

# Environment Overview Committee

Minutes of a meeting held at County Hall,  
Colliton Park, Dorchester on 1 October 2013.

## **Present:**

Robin Cook (Chairman)  
Margaret Phipps (Vice-Chairman)  
Andy Canning, Ronald Coatsworth, Paul Kimber, Mike Lovell, Mark Tewkesbury and John  
Wilson.

Toni Coombs, Hilary Cox and Rebecca Knox attended under Standing Order 54(1).

Janet Dover, County Council member for Colehill and Stapehill, attended the meeting for minutes 113 to 115.

David Mannings, County Council member for Lodmoor, attended the meeting for minutes 116 to 119.

Ros Kayes, County Council member for Bridport, attended the meeting for minutes 123 to 125

Barrie Cooper, County Council member for Blandford, attended the meeting for minutes 123 to 125.

## Officers attending:

Miles Butler (Director for Environment), Mike Harries (Head of Dorset Property, Deputy Director), Steve Hedges (Group Finance Manager) and David Northover (Senior Democratic Services Officer).

## For certain items, as appropriate:

Dave Ayre (Head of Countryside and Business Development), Don Gobbett (Head of Planning), Andrew Martin (Head of Dorset Highways Operations), Mike Winter (Head of Dorset Highways Management), Marc Eyre (Corporate Risk Officer), Mike Hansford (Technical Engineer), Mike Harden (Chief Engineer), Steve Maros (Arboricultural Manager), Peter Moore (Group Manager), Matthew Piles (Group Manager), Mike Potter (Senior Technician) and Gordon Sneddon (Group Manager).

## Public Speakers

### Attending for minutes 110 to 112

Sue Spittle, Christchurch Borough Council ward councillor for St.Catherine's and Hurn, under the Open Door protocol

### Attending for minutes 116 to 119

Bill White, Weymouth and Portland Borough Council ward councillor for Radipole under the Open Door protocol

### Attending for minutes 123 to 125

Sarah Williams, Leader of Bridport Town Council  
David Rickard, Chairman of Bridport Town Council's Environment Committee  
Bob Brannigan, Mayor of Blandford Forum Town Council

Chief Inspector Duffy, Dorset Police also attended for minutes 113 to 115

(Note: These minutes have been prepared by officers as a record of the meeting and of any decisions reached. They are to be considered and confirmed at the next meeting of the Environment Overview Committee on **23 January 2014**)

**Apologies for Absence**

107. Apologies for absence were received from Richard Biggs, Peter Hall, Mervyn Jeffery and Peter Richardson.

**Code of Conduct**

108. There were no declarations by members of disclosable pecuniary interests under the Code of Conduct.

**Minutes**

109. The minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2013 were confirmed and signed.

**Petition - Condition of Hurn Road, Christchurch**

110.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director for Environment on the receipt of a petition, signed by in excess of 20 signatories, on the condition of part of Hurn Road, Christchurch, the surface of which had become uneven as a consequence of the adjacent pine trees' root system which had penetrated the surface. The petitioners had requested that a survey be undertaken to identify those trees which were causing the problem and to subsequently take remedial action to address this, with the road then being levelled and resurfaced and suitable replacement trees being replanted. The report acknowledged that the root system of the adjacent pine trees had resulted in the road becoming uneven.

110.2 Sue Spittle, Christchurch Borough Councillor for St. Catherine's and Hurn, confirmed that the deterioration of the road was now quite evident and was beginning to affect the ability for deliveries to be made. Furthermore anyone requiring to be transported for medical reasons would be caused discomfort by the condition of the road and accordingly she agreed with the sentiments of the petitioners that remedial action be taken.

110.3 The County Council member for Commons supported these views and reported that a series of meetings had already taken place with officers with a view to resolving this issue and that progress was being made on the basis of the action requested in the petition.

110.4 The Director confirmed that progress was being made based on the action requested in the petition, with the necessary trees to be felled, the road to be considered in the resurfacing programme and the replanting of a more suitable species of tree, with oaks being mentioned.

110.5 The Committee were pleased to hear of the progress being made and the clear demonstration of member involvement playing its part in influencing and addressing matters to the satisfaction of the community.

**Resolved**

111. That the petition be noted and the petitioner be informed of the progress being made in meeting the intention of the petition.

**Reason for Decision**

112. In order to comply with the County Council's published scheme for responding to petitions and so as to enable local people to connect with local elected decision makers.

