

Communities, Highways and Environment Scrutiny Committee

30 September 2021 – At a virtual meeting of the Communities, Highways and Environment Scrutiny Committee held at 11.00 am at Virtual meeting with restricted public access.

Present:

Cllr Britton
Cllr Oakley
Cllr Albury

Cllr Baldwin
Cllr Greenway
Cllr Markwell

Cllr Milne
Cllr Oppler, left at 2.03
Cllr B Cooper, left at 1.20

Apologies were received from Cllr Baxter, Cllr Kenyon and Cllr Quinn

Also in attendance: Cllr Crow, Cllr J Dennis and Cllr Urquhart

12. Declarations of Interest

12.1 No declarations were made.

13. Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee

13.1 Resolved - that the minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2021 be approved as a correct record, and that they be signed by the Chairman.

14. Managing Demand at Recycling Centres

14.1 The Committee considered a report and presentation on managing demand at recycling centres (copies appended to the signed minutes).

14.2 Summary of responses to members comments and questions: -

- Although some household recycling centres took trade waste for a fee, most was dealt with at private sites
- Material that was subject to fly-tipping was not the sort of material that household recycling centres dealt with
- There was anecdotal evidence that some Bognor Regis residents resented the booking trial and the limit on visits allowed although feedback showed 60% were in favour of the system
- The system of five visits a month was working well, but the Council would wait for the outcome of consultation before reviewing this
- If the system became permanent, consideration would be given to providing an app for bookings
- There was confidence that the system would be cost neutral
- A concern was raised regarding the state of the WSCC-owned access road to The Woodhorn Group's green waste recycling centre in Tangmere. It is perceived as a potential deterrent for private

contractors with small vehicles and a contributing factor to subsequent green waste fly-tipping in the local area

- Changes to paperwork by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs could explain the increase in fly-tipping of green waste
- Sites could be added to the system if there were major issues at them such as congestion
- If same day bookings were introduced, the cost would be absorbed by existing arrangements
- As some sites did not accept trailers, some people would have to go to sites that did
- Capacity at sites in Horsham and Littlehampton could be improved in the future

14.3 Resolved – that the Committee: -

- i. Looks forward to the possibility of making the pilot booking system permanent at the Bognor Regis, Crawley, Horsham, Littlehampton, Shoreham and Worthing recycling centres and extending the booking system to include the Burgess Hill recycling centre, going to public consultation and receiving the feedback so the County Council can make a more informed decision on making this initiative permanent or not.
- ii. Welcomes the fact that same day booking and the introduction of an app to make it easier for people to book is being explored
- iii. Asks the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change to note concerns around fly-tipping and the site at Bognor Regis

15. Local Flood Risk Management Strategy

15.1 The Committee considered a report and presentation on the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (copies appended to the signed minutes).

15.1 Summary of responses to members' questions and comments: -

- A lot of work had been carried out in areas of Bognor Regis that suffered from flooding in 2012 – these areas would be covered by the strategy but are not in the top 25 areas for concern
- Co-operation between councils and water authorities had improved since 2010 which had helped alleviate some historical problems - all district and borough councils had drainage engineers which also helps
- The actions the Council takes to ensure repairs to drainage systems are made by landowners is successful meaning legal action is not required
- Ditch wardens were used on the Manhood peninsular to spot potential drainage problems early – this scheme could be rolled out across the county
- The Council is building a database on underground highways assets as little is known about them
- If the Council learns of damage to drainage systems by utility companies, it works with them to resolve the issues
- The Council was working with Southern Water to deal with groundwater problems throughout the county
- District and borough councils received funding for drainage projects via the Community Infrastructure Levy

- Work took place with developers on betterments to drainage problems that fell outside of Community Infrastructure Levy or Section 106 projects
- The Committee was promised a briefing note on areas of responsibility for flooding matters and the top 25 areas of concern listed in priority order

15.3 Resolved – that the Committee: -

- i. Welcomes the improvements made to the strategy for 2021-2026 acknowledging the criteria for the 25 at risk areas, but requests that they be presented in prioritised order from
- ii. Welcomes a briefing note on who is responsible for what in managing flood risk
- iii. Acknowledges the challenge of accessing funding
- iv. Asks that consideration should be given to the deliverability of actions for the priority areas with the time and resources available and the resilience of the Council to deal with climate change rainfall events
- v. Encourages more proactive enforcement of repairs to degrading drainage systems

16. End of June 2021 (Quarter 1) Quarterly Performance and Resources Report

16.1 The Committee considered the end of June (Quarter 1) Quarterly Performance and Resources report (copy appended to the signed minutes).

