



Buckinghamshire Council

Transport, Environment & Climate Change Select Committee

Minutes

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE SELECT COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 21 JANUARY 2021 IN VIA MS TEAMS, COMMENCING AT 2.00 PM AND CONCLUDING AT 3.45 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT

S Broadbent, Mr C Clare, A Cole, G Hall, M Hussain, C Jackson, S Jenkins, D Lyons, P Martin, Dr W Matthews, M Smith and P Strachan

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

J Durkan, S Bambrick, B Chapple OBE, N Naylor and R Smith

Agenda Item

- 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP**
Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Alan Hill, Majid Hussain, Mark Titterington and Ian Thompson, Corporate Director, Planning, Growth & Sustainability.
- 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
There were no declarations of interest.
- 3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**
The minutes of the meeting held on 12 November were agreed as a correct record.
- 4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS**
There were no public questions.
- 5 CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE**
The Chairman explained that he had written a letter to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change to express his and the Committee's disappointment regarding the progress of the Strategy and lack of public consultation on the Climate Change Strategy. The Chairman noted that an update was being provided by Cllr Chapple at the meeting.
- 6 HS2 LTD**
The Chairman welcomed representatives from HS2 Ltd: Maddelyn Sutton - Head of Engagement Phase One South, Ambrose McGuire - Project Client EKFB and Rohan Perin - Project Client Align, (Luke Nipen, Senior Engagement Manager was introduced but did not attend the meeting).

The Chairman ahead of the presentation explained Buckinghamshire Council's position with regards to HS2 Ltd. He noted that the Council opposed the work of HS2 and worked tirelessly to mitigate the construction impact on local communities, environment and infrastructure. HS2 Ltd and their contractors had a responsibility to consider the impact of the construction and to keep local residents informed and engaged with works being undertaken.

The HS2 Ltd officers introduced themselves and Mr McGuire confirmed that EKFB stood for the four way joint venture Eiffage, Kier, Ferrovial Construction and BAM Nuttall. A presentation was provided to the members which provided information on the contractors Fusion, Align and EKFB and their priorities and responsibilities in the construction of HS2. Regarding traffic management it was reported that regular liaison group meetings with Buckinghamshire Council were undertaken, the production of traffic management plans, and a road safety fund of £3.5m was available to Buckinghamshire Council to build a legacy of safety improvements. Over part of phase one over 7 million trees and shrubs would be planted along the route, with over 130,000 trees and saplings being planted in Buckinghamshire in 2021. Mr McGuire noted there were areas where contractors had not fully complied with their obligations however these were exceptions and that a majority of assurances were being taken very seriously.

Regarding engaging with local communities the challenge for local communities and people who lived close to the construction was noted. The role of the engagement team was to act as the local voice of the community to contractors. The engagement programme across Buckinghamshire included informing residents and communities of upcoming works, to involve them in design, and respond to questions and concerns. It was reported that a number of staff and a helpdesk team were available for public enquiries, information was provided on the website, and hardcopy notifications and newsletters were issued to residents on upcoming work. Virtual engagement platforms had taken place during 2020 with over 300 events including 2 webinars and virtual exhibitions to engage with residents. There had been a number of successful applications for funds which were awarded to projects and communities across the county, and HS2 and its contractors also provided a number of job opportunities.

In responses to questions the following main points were noted:

- Regarding obtaining accurate traffic numbers HS2 officers explained that individuals should refer to the Traffic Management Plan and the centralised Statement of Intent regarding the impact of the road network. There were no plans to change the Traffic Management Plan. A detailed written response would be provided as requested to Cllr Peter Martin in relation to his area and would be circulated to the TECC and the Construction Commissioner.
- Actions relating to the environment and sustainability were set out in government and HS2 Ltd policies.
- Community engagement officers were thanked for their work with Fairford Leys parish council. Officers from HS2 would ensure that the right specialist officers would attend parish meetings to provide information on works being undertaken so that questions could be responded to.
- Members would be provided with a written response regarding flood modelling.
- A written response would be provided with regards to access from Fairford Leys to the A41.
- Newly planted trees on HS2 land would be maintained indefinitely by HS2. However for other land trees would be maintained, under a normal construction contract, for a year and following this would be subject to agreement with land owners.
- Regarding the EKFB contract, staff out on site were not obliged to wear protective masks unless they were unable to maintain a two metre distance. All site personnel after the Christmas break were subject to COVID 19 testing. Staff who worked in offices wore mask

protection in the office environment. Staff were not permitted to use local facilities outside a site boundary. If outside a boundary then they would comply with same public rules and regulations. Any breaches of rules would be investigated and any breaches should be reported via the hotline. (The 24 hour helpdesk number was 08081 434 434, email HS2enquiries@hs2.org.uk.)

