

# Environment Overview Committee

Minutes of a meeting held at County Hall,  
Colliton Park, Dorchester on 23 January 2014.

## **Present:**

Robin Cook (Chairman)  
Margaret Phipps (Vice-Chairman)  
Richard Biggs, Andy Canning, Ronald Coatsworth, Paul Kimber, Mike Lovell, Peter  
Richardson and Mark Tewkesbury.

Hilary Cox attended under Standing Order 54(1).

## Officers attending:

Mike Harries (Interim Director for Environment), Steve Hedges (Group Finance Manager), David Northover (Senior Democratic Services Officer) and Jason Quinn (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), Gordon Sneddon (Group Manager), Mike Hansford (Technical Officer), Gill Smith (Senior Planning Officer), Mike Garrity (Team Leader), Tony Harris (Senior Landscape Officer), Antony Littlechild (Corporate Sustainability Officer), Pete Jackson (Senior Consultation and Research Officer).

## **Environment Directorate**

1. Prior to the start of the meeting, the Chairman took the opportunity on behalf of the Committee to extend his sincere thanks to the staff of the Environment Directorate for their commitment and dedication in the face of the recent adverse weather conditions and over the Christmas period, to ensure that access to the highway network was maintained and the environment was as accessible as it possibly could be. Members and senior officers echoed those sentiments.

## **Apologies for Absence**

2. Apologies for absence were received from Peter Hall, Mervyn Jeffery and John Wilson.

## **Code of Conduct**

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

## **Minutes**

4.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2013 were confirmed and signed.

## Matters Arising

4.2 Arising from minute 118, the Interim Director for Environment took the opportunity to inform the Committee that the Cabinet had since decided that the site at Piddlehinton was the most appropriate for a temporary gypsy and traveller site and that progress was being made in that regard.

### Public Participation

5. The Committee were informed that no requests for public speaking had been received or that any petitions had been submitted for consideration.

### Forward Together - The Way Ahead

6.1 The Committee considered a report by the Interim Director for Environment on the context and workstreams for the Environment Directorate's Forward Together Transformation Programme and how progress was being made in its application.

6.2 The Interim Director explained that the new Corporate Plan was being developed around the two themes of “being open for business” and “health and well-being” and, within those themes, the focus for the Directorate would be on enabling Dorset's communities and its economy to thrive and grow.

6.3 Members' attention was drawn to the vision for The Way Ahead and how this was to be achieved, as set out in paragraph 3 of the report, with a focus on “enabling” and “communities”. The main workstreams were set out, with initial work being focused on the rationalisation of the structure and the part senior management would play in this. The emerging proposals were built around the three themes of:

- enabling and planning for Dorset's economy to grow,
- keeping Dorset's business and people moving safely, and
- securing the best use of public assets for Dorset communities.

leading to three divisions: economy, environment and planning; highways and; land and property.

6.4 The Committee were informed that greater emphasis would be placed on changing the existing arrangements to generate savings; develop partnership working; change service delivery models; and provide for outsourcing, where appropriate, with decisions being made on the merits of individual cases where a benefit to the Authority could be demonstrated. Changes would only be made in the interests of achieving greater efficiencies or effectiveness. Emphasis was to be placed on community engagement, with a focus on maintaining front line services.

6.5 One member asked if the prospect of engaging with or developing mutual societies could be considered, if appropriate, and welcomed the greater local member engagement proposed. Officers undertook to explore this prospect. They were also confident that any potential decrease in capacity in service provision from the savings being realised would be compensated by an increase in interest from local communities by way of community self help schemes, with measures being put in place to enable greater flexibility for their participation.

6.6 The Committee agreed with the principles of The Way Ahead Transformation Programme, the need for it and the emphasis on flexibility for communities to have the opportunity to contribute more. However to ensure for a more meaningful set of principles, members asked that the second and third bullet points of paragraph 3.3 be combined, to read:-

- our communities will be kept informed, understand better what we do and feel valued and local members will be involved in key decisions affecting their communities.

