

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON 4 SEPTEMBER 2017 FROM 7.00 PM TO 8.40 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Shahid Younis (Chairman), Bill Soane (Vice-Chairman), Abdul Loyes, Ken Miall, Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey and David Sleight

Other Councillors Present

Councillors: Chris Bowring

Officers Present

Neil Carr (Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist), Alex Deans (Highways and Transport Transition Lead), David Wilby (Principal Planner, Highways and Transport) and Louise Strongitharm (Category Manager, Strategy and Commissioning)

11. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted by Pauline Jorgensen and Philip Mirfin.

12. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 19 June 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

13. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

14. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

15. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

16. STRATEGIC REVIEW OF VOLUNTARY SECTOR SERVICES (PLACE COMMISSIONING)

The Committee considered a report, Agenda pages 9 to 12, which gave details of the strategic review of Voluntary and Community Sector providers being undertaken by the Place Commissioning service. This piece of work mirrored the approach taken by the People Commissioning Service as reported to the previous meeting of the Committee (Minute 7 refers).

The aim of the review was to deliver:

- Measurable outcomes for each commissioned or grant funded voluntary sector service;
- A clear correlation between grant funding of a service and the achievement of measurable outcomes;
- The increased use of contracts rather than grants for voluntary sector services;
- Development of investment priorities to help shape the future commissioning of voluntary sector services.

Louise Strongitharm, Category Manager, Strategy and Commissioning, stated that the scale of Place-based voluntary and community sector commissioning was considerably

smaller than in People Commissioning, with only three organisations currently receiving annual grant-based funding, totalling £45,600. The organisations were:

- Wokingham Job Support Club;
- Woodley Town Council (Woodley Town Centre Management Initiative);
- Earley Town Council (Earley Help Shop).

The approach being taken in Place Commissioning was the same as that in People Commissioning to ensure consistency across the Council. The process involved an initial meeting with the providers followed by commissioning analysis and the development of recommendations. A second meeting with each of the providers would involve sharing the outcome of the review and any recommendations for the future. In the event of a proposal to decommission a service transitional support arrangements would be put in place.

During the ensuing discussion the following points were made:

- In addition to the three organisations currently receiving funding, were any other organisations under consideration? It was confirmed that the ongoing pressure on budgets meant that there were no plans to extend funding to other organisations.
- In the move to longer term contract-based arrangements how would organisational performance be monitored? It was confirmed that performance targets would be agreed with each of the organisations and would be the subject of ongoing assessment.
- As discussed at the previous meeting, how would Officers keep Members updated about issues relating to voluntary sector providers in their wards? It was confirmed that discussions would be held with People Commissioning to identify suitable communication channels for Members.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) the update on the Place Commissioning service review of voluntary and community sector services be noted;
- 2) the components of the review, including partnership agreements, commissioned services and a move from grants to contracts, be supported;
- 3) People and Place Commissioning services develop a method for improved communication with Members on issues relating to voluntary sector service providers in their wards.

17. HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT UPDATE REPORT

The Committee considered a report, Agenda pages 13 to 18, which provided an update on highways and transport activities and initiatives within the Highways Alliance (Wokingham Borough Council, WSP and Balfour Beatty Living Places). Alex Deans (Highways and Transport Transition Lead) and Chris Bowring (Executive Member for Highways and Transport) attended the meeting to answer Member questions.

The report focussed on a number of issues including:

- Highways asset management;

- Checks and balances to ensure that roadworks were delivered to the correct specification and quality standard;
- Highways England Smart Motorway project acoustic barriers;
- M4/J10 improvement works to improve traffic flows and reduce congestion.

The report stated that the Highways Alliance had focussed on improving the quality of reactive works (patching and potholes), improving the delivery of highways projects and customer communication and service. The current contractual arrangements with WSP and Balfour Beatty were due to end in March 2019. In the meantime, a review of Highways and Transport was under way as part of the 21st Century Council programme. The outcomes from the review would be incorporated into the new Highways and Transport contracts.

The report also gave details of stakeholder workshops held to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing the service. The workshops, involving Members and Town and Parish Councils, were useful in identifying key local issues and priorities over the next 20 years. Issues raised included the impact of new housing, traffic congestion, air quality, health and wellbeing and alternatives to the car.

