

Buckinghamshire County Council Select Committee

Environment, Transport and Locality Services

Minutes

ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT AND LOCALITY SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT AND LOCALITY SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 3 FEBRUARY 2015, IN MEZZANINE ROOM 2, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 10.00 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 12.07 PM.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr W Bendyshe-Brown, Mr W Chapple OBE, Mr D Dhillon, Mr P Gomm, Mr S Lambert and Mr W Whyte (Chairman)

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr I Boll, Mr S Dando, Mr M Freestone, Mr N Gibson, Ms S Griffin (Secretary), Ms G Harding, Mr D Kettenis, Ms R Vigor-Hedderly, Ms K Wager and Mr S Walford

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from David Carroll and Tim Butcher.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the Tuesday 18 November 2014 were agreed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

Page 6 - Ringway Jacobs

The outstanding actions will be discussed under Item 6 of the agenda.

Chairman's Report





The Chief Executive was invited to attend the meeting today. The Chief Executive will be sent an invitation to attend a future meeting to discuss TfB outcomes.

Page 13 – S106 Inquiry Status update

An update will be given under Chairman's update.

Page 18 – External Funding Opportunities

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources will provide a formal written response to the letter of recommendation sent from the ETL Committee.

Action: Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources

4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

5 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman reported the following.

During January myself and several other members of the ETL were co-opted onto the Budget Scrutiny Committee which included looking at the various budgets that relate to the work of the Select Committee. The minutes are published on the BCC website.

Members of the ETL Select Committee undertook a workshop to discuss the visions and aspirations of the library service for the 21st century in more detail. It was a very useful workshop but there is more work to be done.

A response to some of the outstanding actions relating to the scrutiny of the Transport for Bucks contract in 2011 was issued yesterday. This should resolve some of the legacy issues.

I have received an invitation to take part in a session at the Councillors Association Conference Friday to discuss the benefits of scrutiny.

6 TFB PROGRESS UPDATE

Ruth Vigor-Hedderly, Cabinet Member for Transportation, Gill Harding, Director of Strategic Business Planning, Mike Freestone, Director of Transport, Simon Dando, Contract Director, Ringway Jacobs and Demos Kettenis, Head of Highways, Ringway Jacobs, were welcomed to the meeting.

The Chairman explained that this is the 12 month review since Cabinet agreed the majority of the recommendations made by the ETL Select Committee in 2013/14, following scrutiny of the contract and workings of TfB and Buckinghamshire County Council.

The Cabinet Member for Transportation began by explaining that understanding the nature of the contract arrangements between BCC and Ringway Jacobs has not been an easy task. The recommendations made before to the 1st April, prior to when she came into post, have been noted. Both parties have recognised there have been significant failures over this particular period of time where BCC as a client have not been strong and Ringway Jacobs has recognised the need for improvement in many areas of delivery to BCC as the client. The review has been incredibly robust. Ringway Jacobs is now working very well with Bucks County Council but there is still a long way to go.

The recommendations agreed by the ETL Committee in December 2013 were discussed, during which the following comments were made and questions asked.

Recommendation 1

The Cabinet Member advised that local KPIs in the depots have been introduced, which were not part of the recommendations made. The reason for this is when an issue arises, it can red flagged immediately for action to be taken so it doesn't affect the main contractual KPI. This is a reactive way of working.

When is the reorganisation of the service area likely to be completed? There is concern that some as the LAT positions in the Wycombe depot are not filled which leaves a slight deficiency in some areas. The Cabinet Member for Transportation explained that there are also vacancies in other service areas. The Transformation Programme process needs to be followed. The vacancies are now being advertised externally. Any interested candidates should contact Mr Dando.

There is concern that some of the work carried out in the some local divisions has been done so at very low quality. Is it possible to give examples of local KPIs? Mr Freestone explained that in terms of the structure of local KPIs, they are largely based on contractual KPIs which have recently been agreed and reset based on the work undertaken by the ETL committee and suggestions from the workshops that took place about a year ago. It is about looking at standard performance issues, the local focus and about getting an earlier insight on how performance is being delivered in the three different depots Ringway Jacobs work from. This, in turn, helps to give the Area Manager early insight into performance. All of the tasks required to deliver the overall contract are discussed at monthly outcome meetings which includes looking at areas such as routine maintenance and schemes of delivery etc. The meetings will be effective at highlighting where performance is starting to drift and to look into why certain depots are experiencing problems and not others.