6.7 Officers agreed to take this into consideration.

**Resolved**

7. That the content of the Interim Director's report be noted and the principles of The Way Ahead Transformation Programme, and what it was designed to achieved, be acknowledged.

**Reason for Decision**

8. To ensure member engagement in the Programme as a means to deliver the necessary Directorate transformation.

**Revenue Budget 2014/15**

9.1 The Committee considered a joint report by the Chief Financial Officer and the Interim Director for Environment setting out a summary of the key issues within the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement and the impact of the settlement on the budget strategy for Dorset County Council. The report also outlined the implications of the budget strategy on the Environment Directorate.

9.2 Members were reminded that the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement had seen a reduction in government grant funding for Dorset County Council of around 9% in 2014/15, which had been anticipated in the Medium Term Financial Planning. The overall budget shortfall for the three year period 2014/15 to 2016/17 was estimated at £46.7m, although £1.4m of this should be covered by the residual MFC programme. For 2014/15, the savings required were £15.1m, with proposals to address the majority of the gap being developed and which now formed the basis for consultation and further development.

9.3 Members were informed of the implications of the Budget Strategy for Environment Directorate, with the base budget for 2013/14 being £38,295,900. The Budget for 2014/15 would be £37,515,300. Analysis of the movement in the budget was shown at Appendix 1 of the report and included base budget adjustments, cost pressures recognised through the Resource Allocation Model (RAM) and the Budget Working Group (BWG) savings proposals. The Environment Directorate had identified proposals for savings amounting to £872,000 in 2014/15 and a further £442,000 in 2015/16, this being summarised in the table in paragraph 4.

9.4 Arising from discussion, members asked a series of question to which officers duly responded, particularly with regard to training needs and how this was delivered; the opportunities for generating revenue from parking charges on County Council owned premises; the efforts being made in achieving greater income generation overall; the effectiveness of the Dorset Road Safety Partnership; flooding issues; and how the agency agreements with Christchurch Borough Council and Weymouth and Portland Borough Council were being managed.

9.5 In particular, members asked for more information on income generation opportunities and how this was being managed and officers agreed to report on this to a future meeting, recognising that the policy development panel on sponsorship opportunities was currently already looking at this in depth. Members considered that the Dorset Road Safety Partnership was an effective tool in contributing to improved road safety and the reduction in accidents, collisions and driver awareness and the necessary funding available should reflect this.

9.6 Officers also agreed to provide members with a breakdown of figures relating to the Council Tax base increase and how this benefited the Directorate.

9.7 Whilst considering that the report was both comprehensive and meaningful in

their understanding of the finances, Members asked that the use of unexplained abbreviations and acronyms be avoided in future papers.

### **Recommended**

10. That the Cabinet be asked to take into account savings proposals relating to services within the Environment Directorate for 2014/15 as outlined within paragraph 4 of the report, together with the views expressed by the Committee on budget issues.

### **Reason for Recommendation**

11. The County Council must set a budget within the resources available, and agree a precept for 2014/15 by the end of February 2014. To do this, Directors are required to draw up detailed budgets and develop and consult upon savings proposals within them.

### **Highways Asset Management Plan - Progress Report**

12.1 The Committee considered a report by the Interim Director for Environment which provided a summary of the situation regarding the progress of the Highway Asset Management Plan (HAMP) and the proposed deferral of the submission of the final version for consideration by the Committee at its meeting in June 2014. This was owing to delays in the collection of essential data used to feed into the carriageway investment scenarios as a result of programming issues and the recent adverse weather conditions experienced.

12.2 The Committee recognised the reasoning for this.

### **Resolved**

13. That the report be noted.

### **Policy to Manage the Skid Resistance on Dorset's Roads**

14.1 The Committee considered a report by the Interim Director for Environment on the development of a policy designed to manage the skid resistance on Dorset's roads which would play a significant part in the prevention of road traffic incidents, accidents and collisions and their consequences.

