen technology becomes a viable alternative.
 - Was pleased to hear that the Government's commitment to phase out gas boilers is being taken into account but recognised that this will require significant funding. Funding sources are being explored (County Council or Central Government) by the Cabinet Member.
 - Acknowledged that for many people the new ways of working that Covid has brought have been a benefit and hoped that some of these will continue in the long term. The reduction in the need to travel was welcomed.
 - Asked whether it would be possible to explore decarbonising the Council's pension investments.

Resolved – That the Committee:-

1. Supported of the Carbon Management Plan and the Delivery Plan.
2. Noted the importance of continuing to work in partnership with districts and boroughs but requested that more effort is put into engaging with young people.

3. Noted that hydrogen technology is a long term solution but that the Electric Vehicle Strategy is still important and that charging infrastructure is still required, and was pleased to hear that we are still working with the district and borough councils on this to deliver by end of this year.
4. Requested that a staff education campaign be carried out to remind people about closing windows, turning off lights etc. Also for the general public to be educated on energy saving and climate change.
5. Noted that upgrading of the heating system in council-owned buildings will be required and is being hastened by the Government decision to phase out gas boilers, and that significant funding will be required so there will be a need for continual dialogue with Central Government.
6. Supported the work in keeping the "grey mileage" down where it is practical but must not forget the digital divide.
7. Noted that for many it has been a positive experience to work from home.
8. Requested that the issues of kelp forest restoration, revisiting the street lighting timings and traffic free school routes are investigated.
9. Requested the whole-life costs are taken into account when new projects are being drawn up.
10. Welcomed the introduction of the climate change RAG impact assessment (Red/Amber/Green) tool into decision-making.
11. Acknowledged that significant behavioural change will be required of residents in order to decarbonise the transport network.
12. Requested that we work with the regional school commissioner to raise the profile of energy efficiency at new school sites.

41. Strategic Budget Savings - Pre decision scrutiny

- 41.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director of Law and Assurance (copy appended to the signed minutes).
- 41.2 Tony Kershaw, Director of Law and Assurance explained that the report had been produced before the full details of the Government settlement were known. The main remaining savings proposals is the removal of Community Initiative Fund (CIF) and review of CLC arrangements.
- 41.3 The Committee made a number of comments including those that follow:

- Pleased that the Government settlement has meant that a number of the more unpalatable savings proposals have been removed but acknowledged that this is a one-year settlement.
- Stated continuing support for the CLC's as this is the best opportunity for our residents to meet their County Councillors and to be engaged in the democratic process. Did however acknowledge that some are poorly attended and not everyone supported their retention.
- Requested details of the criteria for working with parish councils to review the library offer.
- Requested details on the review of highways and transport fees and charges.

Resolved – That the Committee:-

1. Welcomed the removal of the proposed savings for the Household Waste Recycling Sites and the reduction in bus passes and subsidies, however pointed out that the Government settlement is for just one year.
2. Would like to retain CLC's and welcomed the study into how they can continue.
3. Would like to retain the CIF and welcomed the opportunity to have a dialogue with the Cabinet Member.

42. West Sussex Reset Plan and Key Performance Indicators

- 42.1 The Committee considered a report by the Chief Executive.
- 42.2 The report was introduced by Sanjay Mackintosh, Consultant, who gave some clarity that these are a reduced list rather than the full list.
- 42.3 The Committee made a number of recommendations which are set out below:

Keeping people safe from vulnerable situations

1. Number of responses to reports of predatory trading and subsequent visits.

Resolved – that the Committee:-

- Agreed that it was a good KPI but would like to understand how this has changed due to Covid and how we have helped residents become more savvy around cyber crime.
- Was concerned about the labelling "predatory trading" rather than "predatory calls".

- Asked if the 200 baseline could be explained in regards to the timeframe.
- Questioned why there was no KPI for the Killed and Seriously Injured and made a recommendation that requested that the Cabinet Member reconsider and put this measure back into the main list.

A sustainable and prosperous economy

2. Length of new cycle paths across the County.

Resolved – that the Committee:-

- Supported the target but were disappointed that it was not more ambitious and that it does not show where linkages between existing paths are going to be made. Recommended that the target is increased.

3. Percentage length of A and B roads that require maintenance.

Resolved – that the Committee:-

- Recommended that C class roads are also included as this would then cover 45% of the network.

4. Highway defects repaired within the required time scale.

Resolved – that the Committee:-

- Requested that Cabinet reconsider as these figures would not show a decline in the network as this is a KPI that allows the situation to deteriorate.

5. Equivalent tonnes(te) of CO₂ emissions from WSCC activities.

Resolved – that the Committee:-

- Requested that the KPI explains where the figure of 13,492CO₂ te had come from and that the missing figures are included.

6. Household waste recycled, reused or composted.

Resolved – that the Committee:-

- Accepted the KPI but regrets that it is not more ambitious.

7. Kg of residual waste per household

Resolved – that the Committee

- Requests that this KPI is removed as appears to partially duplicate 6 above.

Helping people and communities to fulfil their potential

8. Use of virtual/digital library services by residents.

Resolved – that the Committee

- Agreed that this a suitable measure.

9. Number of people reached and supported via the West Sussex Community Hub during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Resolved – that the Committee

- Agreed that this is suitable measure but requested a breakdown of the sort of support given.

10. Percentage of people affected by domestic violence and abuse who feel safe upon leaving the service.

Resolved – that the Committee

- Acknowledged the difficulty in stating a baseline figure but requested that a figure of 2/3 be used.
- Welcomed the KPI but concerned that it is hard to know whether a leaver is genuinely satisfied with the service, and that we may be misleading ourselves since victims feeling safe is not the same as victims being safe.

43. Forward Plan of Key Decisions

43.1 The Committee considered the Forward Plan dated 4 January 2021 (a copy appended to the signed minutes).

Resolved – That the Forward Plan be noted.

44. Possible Items for Future Scrutiny

44.1 A suggestion was made and supported that the Business Planning Group look at Trading Standards work particularly with regards to the Key Performance Indicator in the Reset Plan.

44.2 The Committee also asked that interested members look at the revised business case for Halewick Lane.

45. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 3 March 2021 at 10.30am. Probable agenda items include:

- Update on WSCC Renewable Energy Schemes and Work to Refresh the Overall Strategy.
- Review of the New Approach to using Community Groups to Deliver Highways Services.

- Future of Community Highways Schemes and Community Traffic Regulation Orders.

Any member wishing to place an item on the agenda for the meeting must notify the Director of Law and Assurance by 22 February 2021.

The meeting ended at 4.12 pm

Chairman