**Petition relating to Part Night Street Lighting Policy - Rotary Close, Colehill**

113.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director for Environment on the receipt of a petition signed by 25 signatories concerned at the effects of the part night street light policy for Rotary Close, Colehill. The Close was largely occupied by elderly residents who were in receipt of medical and social care visits throughout the day and night and the ability for their premises to be identified in an emergency situation when there was no illumination was giving cause for concern, and the perception that their security was being compromised.

113.2 The Committee were informed that the Close was a quiet, lightly trafficked residential cul-de sac, attracting minimal pedestrian or vehicular movements at night, with parking arrangements being satisfactorily managed. Furthermore the crime rate in the area was negligible. Officers reminded members that the policy was subject to review if circumstances changed or at the request of the Police if there was a significant increase in the crime rate. However, in this case, there was no justification for the policy to be reverted as the necessary criteria were met and there was no grounds for an exception and the policy had been applied correctly.

113.3 The County Council member for Colehill and Stapehill explained that whilst she had not been the initiator of the petition, she supported its sentiments wholeheartedly. As the Close was home to predominantly elderly residents and was purposely designed for assisted living, it should be afforded an exception for the reasons set out in the petition. At the very least she asked that one street light remain so that the Close might be illuminated to some extent and provide a degree of reassurance to the community.

113.4 This view was wholeheartedly supported by the County Council member for Littlemoor. He had experienced a similar situation in his electoral division, albeit with significantly higher instances of crime and, with the support of Dorset Police, had successfully campaigned to restore the night time lights and the issues which had been experienced had now largely dissipated. Whilst understanding that the intention of the policy was designed to make savings wherever possible, there were reasons why exceptions should be made and Rotary Close was just such a case. Accordingly, he and two other members considered that the solitary light mentioned should remain as this would have limited financial consequences.

113.5 The Chairman of the County Council however expressed his concern that this course of action would set a precedent, citing other examples of similar requests, to which the Committee had not agreed. Given that there were no justifiable mitigating circumstances, he considered that the policy should be maintained. He also commented that large areas of rural Dorset had no street lights and appeared to manage without difficulty and he could see no reason why this would not be the case in this instance.

113.6 Other members, whilst having sympathy with the sentiments of the petition, shared the view that there was no justification for diverting from the policy given that the request was similar to others received by the Committee which had been rejected.

113.7 As a compromise, the Chairman suggested that the petitioner receive an explanation of the Committee's view as to why their request could not be accepted, but that the Committee would support the petitioner if they wished to contact Synergy Housing for the provision of some form of appropriate alternative illumination.

113.8 One member was of the view that if Synergy Housing was not prepared to provide this, then an exception should be made for the Close to remain illuminated. However this view was not shared by the majority of the Committee.

113.9 A recorded vote was requested and Robin Cook, Margaret Phipps, Ronald Coatsworth and John Wilson were in favour of no further action being taken and Mark Tewkesbury, Paul Kimber and Andrew Canning voted against.

### **Resolved**

114.1 That the petition be noted and the petitioner informed that the part night street lighting arrangements operating in Rotary Close, Colehill met the criteria in the policy and should continue to be maintained.

114.2 That the Committee would be supportive of any approach by the petitioner to Synergy Housing for the provision of some form of appropriate alternative illumination for Rotary Close.

### **Reason for decision**

115. In order to comply with the County Council's published scheme for responding to petitions and so as to enable local people to connect with local elected decision makers.

### **Gypsy and Traveller sites**

116.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director for Environment which updated the Committee with progress on and sought their views on:-

- the progress of the Joint Gypsy and Traveller Sites Development Plan Document, jointly commissioned by Dorset Councils;
- the withdrawal of funding by the Homes and Communities Agency for the provision of a Gypsy and Traveller Transit site;
- the Great Dorset Steam Fair temporary transit site; and
- requests received from Dorset Police and several County Councillors for the provision of a transit site as soon as possible in order to trigger the additional Police powers necessary to better manage unauthorised camping.

116.2 The report set out the position and progress being made with establishing the Joint Document; funding arrangements and the Great Dorset Steam Fair. In addition, the Committee were being asked to come to a view as to what option should be chosen for the provision of a temporary transit site whilst the Joint Plan Document was being developed. Given the amount of unauthorised encampments around the county throughout the summer there was a critical need for an interim site to be identified.

