



**Buckinghamshire County Council**  
**Select Committee**  
Transport, Environment and Communities

# Minutes

## *TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE*

Minutes from the meeting held on Tuesday 23 June 2015, in Mezzanine Room 2, County Hall, Aylesbury, commencing at 10.00 am and concluding at 12.10 pm.

This meeting was webcast. To review the detailed discussions that took place, please see the webcast which can be found at <http://www.buckscc.public-i.tv/>  
The webcasts are retained on this website for 6 months. Recordings of any previous meetings beyond this can be requested (contact: [democracy@buckscc.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@buckscc.gov.uk))

### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Mrs P Birchley, Mr T Butcher, Mr D Carroll, Mr W Chapple OBE, Mrs L Clarke OBE,  
Mrs A Davies and Mr P Gomm

### **OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Mr S Dando, Mr M Dickman, Mr M Freestone, Mr D Kettenis, Mr M Shaw, Mrs K Sutherland,  
Mr M Tugwell, Ms C Urry and Mr S Walford

#### **1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

Two nominations were received for the role of Chairman, Mr David Carroll and Mr Phil Gomm. A vote was taken resulting in 5 votes in favour of Mr Carroll and 2 in favour of Mr Gomm, with no abstentions. Mr Carroll was duly elected as Chairman.

### **RESOLVED**

**That Mr David Carroll be elected as Chairman of the Transport, Environment and Communities Select Committee for the ensuing year.**

#### **2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

### **RESOLVED**



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



**That Mrs Patricia Birchley be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Transport, Environment and Communities Select Committee for the ensuing year.**

### **3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/ CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP**

Apologies were received from Mr Bill Bendyshe-Brown. The Chairman welcomed Mrs Patricia Birchley, Mrs Lesley Clarke OBE and Mrs Avril Davies, who were all newly appointed to the Committee.

### **4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **5 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2015 were confirmed as a correct record.

Members noted an update from Julia Wise, Historic Environment Records Officer, in respect of a software issue she had reported at the last meeting.

Members asked for a further update on the potential work on Country Parks which had been delayed. The Committee Adviser reported that the Cabinet Member for Planning and Environment wanted the legal issues around the ownership of the Parks to be investigated before the Committee began any work. The Committee Adviser would keep members updated.

### **6 PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were no public questions.

### **7 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

The Chairman thanked Members for supporting him as the new Chairman of the Committee and asked them to note two written updates received on Sustainable Drainage and Legal Highs, which were in follow up to items that had been presented at the April meeting.

### **8 S278 DEVELOPER WORKS ON THE HIGHWAY**

The Chairman welcomed Mr Mark Shaw, Cabinet Member for Transportation, Mr Stephen Walford, Growth and Strategy Director, TEE, Mr Martin Dickman, Environment Services Director, TEE and Miss Christine Urry, Highways Development Management Team Leader to the meeting.

Mr Walford advised Members that over the past 12 months the public and elected members had raised concerns over works taking place on the highway which were linked to development. As a result, Mr Walford commissioned an independent improvement report on

the work of the Highways Development Management team, which includes S278 and S106. The report, included in the agenda papers, will provide Mr Martin Dickman, who now has responsibility for this area following the launch of the Transport, Environment and Economy (TEE) Business Unit, with a template of how to take improvements forward.

Miss Christine Urry took members through the report and the following points were discussed:

- The report highlighted four key areas for improvement – Documentation, Resources, Engagement and Transport for Buckinghamshire (TfB). The team had responded to the report's recommendations very positively but it would be impossible to deliver all 32 recommendations immediately, due to the current staffing pressures.
- Martin Dickman emphasised that making these improvements was a high priority for his service. The report recognised that the team was small and over-stretched and recommended adding an additional five posts. This would have to be discussed with the Cabinet Member and considered as part of the Medium Term Planning budget process.
- Income generation opportunities via new funding streams such as Planning Performance Agreements were being investigated. Also pre-application advice could still be charged for.
- Christine Urry explained that S278 and S38 charges are a percentage of the total cost of the works and therefore BCC charges are similar to others local authorities.
- Members were concerned to hear that there were no Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) or service level agreements in place with TfB to ensure that their contribution to the work of the HDM team was completed in a timely manner. The HDM team have been working informally to ensure that the relevant TfB teams have an understanding of the timescales which need to be met, but in the longer term it might be helpful to introduce a more formal KPI arrangement. The Cabinet Member reminded the Committee that the overall revised KPIs for the TfB contract had been recently agreed and **it was agreed that the new contract would be shared with the Committee.**

**Action: Cabinet Member for Transportation**

- Discussions took place on the following issues: whether it was possible for BCC to fund infrastructure within developments and then be refunded by the developer at a later stage, developers contributing funding for future parking issues on developments and adoption of highways.
- It was suggested that TfB had been overcharging developers in connection with S106 works. Stephen Walford explained that this was not just a TfB issue, but a commissioning one – alternative providers can be used but over the past few years, where S106 work had been quite a reactive process then TfB had been the main provider. TfB should be aiming to make a profit as a commercial entity but equally market testing should be part of the S106 approach. John Rippon would be able to give members more detail when he updated the Committee on its S106 Inquiry report progress in November.
- One area where the HDM team had been commended was its liaison with local members and the public, although this was seen as very resource intensive. The officers were reminded that major developments in Bucks would lead to major reactions

from the people affected and it was important that officers should deal with this sensitively. It was hoped that by improving processes around the HDM work, experienced officers would then have more time to provide good quality advice to the public and developers alike.

