

Communities, Highways and Environment Scrutiny Committee

24 November 2021 – At a hybrid meeting of the Communities, Highways and Environment Scrutiny Committee held at 10.30 am at County Hall, Chichester, PO19 1RQ.

Present: Cllr Oakley (Chairman)

Cllr Britton, virtual attendee	Cllr Baxter	Cllr Patel, left at 3.01pm
Cllr Albury	Cllr Greenway	Cllr Quinn
Cllr Ali	Cllr Kenyon	
Cllr Baldwin	Cllr Milne, arrived at 10.37am	

Apologies were received from Cllr Oppler

Also in attendance: Cllr Bence, Cllr Crow, Cllr J Dennis, Cllr A Jupp, Cllr Urquhart and Cllr Wall

Part I

23. Declarations of Interest

23.1 No declarations were made.

24. Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee

24.1 In reference to page 6, 14.3, Cllr Quinn spoke in support of the pilot booking system at Crawley household waste recycling centre and reported that it has been well-received by local residents. It was suggested that the arrangement should be monitored and feedback sought from the local authority every six months.

24.2 The Chairman advised that this should be raised as a regular item at the Committee's Business Planning Group and any subsequent emerging trends could be considered as a main agenda item.

24.3 Resolved - that the minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2021 be approved as a correct record, and that they be signed by the Chairman.

25. Responses to Recommendations

25.1 In reference to page 3, point 5, it was questioned why the response specifically focuses on riparian ownership and not address drainage systems within the County Council's remit.

25.2 The Chairman clarified that the County Council is the Local Lead Flood Authority for general drainage and riparian ownership, as well as being responsible for its own drainage infrastructure.

25.3 The Committee noted the response to recommendations made at the 30 September 2021 meeting from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change and the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport.

26. Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse

26.1 The Committee considered a report and presentation on the County Council's partnership approach to Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse (DSVA) (copies appended to the signed minutes).

26.2 Summary of responses to members comments and questions: -

- Measuring the effectiveness of ongoing outreach work includes; asking victims and survivors questions about their safety and security, visibly improved trust and confidence among victims coming forward and seeking support and a reduction in the number of repeat victims that use the service.
- Communication channels were made more accessible during lockdown through; extended service hours on weekdays, weekends and bank holidays, closer partnership-working with the police and children's social care colleagues and virtual sessions held with GPs and referred patients. Partners have also developed remote ways of working with clients to continue support and be more available for those seeking help.
- The West Sussex Education for Safeguarding (E4S) curriculum is voluntary and not a statutory requirement (56% take-up among schools). The Safer West Sussex Partnership (SWSP) has identified the 44% of non-participating schools and has prioritised working with them to adopt the curriculum. Members were encouraged to engage with schools in their divisions and help promote E4S.
- Operation Encompass is a police-led awareness initiative which urgently notifies schools of reported incidents of domestic abuse involving their pupils.
- Information-sharing agreements and respective duties are clearly understood by agencies and partners without barriers.
- SWSP can work with and support providers to reduce the demand on partners working over-capacity, but unable to commission or fund services.
- There is a risk that children who are exposed to domestic abuse become victims or perpetrators themselves in adulthood or become involved in other types of criminality.
- SWSP is working proactively to engage with ethnic minority communities and build trust and confidence to overcome language barriers and cultural differences with the aim of making services more accessible.
- It was suggested that, in liaison with district and borough councils, public sector vehicles should be utilised to promote public service messaging more frequently.
- The Domestic Abuse Act's newly imposed duty to provide safe accommodation will have resource implications on the service.

The findings of the draft needs assessment consultation and the final strategy will be published in January.

- Services reliant on short-term funding have contingency/exit plans in place to ensure delivery is met by working collaboratively with other service providers.
- SWSP local services do support male victims and give the option of working with a male Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) if they prefer. The County Council does not provide a dedicated service for male victims.
- Pharmacies are recognised nationally as safe spaces and Sussex Police is working to identify and visit popular public places to determine their suitability for safe space status and grow the number of locations countywide.

26.3 Resolved – that the Committee: -

- i. Approved of the scope and range of work being carried out to address the issues of DSVA and reduce harm.
- ii. Approved of the range and scope of work to engage with all sections of our communities.
- iii. Asked Cabinet Members to identify and raise issues of short-term funded services (particularly in respect of early intervention and step-down services) in their respective portfolio areas and describe what contingency plans are in place to prolong service delivery or mitigate its termination at the end of funding periods.
- iv. Agreed that public messaging is being disseminated adequately across the expected communication channels and suggests that the service explores utilising public sector vehicles, town & parish noticeboards and GP surgeries.

26.4 The Committee recommended that an all-member Member Development Session is held within the next one or two years to receive an update on the progress made and further challenges arising from SWSP's arrangements for DSVA.

26.5 The Cabinet Member for Adults Services suggested that the Health and Wellbeing Board would be the appropriate forum for determining how best the cross-portfolio implications of the Domestic Abuse Act are taken forward.