14.2 Members were informed that this would include:

- defining correct investigatory levels for individual sites;
- setting out a strategy for monitoring and managing skid resistance on the network; and
- setting a strategy for prioritising further investigation and rectification of sites that have poor skid resistance.

14.3 Members' attention was drawn to the appendix accompanying the policy which set out details on how the policy should be implemented and the processes which should be followed, including site prioritisation and investigation.

14.4 Members acknowledged that the implementation of the policy would contribute to the reduction in the number of road casualties on Dorset's roads and would support the Local Transport Plan objectives of a safe and well maintained highway network.

### **Recommended**

15. That the Cabinet be asked to adopt the Skid Policy with immediate effect.

### Reason for Recommendation

16. To demonstrate how Dorset County Council manages skid resistance on the road network to help reduce collisions and to reduce the risk of third party claims and possible prosecution.

### **Prioritising and Implementation of 20 mph Speed Limits and Zones**

17.1 The Committee considered a report by the Interim Director for Environment which provided background information, described how schemes were prioritised and drew together the national experience of implementing 20 mph speed limits and zones and also sought agreement to permit towns and parishes to fund schemes which met necessary criteria.

17.2 The report set out the way in which speed limits and zones were designed to control the speed of traffic and the difference between how these two methods were applied. Officers reported that where 20 mph speed limits were to be effective, there needed to be the perception that it was justified and that the speed of traffic would only be regulated accordingly with the support of physical measures such as road humps, roundels or build outs. Members' attention was also drawn to paragraph 6.5 of the report, which set out the criteria to be met for the implementation of 20 mph speed limits or zones.

17.3 The Chairman took the opportunity to draw to the attention of the Committee an email received from Trevor Jones, County Council member for Dorchester in which his perception of 20 mph speed limits was that these were ineffectual based on the available evidence and that efforts should rather be concentrated on core priorities in the emerging Corporate Plan. He also asked how the bid submitted to the Department for Transport for funding of 20mph zones in Portland, Weymouth and Dorchester had fared. Officers reported that, unfortunately, the bid had been unsuccessful.

17.4 Members asked for confirmation that the costs of the legal work associated with traffic regulation orders in support of those 20 mph limits which were requested by town or parish councils and other minor authorities would be borne by those authorities rather than be a burden on the highway authority, as this would have a significant effect on the ability for these to be progressed. Officers considered this to be the case but legal clarification would be sought.

17.5 The Cabinet member for Environment addressed the Committee and explained that the policy was designed to enable those communities who considered that they had a strong case for the implementation of a 20 mph speed limit in their community based on traffic speed evidence which had been assembled via, amongst others, community speed watch schemes but which did not necessarily comply with the County Council's road safety criteria required to fund their implementation. Furthermore, should the Committee agree to such a scheme being progressed, she suggested that this be published widely.

17.6 Members were then provided with an opportunity to express their opinions on the prioritisation spreadsheet for 20 mph speed limit implementation and proposals for how this should be applied.

17.7 From member discussion it was considered that Category 1 should include provision for "property damage", whilst Category 5 take account of "no footpaths". However there was some suggestion that Category 4 – relating to type of area - was largely obsolete given the variables of footfall in particular urban and rural areas. Whilst officers considered that urban areas tended to reflect greater footfall, they acknowledged that this was not always the case with certain rural areas experiencing busy traffic flows and activity too.

However officers were minded to retain this category in the first instance in order that an initial assessment of prioritisation could be gauged. Once this was established, further investigative work could then refine this information if necessary.

17.8 Members also discussed and expressed their opinion as to the way in which speeds were calculated, the assessments made of the potential reduction in speeds, and how significant the resultant reduction in traffic speeds from the introduction of such measures might be. Officers were satisfied with the assessments made and had used these as a basis for the way in which the prioritisation spreadsheet had been developed.

17.9 Members recognised that this policy provided the opportunity for communities to achieve a series of measures which might otherwise be unavailable to them and that, subject to satisfying the necessary criteria, this was a means by which this could be done.