116.3 The report identified a series of options available to the Committee including Option 1 - to do nothing; or Option 2 - to consider opening a further temporary transit site at either Piddlehinton or Weymouth Park and Ride site.

116.4 In respect of these options the Committee's attention was drawn to the receipt of the following comments by way of correspondence in respect of:-

- Piddlehinton - from Jill Haynes, the County Council member for Three Valleys and from Jacqui Cuff, the West Dorset District Council Ward Member for Piddle Valley and whilst both understanding the need for a second site, considered Piddlehinton to be unacceptable given the condition of the site which might deteriorate in poor weather and their concerns for security. They also drew attention to the access road which was not in the County Council's ownership.

- Tarrant Hinton – from Deborah Croney, the County Council member for Hambledon, who was supportive of the extension of the temporary permission for the Great Dorset Steam Fair site based on how the site had operated in the past and the demand for it. She also considered that having a second site would relieve some of the pressures experienced and provided a sound basis for travellers moving of their own accord before the use of Police powers was necessary.

116.5 The Chairman then provided the opportunity for speakers to address the Committee in respect of the Weymouth Park and Ride site. The Weymouth and Portland Borough Council Ward Member for Radipole considered that the Park and Ride site was wholly unacceptable as it was the primary gateway to Weymouth, would be unattractive and could deter those wishing to visit the town. His understanding was that Government guidelines did not make provision for traveller sites to be located within car parks and if this proposal was to be progressed, it would undoubtedly be met with considerable opposition. He considered the Piddlehinton site to be the more appropriate given that it had been tried and tested and was considered to have been a success.

116.6 The County Council Member for Lodmoor then addressed the Committee and supported the sentiments of the Ward Member for Radipole. He considered that siting a gypsy and traveller encampment on the Weymouth Park and Ride Site would create a bad initial impression of Weymouth and was not what visitors to the resort would expect to see. Furthermore, this prominent gateway into Weymouth already sited two national supermarkets, along with two other national chains, and the ability to attract further business to that park would undoubtedly be compromised by such an encampment. He agreed that considerable opposition would be generated if such proposals were progressed.

116.7 In response to a question about the previously identified site at Badger's Farm, the Head of Countryside and Business Development explained that whilst this site had been identified and investigated and was found to be favourable in many ways, its access road was not in the County Council's ownership and given the length of time needed for this to be resolved, it was necessary to look for an alternative. Effectively the options now being considered were the only two sites readily available. He confirmed that the Piddlehinton site had performed well the previous year and was considered to be successful. He did acknowledge that the adoption of the access highway needed to be secured and that the lower part of the site might well pose problems if it became saturated, but hardstanding was available on the upper tier.

116.8 The Cabinet Member for Education and Communications asked for a definition of "District Councils" to determine whether Bournemouth and Poole Unitary Authorities were included in this reference. The Head of Countryside and Business Development confirmed that Bournemouth and Poole Unitary Authorities would be required to make their own arrangements for the provision of transit sites. The sites which the Committee were being asked to consider related solely for provision within Dorset.

116.9 The Committee considered that in taking this initiative, greater dialogue would undoubtedly be instigated with both Bournemouth and Poole Borough Councils over provision in the east of the county and what their intentions for this might be. The Chairman considered that the stance taken by the Committee demonstrated what could be achieved, should be applauded and be seen as a means of leverage for persuading other provision. He confirmed that the Police powers only applied to the area in which the transit site was situated and were not transferable. Any other local authority would be required to make their own arrangements.

116.10 It was clarified that at this stage, the Committee were only being asked to recommend to the Cabinet that the two options be investigated further, and that if the Cabinet agreed to this, the process would then be subject to a formal consultation exercise, with a planning application being submitted as part of any planning process necessary.

116.11 The Committee generally agreed that this was a positive step towards alleviating the problems previously experienced with unauthorised encampments. It was anticipated that the availability of the transit sites would mean that many travellers would comply without the need to resort to Police powers.

116.12 The County Council Member for Littlemoor, in whose electoral division the Weymouth park and ride site was located, asked that this option be deleted from consideration, but this was not supported. On being put to the vote, the Committee

### **Resolved**

117. That the progress in preparing a Gypsy and Traveller Sites Development Plan Document and the withdrawal of funding for a transit site be noted.

