



# Minutes

## *TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE*

Minutes from the meeting held on Tuesday 6 November 2018, in Mezzanine Room 1 - County Hall, Aylesbury, commencing at 10.00 am and concluding at 11.45 am.

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**

Mr N Brown, Mr D Carroll (Chairman), Mrs L Clarke OBE, Mr D Dhillon, Mr S Lambert, Mr P Martin and Mr R Reed

### **OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Ms F Blunstone, Mr N Sims, Stewart and Ms K Wager

### **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Mr S Bowles, Mrs L Clarke OBE, and Mrs A Macpherson.

### **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

### **3 MINUTES**

Of the meeting held on 25 September were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

### **4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were none.



## **5 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

The Chairman thanked Committee Members for their continued work on the Committee and thanked Ms Wager, for her support to the Committee.

## **6 GULLY CLEANSING AND DRAINAGE SYSTEM MAINTENANCE**

The Chairman welcomed the Cabinet Member for Transportation and the Operations Manager for TfB who introduced the item and highlighted the following in their summary:

The full discussion can be viewed on the webcast.

- The operations manager had been in post for three years which had driven improvements in the service.
- Over the last 2 years nearly 80 capital drainage schemes had been delivered to address drainage issues.
- Gully emptying was only part of the suite of work for drainage maintenance to remove water from road surfaces to prevent rapid deterioration of road surfaces.
- There were approx. 79000 gullies in Buckinghamshire.
- The network of pipework was in various states of deterioration, there was not currently a full picture of the state of the pipework and issues of flooding gullies was often a result of pipework issues, rather than lack of previous cleansing or problems with the gully itself. This lack of information was a significant challenge.
- The current regime was a cyclical approach to programming of works, with two full time gully emptiers and a third that was hired in when necessary for reactive works.
- The gullies on A and B roads were cleared once a year, the ones on C and U roads were cleared once every 3 years.
- The programme would be disrupted by reactive requirements with resources deployed elsewhere which meant it could at times be difficult to keep to the programme. The KPI for adherence to the programme had a target of at least 95%.
- Over the last three years TfB had met the performance targets for gully cleaning and had kept within budget.
- When prioritising works the teams would judge the severity of the blocked gully. If it was not fully blocked and still draining, even if slowly, or if water could drain further down the system, it would not necessarily be a priority to deploy resource away from the programme to address these reactively.
- The Capital programme over the last 3 years of £720,000, £720,000 and £1m enabled around 80 sites to be addressed where gully emptying could not resolve bigger drainage issues.
- There were seasonal challenges with leaf and debris build up causing difficulties in Autumn, and poorer weather in winter usually meant a more onerous reactive requirement. In the winter the drivers of the gully emptiers, as HGV drivers, would also be part of gritting rota's meaning additional potential disruption to programme.
- A (significant) number of Local Authorities were moving away from programmes on a cyclical basis and were using technology and innovation to build up information around

the asset, high risk areas and vulnerable locations and moving to a more risk based approach to gully cleaning programmes.

- TfB would like to use such systems to build up intelligence to target the resource at the most vulnerable areas of the network.
- TfB were currently working on a business case for different approaches, looking at savings and efficiencies they could bring. They were also exploring sensor technology to help build intelligence to tailor a risk based approach. TfB were building a business case to look at how this technology could help make a more efficient, sustainable and cost effective approach for the Council.
- The key was to ensure that the limited resources were effectively targeted in the places they were most needed.

#### **Member's questions and the resulting discussions included the following points:**

- **Current cyclical programme and extent to which it represented Member and resident experiences and complaints:** Members asked about the timing of the programme, in particular, during the winter when gullies became blocked with extra leaves and debris. Members were told that TfB needed to align their work as much as possible with the district road sweeping programmes to make overall work programmes more efficient. In some cases it could appear that gullies had not been cleared, however, the surface water was often due to more significant drainage issues. To resolve these more significant issues they had to be added to the capital programme and could take longer to resolve. Members were told that the capital schemes had started to address some of the long standing issues.
- **Performance of the current programme:** Members asked about slippage of the programme and were told that the programme was detailed, was built per road and was mostly on track. The KPI was set at a target of 95% minimum for adherences to the programme. Slippage was often due to reactive requirements pulling resources away from the programme.
- **How TfB worked with other to ensure strategies were aligned:** Members were told that joint working had improved significantly over the last 2 years. Gully programmes were published with district, town and parish councils. Members were given some good examples of collaborative working in Amersham and Chesham. It was acknowledged that working relationships with local councils were not perfect, whilst they had improved, this area was still developing. Members were assured that TfB would endeavour to further improve joint working and alignment of programmes going forward.
- Members also heard that TfB held monthly meetings with the strategic flood risk management team to align works, identify issues and joint working opportunities. An annual stakeholder conference with town and parish council's was held each year. This year attendance was significantly higher, a reflection of how engagement had improved.
- **Roles and responsibilities of landowners:** Members asked about what steps were taken to remind landowners of their responsibilities. They heard that the Local Area Technicians worked with landowners and that there were two types of conversation. The first was where landowners themselves had created the problem. The second was where highways had caused landowners issues. Members were told that most of the