Mr Dando explained that driving quality performance rated issues is a key element of monitoring KPIs at a local level. The difficulty is giving the level of granularity that allows the focus to be on local needs because there are slightly different dynamics in how issues are dealt with in urban areas as opposed to rural areas. Local KPIs need to reflect the specific local needs and quality and to be as responsive as possible to the community they serve.

The ETL Select Committee reviewed the KPIs about a year ago and made them fit for purpose to reflect area based working. There is no evidence base such as an audit process to show that this is working. Reassurance is needed that KPIs are linked into any contract extension. The Cabinet Member said that KPIs will be linked 100% directly into any contract. There will be an acknowledgement of local and contractual KPIs in contracts.

The KPIs were modified to make them more understandable for local areas. How do the KPIs/performance in the last two-three months compare to KPIs a year ago? The Cabinet Member explained that the local KPIs have been re-tweaked. Information about local KPIs and the detail behind each KPI is to be circulated to Committee Members.

Action: Cabinet Member for Transportation

In terms of culture change, the ETL Select Committee hasn't received the update it thought it would. The Cabinet Member explained that Bart Smith from the consultancy, Gate One was appointed to carry out a discovery phase of the review into the TfB contract. The decision has recently been made to contract Mr. Smith for a further 41 days of work to deliver a report on the programme and culture change.

There is concern about the customer journey and the waiting time for responses to issues. An example is a resident in Amersham waited 41 working days for a response from TfB (not the 28 day response time). Is this a one off incident or is there an issue to be addressed around customer complaints? Ms Harding explained that there is awareness that the customer journey is not working as well as it should do. Work needs to take place in the following three areas; culture, processes associated with the different communication

streams, and systems. There are two prongs of work taking place around systems; the change associated with the digital platform for BCC which includes the appointment of a new provider; a new direction of the CRM system associated with TfB which was agreed at a recent meeting of the Strategic Board. This should enable an improved customer journey, better site of the metrics and management information associated with the data. Early work includes the use of easy quick fixes such as the spreadsheets to ensure that any communication received is addressed. Extra resources are being put in place from mid-January. The aim is to introduce the new system in June in parallel with the new corporate system.

The Cabinet Member said she has received a good response to an email asking local members if they would be interested in becoming part of a Board to look at the customer journey.

It is good to hear that Gate One have been contracted to carry out further work on the TfB review. What was their initial impression of the arrangements in place? The Cabinet Member said that the initial impression was that neither Ringway Jacobs nor Bucks County Council were in a very good place. Gate One is an independent consultant who is able to give an impartial view on the contract arrangements.

Recommendation 2

The draft 4 year plan has not been shared with the Environment Select Committee. The budget aspect of the plan was reviewed during the recent budget scrutiny meetings. Will the outcome be shared with members of the Select Committee? The draft 4 year plan is to be circulated to Committee members.

Action: Cabinet Member for Transportation

There has been the realisation that some of the KPIs were wrongly put together. Has any refund been received from Ringway Jacobs? There have been discussions between BCC and Ringway Jacobs about monies owing to both parties. Unfortunately is it not possible to share this information at the moment as it is commercially sensitive. A summary of the officer decision on contract variations is to be circulated to Committee members.

Action: Cabinet Member for Transportation

Recommendation 4

A summary of the officer decision on contract variations is to be circulated to Committee Members.

Action: Cabinet Member for Transportation

Recommendation 5

The Department of Transport guidance on asset management has been shared with members of the ETL Select Committee, but information has not been received on how monies are divided between asset management and member led. The Cabinet Member said that in terms of the pot of money for Capital Maintenance work, Bucks County Council is very much member led. It is absolutely fundamental that Ringway Jacobs goes to each local member to ask for their choice of road to be repaired. Following the receipt of the additional funding of £10million, an email was sent to local members asking for their choice of road to be repaired. The steer this year is towards unclassified and C roads as the advice received from experts is many are badly in need of repair.

