

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT, HIGHWAYS AND WASTE POLICY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Environment, Highways and Waste Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Thursday, 29 July 2010.

PRESENT: Mr C Hibberd (Chairman), Mr M Robertson (Vice-Chairman), Miss S J Carey (Substitute for Mr W L Richardson), Mr N J Collor, Mr J M Cubitt, Mr M J Harrison, Mr J D Kirby, Mr S Manion, Mr R A Pascoe, Mrs E M Tweed and Mr M J Whiting

ALSO PRESENT: Mr N J D Chard, Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways & Waste

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr J Burr (Director of Kent Highway Services), Mr N Caddick (Policy and Performance Manager), Mr P Crick (Director Integrated Strategy & Planning), Mr S Gasche (Public Transport Team Leader), Mr D Hall (Head of Transport & Development), Ms C McKenzie (Greener Kent Manager), Mr G Mee (Director of Integrated Transport Strategy), Mrs C Valentine (Community Delivery Manager), Ms L Trice (Operational Finance Manager) and Mrs K Mannering (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Declaration of interests by Members in items on the Agenda for this meeting
(Item A2)

Mrs Tweed declared an interest in Item B5 as the Member for Ashford Central.

2. Minutes - 25 May 2010
(Item A3)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2010 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

3. Cabinet Member's Update
(Item B1)

(1) Mr Chard gave a verbal report on the following issues:-

Kent Highway Services

Future Highways Programme: Procurement; Integrated Transport Schemes; Speed limit reviews

Waste

Waste Strategy refresh; Trade waste enforcement; Household Waste Recycling Centres update

Environment

Environment & Waste Investing in Volunteers accreditation; Country Parks Capital Programme

Integrated Strategy & Planning

Welcome to Paul Crick and farewell to Geoff Mee; Prospective Gatwick to Kent Rail Service; Meeting with Theresa Villiers re: Rail

(2) Mr Chard informed Members that this was the last meeting that Mr Mee would be attending. Mr Mee was congratulated and thanked for the excellent work and contribution he had made to KCC. Mr Paul Crick, recently appointed Director of Integrated Strategy and Planning, was welcomed to the meeting.

(3) RESOLVED that the update be noted.

4. Outturn Monitoring Report

(Item B3)

Outturn Business Plan Monitoring 2009/10 and Risk Register

(1) Further to Minute 5 of 22 January 2010, the report presented a summarised **full-year** picture for each of the service units and an overview of the directorate as a whole. As part of the outturn monitoring, progress was checked against each of the 2009/10 Service Level Business Plans and found that of the 166 projects and developments identified in the business plans for 2009/10, 159 (96%) were complete or part complete and being taken forward into 2010/11.

(2) As part of a refined business planning process risk registers had been dovetailed more closely with the 2010/11 business plans. The EHW 2010/11 Risk Register was set out in the Appendix to the report. Inclusion of risks on the register did not necessarily mean there was a problem. During 2010/11 the controls in the risk register would continue to be tested and checked in order of significance, and new actions monitored.

(3) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the progress against Environment, Highways & Waste Service Level Business Plans for the period 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010 be noted; and
- (b) the Environment, Highways & Waste Directorate Risk Register updated in February 2010 be noted.

EHW Financial Outturn and Unit Operating Plan Outturn for 2009/10

(4) The report summarised the 2009/10 financial outturn for each of the Service Units within the EHW Directorate, and was considered in conjunction with the report referred to above, bringing together financial and key activity and performance outcome information.

(5) At its April meeting the Scrutiny Board recommended that all POSCs needed to formulate their arrangements for contributing to the development of the budget so that they were able to have an input at an earlier stage than previous years. In particular POSCs should consider whether the Informal Member Groups set up following the November 2009 meeting should meet regularly between now and December when the draft budget needed to be finalised for formal consultation.

(6) The provisional revenue outturn was reported to Cabinet on 14 June together with recommendations on rollover for committed projects and contributions to reserves for uncommitted under spends. The overall position for the EHW portfolio was a net underspend of £2,700 having taken into account the rephased projects.

(7) Table 3 of the report identified the planned and actual spend on all capital projects in 2009/10 and the total approved and forecast spending over the lifetime of the projects.

(8) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the revenue and capital financial outturn for 2009/10 including rollovers for committed projects and changes to capital programme be noted; and
- (b) an Informal Member Group, together with appropriate officers, be asked to meet on a regular basis over the next 6 months in order to get a fuller understanding of the implications of potential budget reductions and report back to the full POSC in November and January.

5. Winter Service Consultation 2010

(Item B4)

(1) Further to Minute 3 of 25 May 2010, the final consultation report was produced by Ipsos MORI on 12 June. Additionally the views of Members of this committee and joint transportation boards were sought and the results had been added to the consultation report to produce a revised draft Winter Service Policy 2010/11.

(2) As a result of the comments received a number of changes were proposed to the existing Winter Service Policy Statement. These were summarised in the report and related to District arrangements; Salt bins; Footway clearance; Communications; and Salt.