### **Recommended**

18.1 That the Cabinet be asked to approve the revised method for prioritisation of 20mph speed limits and zones proposed in the Interim Director's report.

18.2 That subject to 18.1 above, towns, parishes, Christchurch Borough and Weymouth and Portland Borough Councils be permitted to fund 20mph speed limits or zone schemes in appropriate locations, subject to meeting the criteria set out in Paragraph 6 of the Interim Director's report;

18.3 That, subject to the agreement of the Cabinet to recommendations 18.1 and 18.2, the arrangements be consolidated within the County Council's Speed Limit Policy.

### **Reason for Recommendation**

19. To ensure that the County Council's approach to the implementation of 20mph speed limits and zones is appropriate given the increasing knowledge as to the impact of schemes and in consideration of the Localism Act 2011.

### **Community Contributions, associated with Highway Maintenance**

20.1 The Committee considered a report by the Interim Director for Environment on community contributions associated with highway maintenance and how these would be applied, together with the arrangements in place to provide the opportunity for those local communities which had expressed a willingness to make a financial contribution towards additional highway maintenance in their areas to have the ability to do so.

20.2 The report provided information on the arrangements for how the County Council could have the ability to accept funding from local communities towards the cost of additional highway maintenance in their areas and, in accepting those contributions, this would help to meet the expectations of local communities and contribute towards offsetting the reduction in highway maintenance related budgets which had been experienced over recent years.

20.3 The Policy set out the process for making contributions, with it being proposed that this should only be accepted from Borough, District, Parish or Town councils. In only accepting requests from the locally elected body, this would ensure that there was strong community support for the proposal and would ensure that proper consideration was given to these.

20.4 Members were informed that the contributions made were designed to meet the costs of enabling a maintenance activity to be carried out earlier, or to a greater standard, than would otherwise have been achieved under the Council's normal

maintenance programme. However this would not be in place of the normal delivery of maintenance which would ordinarily be carried out in accordance with the routine maintenance schedule.

20.5 The Committee was pleased to see that the proposed policy provided for such flexibility and an opportunity for enhancement schemes to be achieved in those communities that wanted them.

### **Recommended**

21. That the Cabinet be asked to approve a new policy providing for the County Council to accept contributions from local communities towards the cost of additional highway maintenance in their areas.

### **Reason for Recommendation**

22. In order to progress the County Council's corporate aspiration of supporting local communities to take a greater interest in highway related maintenance issues in their area, in line with the aims and objectives of the "Big Society" and the Localism Act.

## **North Dorset District Local Plan 2011 – 2026 Part 1: Pre Submission Consultation**

23.1 The Committee considered a report by the Interim Director for Environment on North Dorset District Council publishing its Pre-submission Draft Local Plan for consultation. The Committee was provided with an opportunity for observations to be taken into consideration and that, subject to any amendments, an officer holding response would be sent to the District Council on the basis of the Interim Director's report. The Cabinet would then be recommended to ratify, amend or withdraw the response at its meeting on 3 February 2014.

23.2 The report outlined in detail the significant issues which applied to the County Council, which included the duty to co-operate, the spatial strategy, the relationship between housing and economic growth, specialised housing, and education in Blandford.

23.3 Members noted that the County Council, as a statutory consultee in the process, welcomed the progress made by North Dorset in advancing its plan and was supportive, in principle, of much of what was being proposed, subject to some areas of concern detailed below:-

- Compliance with the duty to co-operate would only be addressed in full once an agreement was in place to resolve issues of a strategic nature in an integrated way;
- The spatial approach to development in Stalbridge and the villages should provide a strategic steer to ensure that development in Neighbourhood Plans occurred in the most sustainable and cost effective locations for the provision of County Council services and that sufficient development takes place to meet essential rural needs;
- The core spatial strategy of the plan would benefit from additional strategic context and clarification of the linkages between job projections and housing proposals;
- The housing needs of elderly and vulnerable people may not be adequately addressed in the Plan.

23.4 Some other more minor concerns relating to education, gypsies and travellers, minerals and waste would also be drawn to the attention of North Dorset.