Members have received a lot of information as part of the selection process. For completeness of the review and the Select Committee, it would be useful to receive a written response clarifying how the County Council has moved to a more sustainable asset approach.

Action: Mike Freestone

The progress update outlines quite a change in the client team. The Cabinet Member said there was recognition of that service area needed to be strengthened and the comments made by the Select Committee during the review were taken on board. Appointments have since been made to the posts of Director of Transport, Contract Compliance Officer, Client Contract Manager and Head of Highways. These posts are on an interim basis of 12 months with the view to make the posts permanent. The new structure will take time to embed.

The expectation is of the provision of a seamless service from any contractor. Ringway Jacobs has been a contractor for BCC for many years now. Can assurance be given that these problems will not re-occur in the future and there will be a regular service which Ringway Jacobs as a contractor are capable of providing? The Cabinet Member said she is aware that this portfolio is commercial and a private company is being dealt with. Ringway Jacobs is a commercial private company which is there to make money. However she is also aware it is difficult for Ringway Jacobs to make as much money with BCC as BCC is a public company and there are restrictions around funding. The review process has been incredibly difficult. What can be guaranteed is by the time the process has been completed, each depot will have a policy and processes in place and members will be able to go to each depot and ask about funding, costs, value for money and benchmarking etc.

Recommendation 8

This recommendation was not agreed by Cabinet. There is a response for the Committee to consider.

During the review by the ETL Committee, concerns were raised about contract variations and contract extensions. Are you able to share any of the amendments made to the contract to give a better understanding of any subtle changes to the contract and therefore the delivery? The Cabinet Member said that Ringway Jacobs has welcomed changes to certain elements of the contract. The County Council is legally tied in terms of what changes can be made without having to go out to re-tender. There will be further, subtle changes to the contract over the next few months after which the contract can be shared with members of the ETL Committee. It is about having an understanding of the contract. It is a joint, open, honest and transparent way of working, but also holding each other to account in terms of delivery, value for money and client satisfaction.

The Select Committee needs to be assured that contract extensions are awarded on the sounds basis of KPIs and contract performance. Mr Freestone explained that the current contract included automatic extension if certain criteria were met but this has been removed. There is still the potential for the contract to be extended but this is based on set criteria.

Recommendation 9/10

The Select Committee recently received some documents about benchmarking. A working group is to be set up to discuss the progress made, benchmarking, how savings are going to be delivered and the external value for money review.

Action: Policy Officer/Committee Members

Recommendation 11

To what extent are external opportunities for savings being addressed, is the obligation for a year on year 3% efficiency saving still in the contract, is this saving being delivered, what do the savings look like and does this still drive the right behaviour? The Cabinet Member explained that she has been asked to make savings of £177,000 this financial year. The possibility of incorporating maintenance works on gulleys etc. in conjunction road closures put in place by a contractor is being looked into.

Mr Dando said that the delivery of 3% efficiency savings year on year is a challenge bearing in mind it is now year 5 of the contract. Significant savings have been delivered at the start of the contract and have been taken forward through the period of the contract. Efficient ways of working are constantly being sought such as works being combined where possible as well as

innovation. The DFT funding is driving the agenda from a Government perspective in terms of the provision of evidence of efficiencies being made. This requires looking beyond the conventional. Discussions with members in relation to the latest innovations on the market are welcomed. The natural cycle is to drive inefficiently out of the system then to find efficiency in the system, to drive out waste and move into innovation.

The Budget Scrutiny touched upon efficiencies but it was not clear about 2015/2016 proposed efficiencies. Information about proposed efficiencies for 2015/16 is to be shared with the Committee.

Action: Mr Dando

When an external call is received, is there a policy within the service area for the call to go to answerphone and for the recipient to listen to the message, pick up the issue and to call the person back. Most people would rather speak to an officer straightaway rather than leave a message. Should frontline staff be reminded that the phone is there as a communication not a hindrance? The Cabinet Member said that communication is fundamental. The Customer Journey Review and the Strategic Board will address this issue.