During the subsequent discussion the following points were made:

- What penalties could the Council impose on utility companies when roadworks were not completed on time? It was confirmed that Officers met with the utility companies to co-ordinate projects. However, emergency works could be necessary and these could not be co-ordinated in advance. Good communication and management of expectations were important. A further briefing session on communication was being arranged for Members later in 2017.
- What works were being undertaken at Junction 10 of the M4? It was confirmed that major bridge maintenance works were being carried out and that Highways England was the client.
- When would new performance indicators, linked to 21st Century Council, be introduced and reported to Members? It was confirmed that new performance measures were being designed to address high level issues identified in the Council's visioning work and operational matters such as response times. An update would be provided to Members at the communications briefing later in the year. Members emphasised the need for more up to date information as part of the new performance management regime.
- Members queried the response time for the Highways for Members Inbox service. Had the response time been increased from 48 hours to five days? It was confirmed that the Highways for Members service had originally been set up with a five day response time and this had not changed. Members requested clarification on response times and the route to be followed for other issues e.g. emergencies.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) the improvements to Highways and Transport services and customer service, outlined in the report, be noted;

- 2) Officers provide an update on the new performance management regime at the Member communications briefing to be held later in 2017;
- 3) Officers circulate information to all Members clarifying the response time for the Highways for Members Inbox and the process to follow when reporting other highways issues such as emergencies.

18. CYCLE LANES UPDATE

The Committee considered a report, Agenda pages 19 to 24, which provided an update on cycle lanes and cycle safety since the previous report to the Committee in January 2017. David Wilby (Principal Planner, Highways and Transport) attended the meeting to introduce the report and answer Member questions.

The report reminded Members that since 2013 a combination of grant funding and developer funding had been used to fund the provision of new cycleways. The funding had been used to deliver the Lower Earley Way Cycleway and work was now ongoing to deliver a cycleway on the A329 corridor. The works included replacing traffic signals, improving bus stops and shelters, improving footways and kerbs and resurfacing the carriageway.

The report gave details about the impact of the Lower Earley Way Cycleway which had opened in late 2013. The data collected indicated that there were over 29,000 cycle trips per year which equated to a reduction of over 18,000 car journeys. The A329 cycleway was being delivered in phases with the final phase planned for delivery in 2018. Data available indicated an increase in cycle journeys of 14% on the A329 route compared to 2013.

The report stated that Wokingham Borough was a relatively safe place to cycle. Records indicated that there had been 236 accidents involving cyclists over the past five years. 23% of these accidents had taken place in the A329 corridor and it was felt that the new cycleway would help to improve safety and raise awareness of cyclists.

The report reminded Members of the Council's Bikeability training programme for 10-11 year olds. Over the past nine years over 11,000 children had received training and in the past two years over 90% of eligible children had been trained. Officers also provided training for drivers and had run specific sessions for coach and bus drivers.

The report also referred to the recent Government guidance relating to the development of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans. It was intended to develop a plan for the Borough alongside a new Local Transport Plan and in line with the Council's Greenways initiative.

In the subsequent discussion the following points were made:

- Was Government funding available for the development of a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan? It was confirmed that Officers had made a bid for Government funded consultancy support and were waiting to hear the outcome of the bid.
- How was data collected to provide performance management on the new cycleways? It was confirmed that three permanent cycle counters had been put in place for the

Lower Earley Way Cycleway. Officers were investigating the potential for a similar arrangement for the A329 corridor.

- What were the benefits of the new cycleways in relation to air quality across the Borough? It was confirmed that active travel measures could play an important part in mitigating the impact of vehicle emissions. This was important as the new housing in the Borough would result in additional vehicles on the Borough's roads.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) the cycling improvements, new initiatives and proposals to develop the cycling network, set out in the report, be noted;
- 2) the incorporation of the DfT's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Planning guidance, to assist the prioritisation of new cycling and walking schemes, be supported;
- 3) Officers consider performance measures relating to cycling initiatives as part of the wider review of performance management discussed under the Highways and Transport Update item;
- 4) Officers be congratulated on their success in securing external sources of funding and delivering the successful Bikeability scheme.

19. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee reviewed its Work Programme for 2017/18, set out on Agenda pages 25 to 27.

RESOLVED: That the 2017/18 Work Programme be confirmed.