- Members raised concern that works information for some areas was not available for residents which caused stress and anxiety in the community. In response it was noted that Schedule 17 had been submitted to Buckinghamshire Council with regards to this matter and designs were being undertaken with consultees and stakeholders.
- Commercial payments between land owners and HS2 and were the responsibility of the land and property department.
- Work was being undertaken with the engagement team with regards to a temporary access road in the Chalfont St Giles area.
- Regarding the cost of communications discussions had taken place with HS2 and Buckinghamshire Council. It was suggested that if extra support was required then HS2 staff could help support resources and officers. If not appropriate then further discussion could be undertaken on this matter.

The Chairman thanked the HS2 Ltd officers for attending the meeting. It was agreed that HS2 would attend a future meeting to provide an update and would provide the additional information requested as soon as practicable.

7 CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY UPDATE

Mr Bill Chapple, Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change, provided an update on the Climate Change Strategy.

Bill informed the select committee that limited information could be provided as the strategy was currently in its final production. Time had been spent over the past few months to make sure that finances were available to achieve and deliver the emission reductions. The strategy would be presented to Cabinet on 16 February alongside a report setting out a large scale tree planting initiative, which was one of the key deliverables of the climate change strategy. Work has been progressing to plant a tree for every resident. Members were provided with information on recent government announcements with regards to climate change policy.

In response to questions the following points were noted:

- The plan was for the strategy to be taken to community boards, schools and the TECC to consider, however details for a public consultation had not yet been agreed. This could be dependent on when the local elections would be taking place due to the purdah period and Cabinet agreement.
- Regarding the levels of carbon absorbed by trees, for every hectare of woodland planted after 30 years this would absorb 300 tonnes of carbon. It was noted that there were plans to plant at least 200 hectares of trees across the county. The strategy would provide detailed information on how this would impact the carbon zero aims for the county.
- The trees would be native trees and the council were considering growing locally.
- The strategy would cover 30 years and consider government policy for now and the future.
- The recycling rate was around 56% which is 12% higher than the national average. The household waste sites were open during this lockdown and rates were between 65 and 70%.
- It was noted that £5m allocated in the budget for Climate Change was not yet available but would be used by the Cabinet Member over a number of years when needed. Some of the funds would be used to plant 10 years work of trees in the second to 5th year of the strategy.

The Chairman thanked the Bill for his presentation and noted that the Climate Change Strategy would be presented at the Cabinet meeting on the 16th February.

8 TRANSPORT FOR BUCKINGHAMSHIRE CONTRACT RE-PROCUREMENT

The Committee received a report from Rob Smith, Service Director, Highways and Technical Services providing information on the progress, governance arrangements and programme to deliver the re-procurement of the Transport for Buckinghamshire contract.

Rob outlined the main points of the report which included information on the current contract which started in 2009, which will come to an end in March 2023. Information was provided on the varied range of services, assets and existing issues in relation to the current contract. A proposed new model was shared with the members that included an increased client team, transferring back staff into the authority, a term principal contractor, a term consultant, and a set of frameworks for specialists types of works. All parties would be part of an alliance to work to common objectives in a collaborative way. A key area would be better engagement with members and for officers to work with community boards. Members would be encourage to use 'Fixmystreet' and the annual Stakeholder Conference on the Highways Service would continue to be held for all Members and Town and Parish Councils.

Councillor Gary Hall informed the Committee that he was part of a working group considering the re-procurement contract.

In response to questions the following points were noted:

- There was a well-established mechanism to deliver this type of work and the market was ready to respond and deliver to this.
- Regarding the High Wycombe Transport Strategy this was being developed by a separate part of the organisation and could be delivered using the same process or if a more specialist approach was required then this could go separately to the market.
- Regarding safety of operations of the highway there was a team that addressed known road safety problems. The council would set its policy with regards of safety expenditure and it was noted that the budget was currently driven by injury accidents which was the national approach.
- Regarding safe methods of working this would be tested as part of the procurement process.
- A bigger client base would support innovation through partner working and connections in the industry.
- It was suggested that geo location would support reporting of problems.

The Cabinet Member for Transport, Nick Naylor explained that a lot of work had already taken place on the new contract. Work was being undertaken to consider options to improve and innovate across the services specifically regarding road repairs.

The Chairman thanked Rob and the Cabinet Member for the update.

9 WORK PROGRAMME

With regards to an additional item, 'Opportunities for cyclists and pedestrians', this would be brought to the March meeting. This was initially intended to be taken to the Growth Infrastructure and Housing Select Committee but in agreement with the Chairman of both committees, and the Cabinet Member for Transport, this would now be brought to the TECC in March. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the GHS would be invited to the meeting.

(Following the meeting it was agreed that the item, Adoption of Roads, would be taken to the

June 2021 TECC Select Committee, date to be finalised).

10 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting would take place at 10am on Thursday 11 March.