27. Energy Strategy 2030

27.1 The Committee considered a report and presentation on the County Council's draft Energy Strategy 2030 (copies appended to the signed minutes).

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

- The strategy is a high-level document and action points will be included and expanded upon in detail in the subsequent action plan following consultation with district and borough councils.

- The strategy promises to strengthen the partnership working set out in the 2016 strategy and involves local authorities promoting energy efficient schemes and funding streams for low-income households in fuel poverty.
- The County Council works closely with the West Sussex Fuel Poverty Co-ordinator at Arun District Council to ensure public messaging is joined up and consistent between all tiers of local government.
- 70 local schools were identified to undergo structural roof surveys with the aim of installing photovoltaics (PV) and battery systems. The County Council will explore alternative options if survey results find certain schools unsuitable.
- In reference to page 41, the Service welcomed the suggestion of including a section on Training and Skills. The County Council has an adopted approach with its existing solar farms where local education institutions are invited to teach awareness of public-owned assets as learning resources.
- The Service gave reassurance that they are working to ensure the County Council's own future joint venture developments will be retrofitted where necessary.
- The County Council is an advocate of embedding indicators, criteria and specifications within its procurement process when going out to tender for service providers.
- The Service is aware of some County businesses leading in design and development in their field and the County Council aims to work with local suppliers and service providers where possible.
- The strategy is in line with the Local Electricity Bill in terms of procuring electricity generators to become local energy suppliers.
- The strategy is not intended to influence or steer local planning authority policy.

27.3 Resolved – that the Committee: -

- Agreed that the rationale for the chosen scenario is justified and therefore the best fit for the County.
- Agreed that the County Council's climate change priorities have evolved to a degree since its 2016 strategy in response to the ever-developing international and national landscape.
- Noted future concern of potential funding cuts to local authorities in recognition of the challenges faced by central government in balancing varying priorities.
- Agreed that the strategy is significantly ambitious and that its deliverability will need to be assessed following the provision of further detail about its implementation and at the conclusion of the consultation period in early 2022.

28. Review of Community Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs)

- 28.1 The Committee considered a report and presentation on the County Council's review of community Traffic Regulation Orders (copies appended to the signed minutes).
- 28.2 Summary of responses to members' questions and comments: -

- As part of the new TRO Assessments, credit is awarded to applications when external funding is available for the delivery of TRO works. This is likely to help applications that, in the past, might not have been progressed as they didn't quite meet the threshold score. All schemes must be assessed as safe and make sense in terms of traffic management. Assurance was given that the rolling programme option eliminates queue jumping as applications would instead be assessed as and when they are submitted.
- A six-month review has been factored in by the service for the rolling programme option in order to monitor workload capacity and any arising delays.
- As part of the rolling programme, any underspend in the annual TRO budget allocation can be rolled over to the following financial year (subject to capital programme governance).
- The service clarified that applicants are required to gain the support of their local town, parish or neighbourhood council. It was deemed unreasonable to request district or borough council support.
- The service confirmed that there are no geographical restrictions in place for individuals wishing to object to a proposed scheme.
- Proactive communications will be carried out with town and parish councils after the Cabinet Member decision is taken in January 2022 to make them fully aware that their support is required at the beginning of the application process in order to expedite a scheme. This information would also be made publicly available on the County Council's website.
- Records are kept of all reported damage to street furniture and repairs are covered under the service's budget for general maintenance. Partial costs are collected from damage caused by third parties where there is a police record.

28.3 Resolved – that the Committee: -

- Agreed that their preferred option is the rolling programme.
- Agreed that the existing number of five objections is a reasonable threshold at which the decision to proceed with a TRO would be referred to the Cabinet Member.
- Agreed that the new timeframes for delivering a community TRO are realistic.

29. (Quarter 2) Quarterly Performance and Resources Update

29.1 The Committee considered the end of September (Quarter 2) Quarterly Performance and Resources report (copy appended to the signed minutes).

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

- What impact does the repairs works at the A285 at Duncton have on Highway's budget for the remainder of 2021/22? The Director of

Highways and Transport was not present but will provide a retrospective answer in due course.

29.3 Resolved – that the Committee noted the report.

30. Forward Plan of Key Decisions

30.1 Resolved – that the Committee noted the Forward Plan of Key Decisions.

31. Work Programme Planning and Possible items for Future Scrutiny

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

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

- Ninesh Edwards, Senior Advisor, informed the Committee that two additional items concerning the final reports of the Gatwick Northern Runway Project and On-Street Parking Management Task and Finish Groups will be heard at the next meeting of the Committee in January 2022.
- Ninesh Edwards informed the Committee that a further item has been added to the agenda for the March 2022 meeting which will allow members an early opportunity to influence the Road Safety Strategy.
- The Chairman highlighted to the Committee that the next potential opportunity to debate the County Council's proposed response to National Highways' A27 Arundel Bypass project may be arranged during the statutory public consultation period, between January and March 2022.

32. Date of Next Meeting

32.1 The next meeting of the Committee will be held virtually via Microsoft Teams on 19 January 2022 at 10.30 am.

The meeting ended at 3.23 pm

Chairman