

## **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 Wednesday, 14 March 2012.

PRESENT: Mr D A Hirst (Chairman), Mr M B Robertson (Vice-Chairman), Mr N J Collor, Mr J M Cubitt, Ms A Hohler, Mr J D Kirby, Mr R F Manning, Mr M J Northey, Mr R A Pascoe and Mrs E M Tweed

ALSO PRESENT: Mr B J Sweetland and Mr D L Brazier

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr M Austerberry (Corporate Director, Environment and Enterprise), Mr J Burr (Director of Highways and Transportation), Mr P Crick (Director of Planning and Environment), Mr D Latham (Roadworks & Enforcement Manager), Ms C McKenzie (Sustainability and Climate Change Manager), Mr T Read (Head of Highway Transport) and Mrs K Mannering (Democratic Services Officer)

### **UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**

#### **13. Minutes - 12 January 2012**

*(Item A4)*

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2012 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

#### **14. Cabinet Member's Update (Oral Report)**

*(Item A5)*

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

##### *Waste Management*

Household Waste Recycling Centre Review; and East Kent Waste Project

##### *Planning & Environment*

National Policy Consultations; and Local Development Frameworks

##### *Highways & Transportation*

Village "Caretaker" Scheme; Lane Rental; Delivering better value in public and school transport; Annual Planned Highway Maintenance Programme 2012/13; and Footway Improvements

(2) Mr Brazier gave a verbal report on the following issues:-

Cyclopark; The Minerals and Waste Development Framework; and Driving out the Message Campaign

(3) RESOLVED that the updates be noted and a copy circulated to Members of the Committee.

## **15. Financial Monitoring Report 2011/2012**

*(Item B1)*

(1) Members of the POSC were asked to note the January full budget monitoring report for 2011/12, which would be reported to Cabinet on 19 March 2012.

### *Revenue*

(2) The overall position for EHW which would be reported to Cabinet on 19 March 2012 was a forecast underspend of £4.891m. The most significant contribution to the Directorate's forecast underspend was from the Waste Division and had arisen largely because waste tonnage was forecast to be 40,000 tonnes less than the affordable level. This combined with new and improved income streams and improved contract prices were forecast to deliver an underspend of £3.698m on Waste Management and Disposal.

(3) Within the Highways and Transportation Division, an underspend of £1.788m was forecast on Transport Services. This had arisen as a result of successful contract negotiations and lower than budgeted journey numbers in the Concessionary Fares and Freedom pass element of the budget.

### *Capital*

(4) Although a real forecast pressure of £2.222m was reported over the period of the capital programme, funding streams to cover this had been identified and were detailed in the Appendix to the report.

(5) RESOLVED that the budget variations for the EHW Portfolio for 2011/12 based on the January full monitoring report to be presented to Cabinet on 19 March 2012, be noted.

## **16. KCC Quarterly Performance Report, Quarter 3, 2011/12 including mid year Business Plan monitoring**

*(Item B2)*

(1) The full KCC Quarterly Performance Report for Quarter 3, 2011/12 was to be presented to Cabinet on 19 March 2012. There were 30 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) included in the Performance Report and a range of other key management information including complaints, consultations, a financial summary and staffing data.

(2) A summary of overall KCC performance for Quarter 3 with the detailed Environment, Highways and Waste elements was attached as an Appendix to the

report. The process contributed to the management of the overall performance of the authority and the reports were published on the external web site as part of KCC's transparency agenda.

(3) There were six KPIs included in the Quarterly Performance Report which were relevant to Environment, Highways and Waste and all were rated as Green.

(4) RESOLVED that the report be noted.

## **17. Bus Services to Tunbridge Wells Hospital at Pembury**

*(Item C1)*

(1) Further to Minute 9 of 12 January 2012, the report provided Members with an update of the current position regarding bus services to the new Tunbridge Wells Hospital at Pembury.

(2) As a result of the January POSC meeting, a special meeting of the Tunbridge Wells Joint Transportation Board was arranged to consider the situation. The JTB report was presented for Members' information and Mr Read gave a verbal update of the outcome of the JTB meeting on 27 February. The JTB's recommendations were as follows:-

**RECOMMENDED** –That the KCC Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste be informed of the views of this Board to assist in the formulation of the KCC response to TWBC on the planning application as described in these minutes and as summarised below:

1) That the current interim solution for public transport due to expire in May 2012, if necessary be left in place for the time being to allow further work to be taken forward to resolve the key issues summarised hereunder.

2) That TWBC as Planning Authority take urgent action to achieve a multi-lateral agreement between the NHS Trust, KCC and other Local Authorities in the hospital catchment area to provide adequate public transport to serve the new hospital, using KCC's expertise to advise an broker an agreement between the parties;

3) By negotiation with the bus companies, such agreement should seek to enhance the existing routes by allowing through-ticketing and ensuring that the services are suitably and promoted;

4) That the NHS Trust, in their negotiations with the voluntary and community sector, shall ensure that due consideration is given to supplementary transport facilities to the more remote towns and villages.