### **Recommended**

118.1 That a planning application be submitted for the Great Dorset Steam Fair transit site for a period of five years from the 2015 event;

118.2 That Option 2 be the preferred option in relation to the requests to provide a temporary transit site pending the identification of potential permanent locations through the Development Plan process;

118.3 That, subject to Option 2 being the preferred option, discussions be held with other Dorset Councils and Dorset Police on partnership working to fund and operate the site and discussions be held with Dorset's two unitary councils to identify a further potential temporary location in the south east Dorset conurbation.

### **Reason for Recommendations**

119. This links to Aim 1 of the County Council's Corporate Plan to 'help build strong communities for all' and, in particular, the outcome to work constructively with Gypsies and Travellers to manage authorised and unauthorised encampments and provide additional authorised sites.

## **New Flood and Water Management Functions and Draft Interim Sustainable Drainage Systems Policy**

120.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director for Environment which detailed the imminent enactment of the next phase of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 which was designed to make the County Council a Sustainable Drainage Approval Body (SAB) with responsibility for approving sustainable drainage system (SuDs) proposals for all developments and redevelopments submitted for planning approval. The Committee were also asked to recommend approval of the Draft Interim Sustainable Drainage Systems Policy, subject to a review by the County Council's Legal Services section.

120.2 The Committee welcomed this development which would provide for progress to be made on drainage responsibilities and how these were applied.

### **Noted**

### **Recommended**

121. That the Cabinet be asked to approve the Draft Interim Sustainable Drainage Systems Policy, subject to advice from the County Council's Legal Services section.

### Reason for Recommendation

122. In order to progress the County Council's corporate aim to safeguard and enhance Dorset's unique environment and support our local economy.

### **On Street Pay and Display for Dorset**

123.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director for Environment which set out proposals for implementing on street pay and display in Blandford Forum, Bridport and Lyme Regis through a balanced and proportionate parking policy which promoted economic vitality and supported the use of alternatives to cars. Officers considered that managing parking effectively could provide higher quality and safer environments and an efficient transport network. Details of the number of pay and display bays, their location and associated costs were all set out in the appendices to the Director's report.

123.2 Members were informed that parking policies designed to improve the way in which existing parking was utilised and priced in order to support sustainable transport and promote economic development, was supported in the 2011 Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset Local Transport Plan and it was considered that these advantages would be achieved by the introduction of such measures in the proposed towns. Primary consultation had taken place with the Town and District councils, local County Council members and Dorset Police, this being followed by statutory consultation with members of the public and businesses.

123.3 The Policy was designed to contribute towards the economic vitality and vibrancy of those three communities, given that motorists tended to adhere more rigidly to on street pay and display restrictions than to limited waiting traffic regulation orders. Consequently, experience had shown that the turn over of parked vehicles increased, with a constant churn of short stay parking, therefore presenting those wishing to visit the retail facilities with greater opportunity to find on-street parking places.

123.4 Accordingly, the County Council Civil Enforcement Officers would then be able to enforce on street parking under a pay and display system more efficiently than under limited waiting restrictions and therefore the restrictions would be regulated more effectively. Officers emphasised that the pay and display scheme was critical in contributing towards the funding of the Enforcement Officers necessary to regulate the restrictions. Members were informed that it was therefore necessary to fund On-Street Pay and Display schemes for Bridport, Blandford Forum and Lyme Regis by using the LTP integrated transport block during 2013/14, with these schemes following the same arrangements as those introduced in Dorchester and Swanage over the previous few years.

123.5 A series of speakers then had the opportunity to address the Committee including the County Council member for Bridport, Sarah Williams and David Rickard, in respect of the scheme proposed for Bridport and the County Council member for Blandford and Bob Brannigan in respect of Blandford Forum, all of whom were opposed to the policy being implemented in their particular towns. Correspondence received from Lyme Regis Town Council and the Rt Hon Oliver Letwin MP, in respect of Bridport, was drawn to the attention of the Committee, which echoed the sentiments of the speakers.

123.6 The County Council Member for Bridport expressed concern that Bridport was unsuited to such a policy and the town's trade would be adversely affected. From a survey which she had conducted there was overwhelming opposition to the scheme from local shoppers and she considered there to be a need for a retail impact study before any further progress was made. Sarah Williams was concerned that there would be an adverse affect on the town's long established street market and, in particular, that the idea for street traders

to have to pay compensation for those bays which were unable to be used for parking on market days was unreasonable. She also considered that the visual impact of the parking meters on this historic market town would be detrimental. David Rickard was of the view that the use of bays by disabled badge holders would negate any benefits the scheme might bring and that there was a need for any proposals to be developed with the participation and support of the Town Council.