**It was agreed that Martin Dickman and Christine Urry would return to the Committee with an update on the progress of implementing the recommended improvements in six months' time.**

**Action: Committee Adviser**

## **9 PUBLIC TRANSPORT INQUIRY - PROGRESS UPDATE**

The Chairman welcomed Mark Shaw, Cabinet Member for Transportation and Mr Martin Tugwell, Programme Director, TEE to the meeting. The Chairman explained that the Committee had undertaken an Inquiry into Public Transport and their report had been presented to Cabinet in November 2014.

Mr Martin Tugwell was leading on a Strategic Options Appraisal (SOA) which should be concluded towards the end of July 2015. The Committee's Inquiry recommendations had acted as a road map for the SOA and some of the Committee's findings were being reinforced by the SOA, but it was too early to reveal too much detail. The two main areas of focus for the SOA were: i) Can we improve our current approach to transport, possibly looking at an integrated transport team and ii) what opportunities could be found through a different model of working, including community transport.

In addition, BCC had supported a proposal put forwards by Northamptonshire for a Total Transport bid. Northants won the single largest grant awarded of £750,000 and £250,000 of this would be used to put together a business case for a Total Transport project to cover Northants, Bucks and Oxfordshire.

The Chairman invited members' questions and the following points were discussed:

- A member highlighted that a previous Cabinet Member had ridden on every bus across Bucks, talking to passengers to gain an insight into their transport needs. Martin Tugwell said he would welcome any information to feed into the SOA process and agreed that it was very important to understand why people use buses.
- Community transport represented untapped potential. There were lots of examples across the county where local people have organised themselves and didn't necessarily need involvement from BCC. However there might be an argument for BCC to assist with capacity building in this area.
- A Member had an issue with a bus operator in their area which had suddenly re-routed a bus. Martin Tugwell commented that any services BCC commissioned would have to be monitored to ensure delivery.
- It was noted that public transport in rural areas was vital and it was also an important consideration for older people. Bus routes in the county were often historical and so were perhaps not as relevant today.

- A member suggested that it would be useful to have a late night bus route which would drive around a wide circle serving outlying villages, so that young people could go out in Aylesbury or Wycombe for example and then safely get a bus home afterwards.

The Cabinet Member advised that he was excited to see what proposals might come out of the SOA and agreed that it was good to take a holistic and innovative approach. **The 12 month update on the progress of the Committee's Inquiry recommendations would be received at the November meeting, along with a more detailed presentation of the outcomes of the SOA, as it was difficult for the Committee to gauge the progress being made in implementing their recommendations to date.**

**Action: Committee Adviser**

## **10 TRANSPORT FOR BUCKS UPDATE**

The Chairman welcomed Mark Shaw, Cabinet Member for Transportation, Mr Mike Freestone, Director of Transport, TEE, Mr Demos Kettenis, Head of Highways, TEE and Mr Simon Dando, TfB Contract Director to the meeting. The Cabinet Member and the TfB team had been invited to provide a further update on three key areas – Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), Staffing and Customer Journey - following the February Select Committee meeting.

Mr Freestone explained that a new framework of more focussed KPIs had been developed and adopted as part of wider revisions to the TfB contract. There was no longer an automatic extension to the TfB contract and fee levels had been reduced to BCC's advantage. The KPI framework had been divided into Contract PIs, where fees would be reduced if minimum targets were not delivered and Alliance PIs which related to other areas.

Mr Simon Dando, TfB Contract Director, reported that the new KPIs were already being monitored and would be reviewed at the end of the year to ensure they remained fit for purpose.

A Member asked a question around highways schemes funded by the Local Area Forums (LAFs). These were often significantly delayed and TfB charged both a management fee and often a contingency fee and it was felt that prices quoted were already inflated by up to 50%. Sometimes LAFs were asked to contribute further monies to ensure schemes could go ahead. Mike Freestone acknowledged that there had been issues with LAF schemes because the process was unclear and there had not been enough staff available on the client side to monitor the progress of schemes effectively. Communities were not obliged to use TfB for their schemes but it should be to their advantage and colleagues within TfB were working on improving the processes. Simon Dando advised that there should be an improvement in the quality of reports and the accuracy and detail of quotes. Target costs should be open to scrutiny. **It was agreed that Simon Dando would investigate claims that contingency fees were being charged with little or no explanation and he would report back to the Committee.**

**Action: Simon Dando**

A member complained that despite the work that had been done on KPIs he still found that the service from TfB was not up to standard – he had issues with grasscutting, poor quality of pothole repairs and redundant streetlight stumps not being removed in his area. Simon Dando apologised for this but reassured members that a number of programmes had been introduced in the past two months to raise standards.

A member commended the introduction of the new Confirm system – he had been on the working group and felt it would be an asset to TfB. He felt that Members would benefit from seeing the system in action and was confident that Confirm would lead to improvements in customer service. Mike Freestone welcomed this endorsement and explained that Confirm was a more robust system than Symology which was used currently.

A member asked for assurances that TfB staff would work closely with the Highways Development Management team to assist them in making improvements to their service. Simon Dando advised that this would happen and more formalised arrangements could be introduced to ensure that adequate levels of service were delivered. Members also noted that a training review had been carried out for all TfB blue and white collar workers – this had considered a broader skill set including customer focus and public engagement.

**It was agreed that the Committee would continue to assist in monitoring TfB's performance and it was suggested that a further update should be scheduled for approximately six months' time.**

**Action: Committee Adviser**

## **11 SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

Members noted that the Flooding inquiry would begin to gather evidence at the next Committee meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> July and the Chairman advised members that the Vice-Chairman had agreed to chair this Inquiry.

## **12 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2015 at 10am in Mezzanine Room 2, County Hall, Aylesbury. There will be a pre-meeting for Committee Members at 9.30am.

**CHAIRMAN**