conversations resulted in positive action and joint working. There had been some occasions where the Council had to take action under the Highways Act. In these situations, where landowners had not taken required actions TfB would have to “make safe” the situation with temporary measures in the meantime.

- **Soakaway issues:** Members highlighted issues with soakaways and asked how these were dealt with. They were told that clearing soakaways could sometimes be a significant job, and there was a need to build up greater knowledge and information around where soakaways were in order to better tackle these issues.
- **Knowledge and information of the drainage asset:** Members asked about the steps being taken to build up an accurate picture of the asset. They heard that TfB were creating a viewpoint of problem areas. They needed to get the correct management system in order to gather and view this information. The system being considered provided the technology to build this picture and was used in other local authority areas and contracts with positive reports. It was hoped that this system might be in place by April next year and a business case was currently being developed.. Having this information would enable a risk based approach to gully clearing as opposed to the current cyclical programme of works, which would be more efficient. Members were offered an opportunity to receive a demonstration of the technology.

**Action: Mr Stewart and Ms Wager to organise a member demonstration of the new technology.**

- **Criteria for prioritisation:** Members asked about the criteria in order to understand how capital works were prioritised which also defined how quickly the issue would be addressed. Mr Stewart provided examples of the types of criteria used such as safety, flooding to homes and land etc. but would send the specific criteria to Members following the meeting. Members wanted to understand the criteria and would suggest amendments if necessary.

**Action: Mr Stewart to send the criteria to Ms Wager who would circulate to Members. Members would consider any suggested amendments.**

- **Complaints data:** Members asked about the trend in complaints and were told that complaints were reducing, there were less “blocked gully” complaints and more about drainage issues and requests for information. Members heard that the open style of answers that was now given described what was done and what can’t be done which had helped to remove the complaint elements. It was recognised that the good weather this year would have contributed to the reduction in complaints.
- **Contract Monitoring and Quality Checking Works:** Members raised concerns around whether works were checked by the Council. Members were told that the client (the Council) had inspectors who checked a percentage of all works carried out. There was also a KPI for the number of gullies cleared within the programme and TfB had to prove these had been done, this was reported on, on a monthly basis. Members expressed they would like more reassurance about the quality checks and inspections carried out by the client side and would like a written response from the Highways Manager.

**Action: Mr Averill to provide a written response to be circulated to Members about the quality checking and inspection process.**

- **A new Approach and way forward:** Members asked about how the service could be improved and made more efficient. They heard that the introduction of the management system to target resources more effectively to move away from a cyclical approach to a more risk based approach. TfB hoped to have the system in place next year and the business case for this was being taken forward. Using gully sensor technology would help build an accurate picture of the gully's and help target when and where works needed to take place.
- **Member suggestion for capital scheme programmes:** Members suggested that capital drainage scheme programmes should be included within the Member capital maintenance programme meetings.

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member and his officers for their update.

## **7 MODERN SLAVERY INQUIRY: 6 MONTH RECOMMENDATION PROGRESS REVIEW**

The Chairman welcomed the Cabinet Member for Community Engagement, Mr N Sims Head of Community Wellbeing and Mrs F Blunstone Community Safety Coordinator who introduced the item. The full discussion can be viewed on the webcast but included the following points:

- That significant progress and success had been made with the set up and successful start to the new victim service. There was a coordinator, 2 other posts and the programme manager in place.
- In September there was a hugely successful police raid. A number of victims of modern slavery were rescued. The victim service offered by the Willow Project was fundamental to this. Three perpetrators were arrested and six victims agreed to be referred through the National Referral Mechanism and agreed to go to court. This was an unprecedented level of support gained from victims.
- The Inquiry Chairman Mr S Lambert, told officers and the Cabinet Member he was hugely impressed with the progress that had been made and praised the officers for their hard work and dedication to driving forward the Committee's recommendations and work within this important area.