23.5 The Committee supported the content of the Interim Director's report and that this should be used as the basis for formal submission to north Dorset, subject to any observations of the Cabinet.

**Recommended**

24. That the Cabinet be asked to ratify, amend or withdraw the response contained in the Interim Director's report.

**Reason for Recommendation**

25.1 To ensure that the Duty to Cooperate would be fulfilled;

25.2 The interests of the County Council as set out in the Corporate Plan were reflected in the North Dorset Local Plan 2011 – 26; and that the Strategy's proposals were deliverable insofar as this was dependent on the County Council in providing essential infrastructure.

**Dorset Minerals and Waste Development Scheme: Adoption of Proposed Revised Milestones**

26.1 The Committee considered a report by the Interim Director for Environment on progress with the Dorset Minerals and Waste Local Development Scheme (LDS), being published in 2012, which set out milestones for the Minerals Strategy, Mineral Sites Plan and Waste Plan. Members were informed that an essential purpose of LDS milestones was to keep the public and other stakeholders informed about the anticipated dates for key stages in the preparation of a plan, including consultation periods. Consequently, planning authorities were expected to keep their LDS up to date and reviewed as and when necessary.

26.2 The Council's LDS had now been amended to take account of the new planning system, with work progressing well on all three plans. However, indications showed that, in applying the revised planning regulations there was now a need for the milestones to be reviewed and revised, but this would not impact on the content of the Scheme.

**Recommended**

27.1 That Cabinet be asked to agree the revised Minerals and Waste Development Scheme milestones for 2013-2016;

27.2 That officers be authorised to insert the adoption milestone for the Minerals Strategy, on the soonest practicable date, once full adoption by all three Mineral Planning Authorities is confirmed (likely to be March 2014); and

27.3 That officers be authorised to make any changes to the local Development Scheme to account for the updated milestones.

**Reason for Recommendation**

28. To provide an up-to-date development scheme which reflected the intended coverage of minerals and waste policies for Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole, in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).

**Adoption of Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Core Strategy**

29.1 The Committee considered a report by the Interim Director for Environment in respect of the adoption of the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Core Strategy, which had, during May 2013, been examined through a series of public hearings by an independently appointed planning inspector who had subsequently made recommendations for the modification of the Plan to provide for its legal compliance and robustness. Consultation on the modifications took place during the summer of 2013, with responses to



these representations being forwarded to the inspector for her deliberation in preparing the report.

29.2 With the subsequent publishing of the Inspector's report and the conclusion of the examination, the Committee were informed that the report had confirmed that, whilst there were a large number of modifications, these did not significantly alter the thrust or principles of the overall strategy.

29.3 Given that the Plan covered the administrative areas of Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole, members were informed that it would now need to be adopted by the Councils as the Mineral Planning Authorities, taking into account the necessary modifications.

29.4 Members acknowledged that the adoption of the Minerals Strategy represented the successful culmination of a considerable and significant amount of work, involving extensive liaison with the minerals industry, local residents and other interested parties, which was essential in striking the right balance between securing the continued supply of minerals, retaining the amenities of residents and maintaining the unique environment within which those minerals were found.

29.5 Recognition was given to the fact that the County Council had acted on behalf of the three authorities in taking a lead on the processes involved. The positive progress made was in contrast with many other authorities nationwide who had not been able to progress as quickly. Members considered that this was testament to the efforts made by officers in securing the position that they had.

#### **Recommended**

30.1 That the Cabinet be asked to recommend to the County Council that it adopts the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Strategy, subject to its inclusion of the main modifications set out in the Inspector's Report;

30.2 That, subject to 30.1 above, to confirm that the date of adoption will be either 18 March or two weeks after the date of the last of the three Council meetings for Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole councils, whichever is the later;

30.3 That officers be authorised to make those additional (non-material) modifications to the Plan which were the subject of consultation, together with any other additional modifications which benefit the clarity of the Plan;

30.4 That the County Council notes that the Plan will require a resolution to adopt it by all three Councils before it is formally adopted.