7 COMMITTEE ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS AGAINST RECOMMENDATIONS

Members of the Committee are asked to agree which symbol in the RAG status, they feel should be allocated to each recommendation as follows;

	Recommendation implemented to the satisfaction of the committee.	\bigcirc	Committee have concerns the recommendation may not be fully delivered to its satisfaction
*	Recommendation on track to be completed to the satisfaction of the committee.		Committee consider the recommendation to have not been delivered/implemented

Recommendation 1 - green star

The recommendation is on track to be resolved. An update is to be given at the June meeting of the Committee.

Action: Cabinet Member for Transportation

Recommendation 2 - green star

Recommendation 3 - green star to be given upon receipt of the evidence about the KPIs.

Recommendation 4 - green star

Recommendation 5 - green tick

The recommendation has been implemented to the satisfaction of the committee

Recommendation 6 - green tick

Recommendation 7 - green tick

An update on the performance with the extra resources is to be given at the June meeting of the Committee.

Action: Cabinet Member for Transportation

Recommendation 8 - green star

Recommendation 9 - green star

A Working Group will be convened to look at benchmarking, how savings are going to be delivered and the external value for money review.

Action: Policy Officer/Committee Members

Recommendations 10/11 - orange circle

The Committee have concerns the recommendations may not be fully delivered to its satisfaction

Recommendation 12 - green tick

The progress chart is to be updated to reflect the RAG rating agreed by Committee Members.

Action: Policy Officer

The updated chart is to be circulated to Committee Members.

Action: Policy Officer

Committee Members are to be advised of the date of the Cabinet meeting at which the Progress Chart will be presented (as part of the annual review of all Select Committees).

Action: Policy Officer

8 TEE BUSINESS UNIT INTRODUCTIONS TO THE PLAN, AND KEY PRIORITIES FOR 2015/16

Neil Gibson, Strategic Director, Communities and Built Environment, Ian Boll, Director of Regeneration and Infrastructure, Stephen Walford, Director of Growth and Strategy, and Gill Harding, Director of Strategic Business Planning, were welcomed to the meeting.

Mr Gibson explained that Transport, Economy and Environment (TEE) is one of the three forward, outward facing Business Units for service delivery in 'Future Shape' the new business model for the County Council. The other two Business Units are Adults, Health and Communities and Children's Social Care and Learning.

The formal 'go live' date for Future Shape is the 1 April 2015. In reality, the TEE Business Unit is fairly well advanced and is ready for the go live now. It is not possible to go live until the 1 April as constitutional changes such as the introduction of Managing Directors and financial rules and regulations will enact from this date.

The Leadership team is comprised of five Directors for the following portfolios; Environment Services, Growth & Strategy, Regeneration & Infrastructure, Strategic Business Planning & Commercial Development and Transport Services. Work is still taking place on the metrics for the Business Unit. The spend for next year is in excess of £100m. TEE is a large business which is a combination of revenue and capital. The impact on Buckinghamshire is far in excess of this amount. For example, there is £1m spend on East West Rail next year but this is a £150m project managed on behalf of Network Rail. There is very little in the Capital Programme for next year around major road growth for Aylesbury but tens of millions of investment will be facilitated via the Business Unit. Current work also includes project management of the Energy from Waste contract which has a value in the region of £50m. The impact goes a long way beyond the cash spend on an annual basis. As the Business Unit evolves and progresses, further metrics will be put in place to explain the impact the Business Unit has through web based systems and financial processes etc.

The TEE Business Unit will interact and work in the main, with four of the eight Cabinet Members; the Leader, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, the Cabinet Member for Transportation and the Cabinet Member for Planning and Environment. As work progresses to include Client Transport, input will also be sought from the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Members as appropriate.