Mrs F Blunstone then provided the Committee with an update on each recommendation in turn and Members asked questions. The full report can be found in the agenda pack and these minutes should be read alongside the detailed progress report.

The following points were raised:

**Recommendation 1:** Members were informed that this action had been fully implemented The Modern Slavery statement had been agreed by the Cabinet Member and would be published

online imminently. Members agreed that this action had been completed to their satisfaction and praised the officers for their detailed response.

**Recommendation 2:** Members agreed that this recommendation was on track. They asked to see the wording that was due to be added to the business unit plans for both Adult Social Care and the Children Social Care Service areas.

**ACTION: Mr Blunstone to provide Ms K Wager with the wording that would be added to the BU plans as required by recommendation 2. Ms Wager will then circulate this to Committee Members.**

**Recommendation 3:** Members agreed that this was on track and they were impressed with the progress made to date. Members asked about the steps taken to increase the numbers of County Council staff and Members attending the training. Mr Reed and Mr Lambert offered to encourage Members through the Member Development Working Group to attend and Mr Lambert informed the Committee that a Member briefing on modern slavery was being scheduled.

Members were told that training leads within Adults and Children's Social Care had been contacted to help encourage more staff from these important teams to sign up to training sessions. There would be another 50 County Council staff trained in November, the majority of which were social workers. The training had been marketed internally and with partners and the team would continue promoting the training sessions to ensure that it reached as many staff as possible. There would also be an E-learning package that would be ready in December. This would be twenty minutes long and all staff would be able to complete it and have a basic awareness of modern slavery, what to look out for and where to find further information and guidance. Managers would be expected to go on the face to face training delivered by the Willow Project.

Mr Lambert informed the Committee that he had attended the training delivered by the Willow Project and highly recommended it for all Members and Officers alike.

**Recommendation 4:** Members were impressed and reassured by the work that had taken place to implement this recommendation. Members were also informed that a video produced by the service on modern slavery was being shared with other councils. Members agreed that this recommendation was on track to be fully complete.

**Recommendation 5:** Members congratulated the officers for the detailed response and progress that had been made on this recommendation. The detail in the report on this recommendation demonstrated that it had been completed. Members would review how well the information available on the intranet had embedded when they review progress at the 12 month update.

**Recommendation 6:** Members heard how single points of contact had been identified and trained within children's and adult social services. There was only one for children's and three for adult social services. Members were told that as a result, the community safety team had

liaised with children's services and they had now identified a further three single points of contact who would be trained.

Members agreed that this recommendation was on track to be fully complete and it would be reviewed at the 12 month update.

**Recommendation 7:** Members asked about the low numbers of potential victims recorded on the adult social care system. Members heard that numbers remain low, and this was mainly due to training issues. As more people were trained this would impact on the numbers of potential victims recorded. The changes to the children's social care recording system would be confirmed in the very near future. Members asked about how information would pass over from children's to adults in transition from children to adult services. They were told that the new recording system will record both adult and children's data to ensure information was not lost during transitions.

Members agreed that progress was on track and they would review this area again at the 12 month review to ensure that the recording of potential victims and referrals was robust.

**Recommendation 8:** Members heard about the delay to the victim service, but as mentioned above, the Willow Service set up in September 18 had been hugely successful so far and was having a significantly positive impact locally. The service would be in place until 2020 with the possibility to extend. The pilot was working very well; the recent police operation was testament to that. The success of the operation could not be underestimated and was down to partnership working and the support the service offered victims. The victim service and the community safety team were working closely with the police and crime commissioner who funded the victim service and provided the venue for the victim reception centre which perfectly supported victims.

Members agreed that this recommendation was on track and they looked forward to reviewing the evaluation of the pilot in 6 months' time.

The Chairman told officers he was delighted with progress. He thanked the officers and the Willow Project (victim service) for the dedicated work that had taken place in this very important area. The Cabinet Member thanked the Committee for the interest and involvement they had in raising awareness of this issues, raising the profile of the work that had taken place and driving improvement in this area.

## **8 COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee noted the forward plan and highlighted that they would be holding a detailed work programme workshop in March 19 to develop the annual work programme for 2019/20.

## **9 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on 22 January 2019 at 10:00 am, in the Mezzanine Room 1, County Hall.

**CHAIRMAN**