(3) Meetings had been held between KHS and the Children, Families and Education Department and discussions were ongoing to improve schools responses to snow and icy conditions. A meeting had also been held with the leading bus operators in the county in regard to gritting bus routes and increasing the communications between KHS and those companies during the winter.

(4) The inaugural meeting of the South East Authorities Winter Service Group was held at the Ashford Highway Depot in June. The group was chaired by KHS and was a useful forum for sharing ideas. Practical arrangements for mutual aid across the region in future and joint procurement arrangements were being considered and would be reported to the Committee in due course.

(5) RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste be recommended to:-

(a) approve the policy changes set out in the report;

(b) develop formal agreements for winter service with District councils across the county, including the provision of salt; and

(c) approve the trial of salt bags in selected parish council areas.

6. Interim Guidance Note 3: Residential Parking

(Item B5)

(1) Concerns had been raised by the Kent Developers' Group concerning the possible consequences of Interim Guidance Note 3: Residential Parking for homebuilding in Kent. The report advised members of how Kent Highway Services and the Kent Design Initiative were working with development partners to test the robustness of IGN3, and pointed to further consultation that would be undertaken as residential parking policies were developed at district level.

(2) A more detailed report, which included details of the previously adopted standards (SPG4) and feedback from the Residential Parking Workshop held on 14 April 2010, was attached as an Appendix to the report.

Kent Highway Services (KHS) was working with the district planning authorities to identify the zones within which the different approaches to residential parking should apply. The survey evidence underpins the work.

(3) Ashford Borough Council had prepared detailed residential parking guidance, in the form of a draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), which was now out to consultation. The draft SPD was based on IGN3. Such detailed development of IGN3 fulfilled the requirements of PPS3 and provided developers and designers with a further opportunity to comment on new, design-led approaches that were aimed at preventing parking problems in future developments. PPS3 placed the onus on local planning authorities (- the district councils in Kent -) to prepare residential parking policies. KHS had offered to help with the local interpretation through the Local Development Framework process.

(4) In response to the Kent Developers' Group's concerns, KHS and the Kent Design Initiative were working on case studies. These included assessments of sites put forward by two of the Group's members, single plot options, and sites in Kings Hill. The latter would be assessed by an independent layout architect in order that the design quality implications were considered alongside the numerical aspects.

(5) Interim Guidance Note 3: Residential Parking was an evidence based foundation for local planning authorities' "residential parking policies" required under Section 51 of Planning Policy Statement PPS3: Housing. Further public consultation would be undertaken as Kent's district councils respond to PPS3, as was already happening with Ashford Borough Council's draft Supplementary Planning Document.

(6) RESOLVED that:-

(a) the testing of the robustness of IGN3 referred to paragraph (4) above be endorsed, and a report on the outcomes be submitted to the POSC when available;

(b) the concerns of the Kent Developers' Group, and the work that was being undertaken to address the concerns, and encourage further dialogue at appropriate levels to understand the actual implications of and opportunities presented by IGN3, and its interpretation at local level be acknowledged;

(c) the Committee noted that public consultation on Ashford Borough Council's draft Residential Parking SPD offered developers and designers an opportunity to make further representations on the implications of 'IGN3 based guidance', having regard for the need to address the problems of some past approaches;

(d) the widespread concern among residents concerning parking in recent residential developments, and the social and cost implications arising from the problems caused, be acknowledged, and the collaborative working approaches that were seeking to avoid replication of the problems in future developments be welcomed; and

(e) the report be submitted to the Joint Transportation Boards.

7. Repairs to Weather Damaged Roads Update

(Item B6)

(1) The report informed Members of the progress on the delivery of repairs to roads in Kent. The work was being undertaken by 7 contractors who were appointed following a competitive tender process in March. Progress to date had seen the completion of over 75000m² of repairs to over 1200 roads.

(2) After 12 weeks of the programme 13754 individual potholes and 61883m² of larger patches were repaired. This equated to some 75,600m² of repairs, equivalent to over 60 Olympic size swimming pools, and had been delivered at a cost of £3m. The find and fix approach was clearly showing favour with many people, however with the rate of repair significantly higher than normal (due to the high level of winter damage, and increased intervention levels as explained), the cost was greater.

(3) The administration of the contract was being undertaken with the KHS alliance; this included contract preparation, project management, a high level of site supervision and permitting. The total estimated costs were in the region of £320k (5% of the contract value).

(4) Since the initial Cabinet decision which allocated £1m to the work, progress had been good and feedback had been very positive. However, the quantum on the potholes was such that further funding was required to continue the work. Subsequent Cabinet approval had been given to ensure funding was available for the repairs, and a final allocation of £6.5m was approved. It was currently estimated that the highways maintenance backlog was in the region of £430m.

(5) RESOLVED that the progress of the works be noted.