123.7 Bob Brannigan made his observations on the accuracy of some of the detail of the scheme and considered that any scheme should be tailored to the specific town and not be imposed on the basis of how it was applied elsewhere. He considered that the town's trade would be adversely affected and that out of town retailers with their ample parking would prosper as a consequence. The County Council Member for Blandford considered that cars were needed to access Blandford town centre as there was little alternative arrangements available in North Dorset and that any objective of the scheme to improve traffic movements was of little consequence in Blandford given the configuration of its roads. He also considered that as the town centre was in a conservation area, there would be opposition to any unnecessary street furniture.

123.8 In summary, the overwhelming collective reason for the opposition to the proposals was that whilst such a scheme might well be suited to a town with the dimensions, dynamics and capacity of Dorchester, it was not necessarily conducive to those smaller market towns being proposed, where the same dynamics did not necessarily apply. Critically, the ability to park free of restrictions within the confines of the town centre was considered to be the essence of those town's economic and social vitality and vibrancy. Another fundamental difference was that Dorchester Town Council had been in favour of the policy being introduced to address the particular issues being experienced there, but that in the case of these proposals, there was overwhelming opposition to the introduction of the schemes from all three town councils involved, two of whom, Bridport and Blandford Forum, had generated significant petitions, of some 5000+ and 1200+ signatories respectively.

123.9 Having taken into account the distinct views of the speakers and the evident level of opposition in respect of all three proposals, the Committee agreed that the parking experiences and requirements of different towns were not necessarily similar. They considered that what would benefit Dorchester might not necessarily apply to the dynamics of smaller market towns as being proposed and might well destabilise the social and economic equilibrium that they currently enjoyed and deter visitors to those towns. They considered that any scheme which was introduced should be specifically designed to meet the needs of that locality; should take into account the views of the town councils involved, and have their support and participation and; balance the benefits to the way in which traffic was managed with the interests of the local retail industry.

123.10 Accordingly, the Committee considered that, at this stage, they were not in a position to come to a decision on how this should be progressed and therefore agreed that the Cabinet should be asked to review the On Street Pay and Display Policy to determine how it might be more readily applied. In anticipation that the Cabinet would agree to this course of action, members agreed that a policy development panel should be established to explore in more detail how this policy might be best applied.

### **Recommended**

124. That given the current circumstances locally and nationally, the Cabinet be asked to review the policy relating to On Street Pay and Display across the whole county and how this should be applied and that subject to the Cabinet considering that the review of the policy was necessary, a Policy Development Panel be established in this regard.



Reason for Recommendation

125. To ensure that the policy was applied as effectively as possible throughout Dorset and in order to progress the County Council's corporate aim to safeguard and enhance Dorset's unique environment and support our local economy.

**Community Led Highway Initiatives (CLHI) - Additional Insurance Liabilities**

126. The Committee considered a report by the Director for Environment which provided information on how the County Council would be required to assume additional insurance risk in order to progress the aspiration of encouraging local communities to undertake work on the highway. The report provided details of the insurance and training arrangements to be put in place to augment this.

Recommended

127. That the cabinet be asked to approve the County Council's acceptance of the additional risk that working in partnership with local communities brings, accepting slightly increased liability to be met by insurance and self-insurance arrangements, but mitigated by an appropriate level of training and supervision.

Reason for Recommendation

128. In order to progress the aspiration of encouraging local communities to undertake highway-related improvements in their area, in line with the aims and objectives of the Localism Act. The overall CLHI project supported elements of the County Council's "Forward Together" programme: encouraging greater independence, smarter services and empowered people. Until issues over the insurance cover for volunteers working on the highway had been determined, progress could not be made on starting the various CLHI pilot schemes being planned.

**Highway Asset Management Plan**

129.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director for Environment which provided an update on progress being made in the development of the Highway Asset Management Plan (HAMP) and highlighted some of the key issues arising from the development of the individual asset plans.

129.2 The Committee were informed that the maintenance backlog for carriageways was defined by the cost of returning the network to an acceptable level, which had been calculated to be approximately £223 million, with this figure increasing year on year owing to the continued under investment in the network. The report also covered detail of other highway assets including footways; drainage; structures; verges, hedges and trees; signing road markings; street lighting; public rights of way and; the new highways management system (Confirm).