16.2 Summary of responses to members' questions and comments: -

- It was seen as a good thing that people continued to contact the community hub – most people now needed signposting to services rather than practical help
- The target of 7.5km of new cycle paths a year was based on length of designated paths, not quality, and did not include those in new developments. No new cycle paths were built on roads
- Longer term funding would improve the scheduling of building cycle paths – weather was not expected to cause delays
- The Council was in dialog with the contractor to clear the backlog of defects which would be made worse by a bad winter
- The Council paid the contractor a fixed sum to repair a fixed number of defects and agreed a fee with them if the number of repairs needed was exceeded
- Maintenance of A and B roads only used capital investment if there were problems
- There was no evidence that e-scooters were a specific factor in the number of people killed or seriously injured on the roads – figures for accidents involving e-scooters were not recorded separately

16.3 Resolved – that the Committee: -

- i. Acknowledges the issues around the registration service and where Covid has impacted and how we anticipate this to improve moving forward now as restrictions are easing
- ii. Acknowledges what the uptake of the digital offer in libraries
- iii. Acknowledges the challenge and importance of risks and performance issues, and the reliance upon officers flagging these
- iv. Is content with the new format of the Performance and Resources Report

17. Highways Maintenance Contracts

17.1 The Committee considered a report and presentation on the highways maintenance contracts (copies appended to the signed minutes).

17.2 Summary of responses to members' questions and comments: -

- The Council was generally satisfied with the way the different highway maintenance contracts are being delivered but there was room for improvement with Lot 1 – Core Maintenance Services
- The biggest challenge going forward was maintaining a balance across all lots by not taking for granted those working well and focussing too much on those not doing so well
- The Council was confident it had adequate supervision of contracts although this was time consuming
- The shortage of HGV drivers had impacted on the number of gritter lorry drivers available – training staff to make up for this could be an option
- Some drainage targets had been missed as chambers could not be reached due to them being obstructed by parked cars
- The current delivery model is working better than previous ones and is the best possible with the resources available, but it was acknowledged that this still might not live up to residents' expectations
- Road quality suffered from lack of investment nationally and the volume of traffic, particularly HGVs, not the weight of HGVs
- HGVs were encouraged to take primary routes where possible, but had to use minor roads for things such as deliveries, waste collection and bus routes

17.3 Resolved – that the Committee: -

- i. Acknowledges that very soon the whole process of procuring highways maintenance contracts starts again and requests that the Committee is involved as and when appropriate
- ii. Would like to know more about what the impact may be over the winter of a shortage of HGV drivers and how that impacts on service delivery
- iii. Would like a better understanding of the drainage infrastructure
- iv. Requests training on this subject when and where appropriate

18. Establishment of a On-Street Parking Management Task and Finish Group

18.1 Resolved – that the Committee agrees the membership of the On-Street Parking Management Task and Finish Group as Cllr Albury, Cllr Baldwin, Cllr Baxter, Cllr Milne and Cllr Oakley.

19. Establishment of a Gatwick Airport Northern Runway Consultation Task and Finish Group

19.1 Resolved – that the Committee agrees the membership of the Gatwick Airport Northern Runway Consultation Task and Finish Group as Cllr Albury, Cllr Britton, Cllr Oakley, Cllr Quinn and Cllr Milne.

20. Forward Plan of Key Decisions

20.1 Resolved – that the Committee notes the Forward Plan of Key Decisions.

21. Work Programme Planning and Possible Items for Future Scrutiny

21.1 The Committee considered its work programme and possible items for future scrutiny.

21.2 Resolved – that the Committee agrees the following changes to its work programme: -

- No savings proposals would be coming to the November meeting
- Preview of any decision on the future of Operation Watershed to come to the Committee (probably in 2022)
- Annual monitoring of the Highways Maintenance Contract and procurement on new contracts to come to the Committee at the appropriate time
- The Flood Risk Management Strategy to be reviewed again in 2023

22. Date of Next Meeting

22.1 The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 24 November at 10.30 am at County Hall, Chichester.

The meeting ended at 3.22 pm

Chairman