(3) The NHS Trust had now received detail information from Community Transport Providers and were developing a detailed proposal for providing enhancements to Community Transport.

(4) Further details of the performance of the interim services were now available. The enhanced services carried around an additional 150 journeys each day to and from the hospital. This was encouraging given that the services had not been marketed and awareness was low. If there were no further increases in passenger

numbers, the gross cost of providing the services over five years to the NHS was expected to be around £2.7M. Officers were in discussion with the NHS Trust and TWBC to progress the matter and deliver an appropriate solution in line with the previous resolution from the Committee.

(5) RESOLVED that the current position with regards to Bus Services to the new Tunbridge Wells hospital, be noted

## **18. Member Highway Fund - Operational Review**

*(Item C2)*

(1) The report updated Members on the operational progress of the Member Highway Fund (MHF) to date and highlighted areas for improvement.

(2) The MHF had now been in operation for nearly 3 years and good progress had been made to commit to date £5.8 million to local highway schemes and projects. Approximately half of the money had been committed in the last 12 months. A total of 1,197 schemes had been designed by Highways & Transportation in that period. The most popular scheme category had been the installation of new or improved pedestrian crossings, where £874k had been spent. A full breakdown of scheme types, numbers and costs were set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

(3) As part of the restructuring of the Highways department a dedicated MHF Team was set up in July 2011 to assist Members in committing and spending their Funds. The team consisted of 12.5 FTE's and was currently supplemented with 3 additional staff. The team had processed 458 applications to date and assisted Members in committing 40% of the total three year budget for the MHF in the last six months.

(4) The majority of the MHF applications were currently progressed through the 6 area engineers. The current communication strategy employed by the MHF team to ensure Members were kept informed of progress of their schemes was:-

Area Engineers; Technical Support; Update Reports; and Member surgeries

(5) Work had begun on an automated computer system to support engineers in producing more accurate and timely reports. The system should reduce the amount of time spent by officers on administration of the MHF freeing more time to support Members. It was also proposed that the system would allow Members to access information on their MHF schemes via the internet.

(6) The recent Highway Tracker Survey of County Members indicated that 69% of Members were satisfied with the overall process of the Member Highway Fund. Concerns had been raised about communication and time taken to deliver schemes.

(7) The total time required to deliver a scheme from the initial approach by a Member to construction on site was determined by various processes, some of which were statutory. To reduce the time taken to deliver MHF schemes it would be necessary to ensure that applications were submitted as early as possible in the year to avoid a compressed work load. The scale of abortive works needed to be reduced and a quicker more efficient process needed to be introduced especially for smaller schemes.

(8) RESOLVED that an Informal Members Group be set up by the end of March to discuss the issues raised, and report back to the Cabinet Member with suggested improvements on the MHF scheme and how it operated.

## **19. Select Committee - update**

*(Item D1)*

### *Select Committee – Renewable Energy – one year on monitoring feedback*

(1) The Select Committee on Renewable Energy, under the Chairmanship of Mr K Ferrin, held its one year on monitoring meeting on 24 January 2012. A copy of the minutes from that meeting was attached to the report. Ms McKenzie gave a presentation giving an overview of the findings from the Kent Renewable Energy Resource Study; feedback from the stakeholder consultation which closed on 10 February; and an overview of next steps with regards to developing the Kent Action Plan to be developed with partners.

### *Select Committee topic review work programme*

(2) There would be resources available to start two more new Select Committee review in May 2012.

(3) RESOLVED that:-

(a) the Renewable Energy Select Committee update one year on, be noted; and

(b) Members advise the Democratic Services Officer of any topics that they would like to suggest for inclusion in the Select Committee Topic Review Programme.

## **20. Highways & Transportation Professional Consultancy Services - options**

*(Item 1)*

### **EXEMPT ITEMS**

*(The following is an unrestricted minute of matters which the POSC resolved under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public should be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act).*

(1) Further to Minute 12 of 12 January 2012, the report updated members on the progress towards the future service provision for Highways and Transportation Consultancy Services.

(2) The IMG had met on three occasions and had explored in depth the options available for procuring future Professional Services; including the extension of the existing contract for any length of time up to 2016. Members were supportive that future service provision contained the highest level of expertise available whilst

retaining value for money. The size and value of work to be put through the contract(s) was also discussed in detail. Market interest was critical to create commercial tension. Members recognised the need for a highly skilled 'client' to ensure that not only the technical expertise provided was of the highest quality but also that the commercial side of the procurement was delivered to a very high standard.

(3) RESOLVED that the proposed option, set out in the report, be progressed; and the Director continue to be advised as the contract(s) were procured.