129.3 Members were provided with a series of potential capital investment options which had been identified for carriageways including:-

- doing nothing,
- maintaining the current level of funding,
- maintaining the current condition,
- improving the network condition to an acceptable level,
- improving the network to very good condition.

together with the implications of progressing each of these strategies.

129.4 The Committee were of the view that the condition of Dorset's roads played an essential part in determining how accessible amenities within the County were and, given that a significant proportion of Dorset's economy was based on tourism, the means by which visitors to Dorset could access those amenities was critical. Accordingly, surveys had determined that the highway network was highly valued and that support should be provided for its continued maintenance.

129.5 Some members considered that more effort should be made to attract more funding from central government and that representations should be made in the strongest possible terms. However officers confirmed that every effort had already been made to secure as much funding as was possible. In recognition of the condition of the highway network, funding allocations to local authorities for highway maintenance improvements were increasing significantly, albeit that this would still be insufficient to maintain pace with the current level of deterioration.

129.6 The Committee acknowledged that it was more economic for roads to be maintained in a reasonable condition than having deteriorated.

#### **Resolved**

130. That a report setting out the finalised version of the HAMP detailing investment options be provided for considered by Committee at their meeting in January 2014.

#### **Recommended**

131. That the Cabinet be asked to take into account the declining condition of the highway assets and the need for increased investment, in budget planning for 2014/15.

#### **Reason for Recommendation**

132. Under investment now, will impact on asset condition, potentially costing more in the longer term, and in the form of reactive maintenance and third party claims, whilst leaving assets in unacceptably poor condition.

### **Routine Highway Maintenance Pressures**

133.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director for Environment which explained that, in recent years, funding for routine highway maintenance had decreased consistently. This had coincided with an increase in extreme weather events resulting in a significant increase in public enquires and highway defects which had to be managed and addressed.

133.2 The Committee acknowledged that it was becoming evident that the strategy of continual annual reductions in funding, set against the continual effects of successive harsh winters, had contributed to a significant increase in serious defects throughout the highway network, and this was clearly unsustainable. As a result, proactive and planned operations were now at a minimum because the vast majority of defects were having to be repaired as a matter of urgency in an ineffectual and reactive manner. Consequently, the report presented the demands on the highway service and a suggested revised strategy to ensure that the County Council's largest asset was maintained in a more effective manner.

133.3 The report detailed comparisons of highway revenue funding per kilometre of network between Dorset and other comparable highway authorities and this demonstrated that the funding allocation was significantly lower for Dorset than other authorities. A summary of key performance statistics was provided, covering both those which were resource and demand related, which clearly demonstrated the correlation between the

decline in funding and workforce resources against a significant increase in the demand for defects to be addressed.

133.4 The report set out a series of key recommendations which were designed to either address at an early stage, or contribute significantly towards, highway maintenance improvements, and would avert more significant detrimental issues from manifesting. However given that the use of resources had been largely reactionary of late, such mitigating measures had largely been withheld at the expense of more urgent attention.

133.5 In response to one member's suggestion that there be a fundamental reassessment of how maintenance issues should be addressed, members' attention was drawn to paragraph 5 of the report. This set out the Service's changing approach to obtain the greatest benefit from the funding available so as to be as flexible and efficient as possible.

133.6 Members considered it evident that the amount of Revenue Support Grant received by local authorities was commensurate to their ability to spend on maintaining their highways and that those authorities with a greater proportion were able to achieve more.

133.7 The Committee considered that there was a need for this to be recognised and that the profile of highway maintenance budget pressures should be raised in order that this might be addressed.

#### **Recommended**

134. That the Cabinet take the contents of the Director's report into consideration when the Revenue Budget for 2014/15 was set.

#### **Reason for Recommendation**

135. To arrest the increase in inefficient reactive work by introducing a return to proactive maintenance principles and therefore mitigating the risk of third party litigation.

### **Road Casualty Reduction Plan 2013-2020 - Progress**

136.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director for Environment setting out an updated Road Casualty Reduction Plan 2013-2020 which reaffirmed the Authority's approach to achieving its challenging casualty reduction targets and presented the latest trend data, together with an updated action plan for 2013-14.