#### **Reason for Recommendation**

31. To secure an up-to-date Minerals Strategy in accordance with the local Development Scheme, which would contribute to Corporate Aim 4: Safeguard and enhance Dorset's unique environment and support our local economy.

### **Green Asset Guide: Sustainable Landscape Planning, Design and Management - Position Statement and Guidance.**

32.1 The Committee considered a report by the Interim Director for Environment on the development of the Green Asset Guide covering sustainable landscape planning, design and management, together with a position statement and guidance resulting from an audit undertaken by the South West Audit Partnership in 2012 which was of the view that the County Council had an unsustainable approach to landscape design which lead to excessive routine maintenance costs and revenue expenditure.

32.2 Members were informed that as a consequence, a Green Asset Guide had been developed which was designed to establish best practice guidance for the sustainable

approach to landscape projects and which fully supported the County Council's sustainable construction strategy.

32.3 The report outlined why the guide was necessary and how it would be applied and monitored so as to ensure the enhancement of a sustainable approach to landscape planning, design and management.

32.4 Members discussed their own experiences of landscaping and its management within their electoral divisions and raised particular issues in relation to the part trees played in this. Whilst initially the maintenance of the landscape around saplings could seemingly prove to be arduous, in time these could well stabilise the soil and stifle weed and grass growth. Officers also explained that landscaping was also recognised as a significant contributory factor in the securing of many planning applications and at Inspector's Inquiries so the importance of how these were applied could not be underestimated.

32.5 Members were advised that to help ensure maintenance might be minimised, low maintenance shrubs and plants were selected for landscaping as well as providing only a minimal depth of top soil which played a part in the suppression of weeds. Members were assured that landscaping management would be made on the merits of each particular case, so as to provide the right solution for the right site and being based on sound ecological needs.

32.6 The Vice-Chairman explained that the Policy Development Panel on Verge Cutting was making progress in exploring the most appropriate means by which to manage highway vegetation.

#### **Resolved**

33. That the Green Asset Guide and its adoption as a whole authority best practice, be endorsed.

#### **Reason for Decision**

34. The Green Asset Guide directly supports the Corporate Aim to safeguard and enhance Dorset's unique environment and support the local economy by encouraging best sustainable practice to landscape, design and management within Dorset.

### **Environment Report 2013**

35.1 The Committee considered a report by the Interim Director for Environment which provided a snap shot of the County Council's performance against the environmental policies and targets for energy, water, waste and transport for 2012/13 and noted progress in the improvement in the environmental performance.

35.2 The report set out details of the data collection and monitoring process together with the progress and performance being made, with key observations and issues being highlighted. Overall the report demonstrated that the County Council continued to make good progress in improving its environmental performance and reducing its carbon footprint in line with set targets, with trend analysis showing that, in recent years, there had been some significant reductions in key areas. The statistics to support this were set out in paragraph 3.1 of the report.

35.3 However there was recognition that this reduction was set against a significant increase in fuel utilities prices over recent years and, whilst performance data continued to be encouraging, the County Council was still falling short of meeting its overall targets for carbon reduction and given this, continued strenuous efforts needed to be

maintained so as to fully realise potential environmental and financial savings.

35.4 Members were informed that, where possible, low energy technologies and recyclable materials would be used especially in any new build, replacements or refurbishment. There was also a recognised need for behavioural change.

35.5 Members were informed that it was likely that the benefits from more efficient technology would be reflected in figures in future years as the implementation programme was rolled out, with any opportunity being taken to take advantage of government and European financial grant initiatives available.

35.6 Members attention was drawn to the Carbon Summit, to be held on 6 March, to which all members would be invited, and at which suggestions and ideas on how better to achieve carbon reduction targets would be encouraged.

### **Recommended**

36. That the Cabinet be asked to support a redoubling of efforts to find further carbon savings throughout the Council.

### **Reason for Recommendation**

37. The County Council's Corporate Plan to 2014 identifies addressing climate change and other sustainability issues as a key outcome of the Corporate Aim to safeguard and enhance Dorset's unique environment and support the local economy.