8. Strategic Transport Issues Verbal Update

(Item B7)

(1) Mr Mee gave a verbal update on the following issues:-

Lower Thames Crossing; Rail issues; DaSTS Study London to Dover/Channel Tunnel; Integrated Transport Strategy (Growth without Gridlock); Local Transport Plan; A21 Tonbridge – Pembury; Lydd Airport; and Minerals & Waste Development Framework.

(2) During debate Members thanked Mr Mee for the efficient service rendered to the Council, and wished him good luck for the future.

(3) RESOLVED that the update be noted.

9. Sustainability and Climate Change Update

(Item B8)

(1) The report provided the annual update of Kent County Council and the Environment, Highways and Waste's Departments progress against its commitments in the KCC Environment Policy and ISO14001 Environmental Management System accreditation.

(2) At the last Kent Partnership meeting on 8 June, the Kent Partnership agreed the final draft of the revised Kent Environment Strategy. The revised strategy had 10 Priorities under which there were a small number of high level strategic actions. Appendix 1 of the report detailed KCC's and Environment, Highways and Waste current and planned actions as well as potential gaps in activity against the 10 priorities.

(3) A summary of key corporate achievements delivered against KCC's Environment Policy was set out in the report. KCC's full Corporate Environmental Performance Report for 2009 was available on www.kent.gov.uk.

(4) Environment, Highways and Waste achieved the ISO 14001 environmental management standard in 2007 and continued to meet the standard.

(5) As part of the annual review process an assessment was made as to whether new policy drivers or the rate of progress in achieving objectives required changes to the KCC Environment Policy or its implementation priorities. Rising energy prices

and carbon reduction would continue to be high corporate priorities. The following priorities for KCC and EHW for 2010-11 were being proposed:

- Driving energy efficiency and carbon reduction in buildings Performance and compliance with the Carbon Reduction Commitment
- Ensuring KCC and EHW are proactive in dealing with the risks of climate change focusing on mainstreaming into core service delivery e.g. severe weather
- Enabling community action especially with regards to energy efficiency in homes and fuel Poverty
- Visible Leadership

Specific priorities for EHW

- Continue to extend carbon reduction activity within Kent Highways Services and Waste Management with a particular focus on transport and travel.
- Capacity Building, especially with regards to green jobs and growth opportunities.

No substantial changes were recommended to the Environment Policy, however it was suggested that the following areas be strengthened.

- Climate change risk and resilience
- Domestic sector energy efficiency
- Green jobs and opportunities

(6) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the overall progress made by KCC and Environment, Highways and Waste be noted and supported; and
- (b) the approach for taking this forward as set out in paragraph (5) above be endorsed.

10. Select Committee - update *(Item C1)*

Select Committee: Renewable Energy

(1) The Select Committee had now completed its evidence gathering. A first draft of the committee's report would be discussed by the Select Committee in early August. As soon as an agreed draft was available it would be shared with Cabinet Members, Officers and key stakeholders before it was finalised for submission to Cabinet in October 2010.

Select Committee: Passenger Rail Services in Kent

(2) The Select Committee met on 22 June 2010 and received a report on progress made with the recommendations since the Select Committee reported to County Council in December 2008. The update on progress on recommendations

was attached as Appendix 1 to the report, and a copy of the minutes from the June meeting were attached as Appendix 2 to the report.

(3) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) progress on the Select Committee for Renewable Energy, and the minutes from the Select Committee on Passenger Rail Service be noted; and
- (b) Members advise the Democratic Services Officer of any items they would like to suggest for inclusion in the Select Committee topic review programme.

11. Financial Monitoring 2010/11

(Item B2)

(1) Members were asked to note the June budget monitoring exception report for 2009/10 reported to Cabinet on 12 July 2010.

Revenue

(2) The overall position for the EHW Directorate was a predicted overspend of £0.29m. This had been caused by pressure on the Freedom Pass budget because of the popularity of the pass and the increased numbers of journeys taken. There was also considerable price pressure on Waste, with the April RPI being much higher than budgeted. However this was being offset by forecast tonnage being lower than budgeted.

(3) Since the exception report was written, the in-year budget reductions had been announced. The revenue allocation from Area Based Grant (ABG) for road safety had been cut by £0.608m. This had resulted in a reduced contribution to the Kent & Medway Safety Camera Partnership of £0.44m and other road safety reductions of £0.168m (including not going ahead with the speed limit review). KCC's allocation for 'Kickstart' funding of £0.441m was also removed but the reduction had not been passed on to the EHW portfolio.

Capital

(4) The Integrated Transport (IT) funding had been cut by £4.105m, the road safety allocation by £0.508m and the highway maintenance allocation by £0.04m. The reduction in the IT funding had meant that a number of schemes would now have to be deferred. The reduction in the road safety allocation would mean that new speed signs expected as a result of the Speed Limit Review would no longer be installed, as the review was not going ahead, and no more speed cameras would be installed. The reduction on highways maintenance would result in a small revision to the programme of work for structures.

(5) RESOLVED that the budget variations for the EHW Portfolio for 2010/11 based on the June exception report to Cabinet, and the effects of the subsequent in-year budget reductions be noted.