136.2 The Committee were informed that the Plan demonstrated that Dorset's long term casualty trend remained downwards, albeit at a slower rate in the medium to short term, which reflected the national picture. The Plan reinforced the need for the Authority to continue to work in partnership with other agencies and to continue to collect and analyse all of the available evidence in order to deliver interventions that would achieve the greatest casualty savings. This approach continued to be the most appropriate way forward and members acknowledged this.

136.3 The Plan focused on an improved methodology for prioritising and evaluating schemes on casualty reduction grounds and a stronger emphasis was being placed on ensuring robust evaluation was carried out for all partnership interventions. The Plan explored the challenges facing the County Council and explained how the Authority aimed to achieve the targets set. It also provided engineering, education and enforcement project case studies.

136.4 The Committee acknowledged that given the funding levels received, the

Authority was achieving far more than it might otherwise do. In response to one members suggestion that a '20 is plenty' speed campaign be introduced as a blanket approach within Dorset, officers informed members that work was in progress to determined the best use of 20 mph zones and where they might be applied most effectively, but that their use was limited, taking into account the funding available for Traffic Regulation Orders. Accordingly, a partnership approach was essential to ensure that any scheme was achievable.

136.5 The Cabinet Member for Environment took the opportunity to explain that work was ongoing with Dorset Police and other Dorset authorities to consider how best to take the matter forward together. A Dorset Police initiative, Community Speedwatch, was only at an early stage but was hoped would provide interesting data with a report on its findings anticipated to be consider by Committee at their January 2014 meeting.

136.7 Another member asked for more attention to be given to cyclists adhering to speed limits as, in his experience, this was not always the case. Officers considered that speed limits should be adhered to in any event.

#### **Resolved**

137. That reaffirmation be given to the County Council's continuing partnership approach on road casualty reduction through the delivery of the Revised Road Casualty Reduction Plan 2013-2020

#### **Reason for Decision**

138. The Road Casualty Reduction Plan supports the work of the Dorset Strategic Road Safety Partnership (DSRSP) and re-affirms the authority's approach to achieving its challenging casualty reduction targets.

### **Revenue Budget Monitoring, including Meeting Future Challenges Update (as at 31 August 2013)**

139.1 The Committee considered a report by the Chief Financial Officer which showed budget monitoring information as at 31 August 2013 showing a projected overspend against service budgets for the County Council of £8,205,000. The Environment Directorate's contribution to this was a £990,000 overspend, which was attributable to the following overspends :-

- Countryside - £100,800
- Dorset Highways - £243,700
- Dorset Passenger Transport - £515,100
- Business Support £130,000

139.2 Officers responded to members questions, explaining the detail behind the figures, how these were applied and being managed and actions which had been, and were being taken, to reduce the overspend position.

#### **Noted**

### **Corporate Performance Monitoring Report - First Quarter 2013-14 (1 April -30 June 2013)**

140.1 The Committee considered a joint report by the Chief Executive and the Director for Environment which presented the results of the monitoring of the County Council's budget and Corporate Plan for the first quarter of 2013/14, with a specific focus on those elements of the Plan which were managed by the Environment Directorate. The report also contained analysis of the Council's progress against all five of its corporate aims and presented the Corporate Balanced Scorecard.

140.2 Members were informed that at the end of the first quarter, the County Council's performance was in a reasonably healthy position and the budget remained stable. The performance indicators in the budget and Corporate Plan had an average "green"(on target) rating. The percentage indicators that were meeting, or exceeding, their targets were 70% with 85% of actions being reported to be on course or complete. The projected year-end overspend for the whole authority was £2,845, 280 , which was 1.06% of the total budget and within the operational range of 2%.

140.3 The Policy and Performance Manager drew members' attention to the work and the budget of the Environment Directorate, which was largely encapsulated in Aim 4 of the Plan. He reported that arising from the recent peer review of the County Council, a number of developments needed to be addressed in terms of the Authority being more member led and ensuring a better understanding of what the County Council did. The aims for the Directorate were predominantly green but only one area of concern appeared on the Balanced Scorecard, this being the maintenance of the Principal Road Network.

140.4 Members considered that whilst having the Authority's overall position presented to them was helpful, in future, greater emphasis should be placed on Aim 4 and those issues affecting the Directorate. They also appreciated that the way in which the information was gathered did not necessarily make for a timely presentation to Committee and that often issues had been overtaken by events and had rectified themselves accordingly. Whilst wishing to have a consistent approach to the way in which data was presented, the Policy and Performance Manager undertook to address the Committee's request for a more focused provision of information based on the Directorate and how it operated. He would raise this matter with the other overview committees.