Ms. Harding explained that the Transition Plan has been in place for a while although there is now more work and people involved. A robust governance structure and process is in place. The decision has been made that the Programme Board will continue during the transition period and onwards after the 1 April 2015. Business Managers have now been recruited. They are the next level of accountability below the Leadership Team and are involved in commissioning and work-streams. Other key areas to highlight are;

- The Transitions Programme is taking place in parallel with the other Business Units.
- Interaction from other key stakeholders is key
- Activity is happening at the same time as business as usual
- The decision has been made to bring in a dedicated Works Programme Manager for three days a week to have overall accountability to deliver the work to the timeframe.
- Other members come from business improvement team the TEE is self- delivering which can be both difficult and challenging.
- Key workstreams are taking place to ensure the success of the Transitions Programme.
 This includes recruitment, retention and development. Following the end of the first process
 with posts at risk being ringfenced, there is the move to an open selection process and
 advertising the vacancies externally.
- The more senior vacant posts are to be advertised shortly. The current high vacancy rate of 20% has been identified as a risk.
- Communication is a challenging process in terms of the Future Shape and the Business
 Units as there is a lot of change taking place. A variety of communications channels are
 being used such as weekly briefings with staff, updates on the intranet, regular employee
 representative meetings and stakeholder engagement. There has been positive feedback
 from staff within the Business Units in terms of the feeling that they are being sighted on
 the changes taking place and the reasons why.

Performance and behaviours

- A message has been sent to all staff about the new commercial way of working
- The DSP process will be robustly used to appraise past performance and to aid the objective setting process for those undertaking new roles.
- Any gaps in training and development that are sited and will be addressed in order to help employees deliver their jobs.
- The Business Units will have a training and development plan. There needs to be investment in staff to help deliver the service.

Mr. Gibson advised that there has been a robust interview process which included profiling of candidates to give a good insight of any training and development needs.

Ms. Harding explained that the County Council is currently going through the business planning cycle and is nearing the end of the MTP cycle. For different reasons Waste Management and Country Park Services hasn't been through the same restructure process as other service areas have as yet.

The TEE Business Unit will take on the client transport function. How this will impact on the current model will need to be understood.

- Work is taking place on financial structures with Corporate Finance to look at systems and what needs to be done to tie the work of the Business Units in with corporate structures. Systems and process change is needed to support this. In terms of the amount of change taking place, it is important that staff know who to talk to and that the structure chart is updated regularly.
- The TEE will be one of the first outward facing Business Units to come into effect on the 1 April.

- The accommodation needs for TEE Business Unit need to be discussed (currently 168 staff)
- In terms of Governance and Structure reviews, work is taking place with the Assurance to look at compliance with the new Operating Framework.
- A launch event for the TEE business unit will be held at the end of March
- A review will take place in August/September to discuss with staff what we thought was going to work, if it has worked and further changes to be made
- Property Service will move to HQ and Shared Services. There is the duty to ensure that
 the transition out of the TEE structure into the new structure happens in the most
 appropriate form.

Mr. Gibson explained that the Programme Board meets every two weeks. Any headlines emerging from the Business Plan will be closely tied in with the budget MTP.

Strategic Business Planning & Commercial Development

Ms. Harding explained that the role of this business area is a supporting one but also an important one to drive forward efficiency savings, commercial development and devolution. This includes metrics and management in terms of finance and performance. It is the commercial arm to make sure the Business Unit is doing everything it needs to do and that the right assurances are in place.

Environment Services

Mr. Gibson explained that in terms of the elements of risk, there is the waste strategy and the need to get the EfW plant live by from 2016 as a £7-8m reduction has been assumed in the year it goes live and new income the year after. Country Parks are largely self-financing but a model is being looked at which will make them truly self-financing and sustainable over decades in terms of the capital investment they will need. Another aspect of the Business Unit is Development Management. Significant income is received from developers as the County Planning Authority. As the Highway Authority, Bucks County Council plays a pivotal role with developers in the S106 process and making developments happen. Smarter working in terms of a management approach rather than a development control approach needs to take place. The Growth and Strategy team will lead on getting policy context and asks correct. Environmental Services will deal with operational liaison with developers.

Growth and Strategy

Mr. Walford explained that economic development includes liaison with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) which will be channelled across this area. There a co-ordination role to play across the Business Units in terms of the liaison and negotiation with the LEP. Growth and Strategy projects include infrastructure planning, translating S106 agreements into reality, transport and strategy policies, minerals and waste planning, and supporting and implementing sustainable resource strategies across BCC.