## **Dorset Highways Performance - Quarters 1 and 2, 2013/14 - 1 April 2013 – 30 September 2013**

38.1 The Committee considered a report by the Interim Director for Environment which presented the performance results for a range of highway services and focused on customer experience, finance and service performance for Quarters 1 and 2 of 2013/14. The report also comprised a summary of Dorset Highways Performance and templates for a range of key highway services.

38.2 Officers reported that progress continued to be made to develop meaningful performance systems and measures for each service group. In the first two quarters, key headlines from the Service included:-

- demands on the Service have varied, with some increases and some decreases,
- customer satisfaction has been maintained or improved for most services, with the exception of road condition,
- there are more formal complaints and more compliments,
- the revenue budget of £29,638,000 was forecast to overspend,
- the capital budget of £25,646,395 was forecast to under spend, and
- public liability claims had returned to expected levels.

38.3 Whilst members appreciated the level of information with which they had been provided, it was recognised that because of the way in which the detail had been collected and the timescales involved, the information was generally historic and in many cases had been superseded by ongoing actions and events. Accordingly, they considered that it might be appropriate to be provided with regular, quarterly updates electronically via the IT mechanism of the Members' Gateway so that the information provided was more meaningful and timely. Additionally, the Committee would continue to receive a high level summary of the key issues affecting the Service biannually.

38.4 For now however, it was agreed that all members should receive the available briefing note on how the Directorate was managing the consequences of the recent demanding weather conditions and the means by which they were addressing the considerable number of highway issues which had been drawn to their attention, and the repairs necessary, particularly in respect of pot holes. Officers elaborated on how these were managed and prioritised and the funding which might be available to contribute towards their repair.

**Noted**

**Revenue Budget Monitoring 2013/14, including Forward Together (Residual Meeting Future Challenges (MFC) Update)**

40.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director for Corporate Resources which showed budget monitoring information as at the end of November 2013, showing a forecast overspend against all service budgets for the County Council of £5,665,000, compared with the predicted overspend of £8,205,000 as at the end of August 2013.

40.2 For the Environment Directorate this represented a projected overspend of £1,150,000 or 2.9% of the budget for the year, this being attributable to:-

- Countryside Services - £320,000 overspent,
- Dorset Highways - £40,000 underspent,
- Planning - £42,000 underspent,
- Dorset Passenger Transport - £856,000 overspent, and
- Business Support Unit - £55,000 overspent.

40.3 In response to members' questions, officers explained the detail behind the figures and how these were applied and being managed. Particular mention was made that:-

- the "amber" indicator in the MFC summary relating to Clerk of Works had since turned "green"
- the in -year saving in the street lighting PFI of £106,000 from reduced electricity consumption from the part-night burn policy had been vired to routine maintenance for 2014/15 but, from 2015/16, would be attributed to reducing the deficit,
- the "red " indicator for passenger transport was attributable to the deferral of the decision on bus subsidies pending further consultation and that the savings would be realised in subsequent years.

**Noted**

**Corporate Performance Monitoring Report: Second Quarter 2013-14 (1 July -30 September 2013)**

39.1 The Committee considered a report by the Interim Director for Environment which presented the results of the monitoring of the County Council's Budget and Corporate Plan for the second 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. Members' attention was drawn to the work and budget of the Environment Directorate, which was largely encapsulated in Aim 4 of the plan.

39.2 Members were informed that at the end of the second quarter, the performance indicators in the Budget and Corporate Plan had an average "green" (on target)

rating. The percentage of indicators that were meeting their targets was 63%. Furthermore, 67% of actions were on course or had been completed. The projected overspend for the whole authority at the end of Quarter 2 of £437,000 was 0.16% of the total budget.

39.3 Regarding performance indicators for the Directorate, Aim 4 had an average "amber" rating, with 50% of indicators on target and 47% more than 5% off target. The projected overspend of £847,000 was less than 2% of the total budget, with 72% of actions being on course.