### **Noted**

#### **Dorset Local Nature Partnership (LNP) Draft Strategy**

141.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director for Environment setting out the draft Strategy which was currently the subject of public consultation. The Strategy set out a vision, high level objectives and priorities for enhancing 'natural value' in Dorset for the benefit of people, wildlife and businesses.

141.2 Officers informed the Committee that the LNP was designed to develop a vision for the local environment, championed its interests and would better integrate environmental objectives with social and economic goals working closely with Local Enterprise Partnerships and Health and Wellbeing Boards in the process.

141.3 The Vice-Chairman, in serving on the LNP Board, considered it to be most beneficial in contributing significantly to 'nature value' playing an integral part in the business of the County Council.

### **Recommended**

142. That the Cabinet be asked to:-

- (a) endorse the Dorset LNP Draft Strategy subject to the minor changes and clarifications summarised in the proposed County Council's appended response to the Directors report, together with any other changes which the Cabinet might consider to be necessary.
- (b) delegate authority to the Director for Environment, after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment and the County Council's representative on the LNP Board, to adopt the final iteration of the Strategy on behalf of the County

Council.

Reason for Recommendation

143. To support the delivery of Corporate Plan Aims 1, 2 and 4.

**Draft Management Plans for Dorset ANOB's 2014-19**

144.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director for Environment which set out the draft statutory management plans, both of which were currently subject to public consultation, for Dorset's two AONB's for the period 2014-19

144.2 Members were informed that both plans set out detailed management policies, projects and priorities to conserve and enhance the national beauty in those nationally important landscapes. The Committee endorsed the County Council's broadly supportive stance, taking into account the observations provided by way of response.

144.3 The Chairman of the Council suggested that consideration be given to how the rural roads protocol was being applied particularly in respect of the elimination of white line markings and hoped that this was being done by exception rather than as a matter of course. Officers reported that any such work was safety audited and would only be introduced where it was considered appropriate.

Recommended

145. That the Cabinet be asked to:-

(a) endorse the draft management plans for the AONB's subject to the minor changes and clarifications summarised in the proposed County Council appended responses to each to the Directors report, together with any other changes which the Cabinet might consider to be necessary.

(b) delegate authority to the Director for Environment, after consultation with the Cabinet Member for the Environment, to adopt the final iteration of the management plans strategy on behalf of the County Council to ensure their timely completion by the end of March 2014.

Reason for Recommendation

146. To support the delivery of Corporate Plan Aims 1, 2 and 4.

**Policy Development Panels**

147.1 The Committee considered possible topics for future work of policy development panels. Reference was made to the recommendation from Cabinet at their meeting on 17 July 2013 for the establishment of a policy development panel on Private Sector Business Development. The Committee were unclear about the intended purpose of such a panel and the Director agreed to seek clarification before the Committee decided whether there was a need for a PDP to be established.

147.2 In anticipation that the Cabinet would sanction a review of the On Street Pay and Display Policy, the Committee sought membership of the establishment of the relevant PDP with Margaret Phipps, Mark Tewkesbury, Paul Kimber and Mike Lovell all being nominated to serve on this with the opportunity being provided for other members of the Committee to serve on this also.

147.3 The Chairman reported that work was still in progress in respect of the PDP on Roundabout and other Asset Sponsorship. The Committee agreed that a PDP on Grass Verge Cutting should be established with Andy Canning being nominated to serve on this and the opportunity, once again, being extended to other Committee members wishing to serve on this.

**Member Briefings**

148.1 The Committee were provided with the opportunity to identify topics for future member briefings.

148.2 They reaffirmed their wish that their January 2014 meeting be followed by a briefing on Gypsies and Travellers.

**Noted**

**Schedule of Members' Seminars and Events 2013**

149. The Committee's attention was drawn to the Schedule of Members' Seminars and Events for 2013.

**Noted**

**Environment Overview Committee Work Programme**

150. The Committee considered and agreed its work programme for the start of 2014, taking into consideration a progress report on Traffic Management Issues; the final report to Committee on the recommendation from the PDP on Roundabout and other Asset Sponsorship and a report on the Highway Asset Management Plan.

**Noted**

**Questions**

151. No questions were asked by members under Standing Order 20(2).

Meeting duration: 10:00am – 1.10 pm