Regeneration and Infrastructure

Mr. Boll explained that this area focuses predominately on the delivery of capital projects. Where Growth and Strategy has identified schemes, Regeneration and Strategy will be tasked with infrastructure and regeneration to deliver the schemes.

The service is comprised of three teams; Highways, Infrastructure and Regeneration. Highways will look predominately at new roads which unlock development as identified in the Strategic Economic Plan. Infrastructure team work includes HS2, EfW and East West Rail. The Regeneration team work comprises of property major projects including new school builds and regeneration schemes such as Waterside North. It is entirely funded by capital so has to be very cost aware and commercially driven. The team is very much focused on project management expertise. They are all Prince 2 trained and are increasing becoming Agile trained. In terms of the question what will members of the public see is different; a key part of

the work is a matrix managed approach to share expertise rather than working in silo. Cabinet Members will be kept aware of projects on a case by case basis.

Transport Services

Mr. Freestone explained that in terms of client transport is about enabling efficient, effective economic use of the transport network. The review of client transport and strategic transport is a big change mechanism coming forward during the year. Work is underway to build a model in partnership with colleagues in areas such as children's services. It is about making the best links to existing public transport operations to maximise benefits to the community at large. There is still a lot of work to be done. Adult client transport is part of this work.

During discussions, the following questions were asked.

In terms of the use of agencies to recruit to short term interim posts, agency costs are usually about a third more. There is concern that money is not spent needlessly on agency staff when there is the need for a post to be recruited to permanently. Ms. Harding said that using an agency can cost one third more or the same depending on the way the structure is terms of an internal member of staff and the add on costs. Where there are permanent posts in the structure, we are trying to ensure that the posts are recruited to on a permanent basis. Because of the amount of change, it is sometimes necessary to bring in interim staff to help deliver the service until permanent staff are in place. The other key issue is that is some areas of work, it is not clear whether there is the need or the budget for a permanent member of staff as some of work could be short term or innovative. The resourcing strategy is being discussed with our HR business partner to ensure it is the right approach for the business.

In terms of the new Business Units, how will members of the public see a difference in the way the services are delivered? Mr. Gibson said an example is the Energy from Waste plan which is being built in the north. Members of the public will see the plant being built and will feel their council tax is kept low as the waste is being processed and disposed of at a lower unit cost. There will not be any difference in terms of the way the waste is collected. In real terms the same services will be delivered at a lower unit cost.

Ms. Harding added that the aim is to try and ensure that any areas where there could or should have been improvements are incorporated in the journey. It is about how we internally try to deliver the services and about driving out efficiencies so that hopefully cuts to the public won't be as great as they need to be.

Mr. Gibson explained that the Business Units are commissioned by the County Council though HQ around the services to be delivered at a cost or price the County Council can afford. A huge challenge is to generate new revenue/income/capital and to drive efficiencies and deliver on behalf of the County Council. The business model can be adapted to try to address changes in circumstances.

How many Cabinet Members does the TEE Business Unit report to? Mr. Gibson explained that the TEE business unit reports to four Cabinet Members. Cabinet Members are important stakeholders as when they sit as a Cabinet on behalf of the Council, they determine finance, strategies and policies etc. When they work with the Business Unit, they work as individual Cabinet Members. Each Cabinet Member is 'man marked' according to the specific area i.e. the Director of Regeneration would work with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources portfolio. However there will be cross portfolio working.

9 COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Members of the Committee NOTED the work programme.

A staged approach has been suggested for the Country Parks item. An update will be given at the April meeting, following which Members can decide if there is the need to set up a Working Group to look into this item further.

The topic of Legal Highs has been proposed as a future item for the Work Programme. This would fall under the Crime and Disorder remit of the Environment Select Committee.

The Public Transport Inquiry-progress update is to be moved to the 19 May meeting.

Action: Policy Officer

10 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is due to take place on Tuesday 17 March 2015 in Mezzanine 2, County Offices, Aylesbury. There will be a pre-meeting for Committee Members are 9.30am.

Meeting dates for 2015

14 April
19 May
23 June
21 July
8 September
6 October
17 November

CHAIRMAN