### **Noted**

#### **Citizen's Panel 30**

41.1 The Committee considered a report by the Interim Director for Environment on the findings of the Citizen's Panel Survey 30, which received 3,083 online and posted responses, which represented a response rate of 61%.

41.2 Members noted that on this occasion, the evidence gathered covered the following areas of County Council and NHS activity:

- Superfast Broadband,
- Dorset Beach Care,
- Local Flood Risk Management,
- Recycling and Waste,
- NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups, and
- Mental Health Well-Being.

41.3 Members were particularly interested in the responses provided to the issue of flooding and what might be done to address this. The issue of building in flood plains was discussed and the consequences of this were understood. Some concern was expressed at this practice despite the assurance that the means of land drainage had to be demonstrated prior to any development on such land being given the necessary permissions and going ahead.

41.4 The Committee were pleased to learn that the Citizen Panel received feedback on their responses as a matter of course.

### **Noted**

#### **Policy Development Panels**

##### Establishment of Future Policy Development Panels

42.1 The Committee decided that there was no need to establish any further Policy Development Panels at this time.

##### Policy Development Panel on Verge Cutting/Highway Vegetation Management

42.2 The Committee considered an interim report by the Interim Director for Environment on the work of the Policy Development Panel on Verge Cutting/Highway Vegetation Management and the progress being made. The Vice-Chairman, who was also the Chairman of that Panel, explained that a commitment in principle had been received from the County Council's verge cutting partners to embrace The Living Verge Project in the longer term and this should be welcomed. However in the short term, current arrangements would continue whilst new ways of working were explored. The Panel had looked at more detailed options and proposals for a phased approach to the transformation of the

Service and agreed to recommend, via the Committee, to the Cabinet, a "Road Map for Future Arrangements".

42.3 The Panel had also recommended that there be:-

- an amendment of the Panel's title so that it was more encompassing,
- an amendment to its Terms of Reference, to do likewise,
- an acceptance of the progress made and how this might be managed,

42.4 The Committee were pleased to see the progress being made and accepted the recommendations contained in the report.

#### **Resolved**

43. That the Panel's name and Terms of Reference be revised in line with the recommendation contained in the Interim Director's report.

#### **Recommended**

44. That the Cabinet be asked to approve the "Road Map for Future Arrangements".

#### **Reason for Recommendation**

45. To safeguard and enhance Dorset's unique environment and support the local economy.

#### **Policy Development Panel on Roundabout and Other Asset Sponsorship**

46. The Chairman reported on the work of the Policy Development Panel on Roundabout and Other Asset Sponsorship and the progress it was making. He was optimistic that the roundabout sponsorship alone would produce in the region of £100,000 in net income given the commitment already received in that regard, with a careful and sympathetic assessment of other sponsorship opportunities continuing to be explored. The Interim Director agreed to share a briefing note with the Committee on how the roundabout sponsorship arrangements were progressing.

#### **Noted**

#### **Member Briefings**

47. The Committee were provided with the opportunity to identify topics for future member briefings and considered that it would be beneficial to have one on gypsies and traveller sites at an opportune time.

#### **Noted**

#### **Schedule of Members' Seminars and Events 2014**

48. The Committee's attention was drawn to the Schedule of Members' Seminars and Events for 2014. The Chairman drew attention to the addition of a budget seminar on Monday 3 February and the Carbon Summit on Thursday 6 March

#### **Noted**

#### **Environment Overview Committee Work Programme**

49. The Committee considered and agreed its work programme for the remainder of 2014, subject to the inclusion of the Highway Asset Management Plan on the agenda for June.

**Noted**

**Outside Bodies**

50. The Committee were grateful to receive submissions from Margaret Phipps, on the Bournemouth Airport Consultative Committee and Paul Kimber on the Portland Gas Trust, with regard to the work undertaken by those outside bodies.

**Questions**

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

Meeting duration: 10:00am – 12.50 pm

