

## Environment Overview Committee

Minutes of a meeting held at County Hall,  
Colliton Park, Dorchester on 9 October 2014.

### Present:

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

Spencer Flower, Leader of the Council attended under Standing Order 54(1).

Janet Dover, County Council Member for Colehill and Stapehill, attended the meeting for minutes 152 to 154.

Daryl Turner also attended.

### Officers attending:

Mike Harries (Director for Environment and the Economy), Steve Hedges (Group Finance Manager) and David Northover (Senior Democratic Services Officer).

### For certain items, as appropriate:

Andrew Martin (Head of Dorset Highways), Peter Moore (Head of Environment), Matthew Piles (Head of Economy), John Alexander (Policy and Performance Manager), Martin Hill (Network Operations Service Manager), Steve Howard (Strategy and Community Liaison Officer), Anthony Littlechild (Corporate Sustainability Officer), Giles Nicholson (Area Manager) and Jan Stevenson (Passenger Transport Services Manager).

### **Acknowledgments**

134. The Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, took the opportunity to congratulate Peter Moore and Matthew Piles on their recent appointments as Head of Environment and Head of Economy respectively and to Andrew Martin on his appointment as the Head of Highways, as a single integrated service.

### **Apologies for Absence**

135. Apologies for absence were received from Richard Biggs, Peter Richardson and Peter Finney.

### **Code of Conduct**

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

### **Minutes**

137.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2014 were confirmed and signed.

### **Matters Arising**

#### Minute 116 – Park and Ride – Weymouth and Dorchester

137.2 Officers informed the Committee that, as yet, there had been little progress made with arrangements for the implementation of an integrated parking strategy between the County Council, West Dorset District Council, Weymouth and Portland Borough Council and Dorchester Town Council. The Director apologised for this not being progressed but provided an assurance that now the new Heads of Service were in post this would be

addressed and the Committee would receive a report at their meeting in January 2015, with appropriate local members being involved in this process.

### **Public Participation**

#### Public Speaking

138.1 The Committee were informed that no requests for public speaking had been received.

138.2 The Committee were informed that no public statements or questions had been received.

#### Petitions

138.3 Under the provisions of the County Council's Petitions Scheme, the Chairman of the Committee received a petition from Janet Dover, County Council Member for Colehill and Stapehill which was submitted on behalf of 'the residents of Stapehill, Leigh Road and Wimborne, requesting the reintroduction of an hourly, reliable bus service down the main road to and from Wimborne, Ferndown and Bournemouth'. Members were informed that the sentiments of the petition would be duly investigated and findings would be reported to the Committee at a later date.

### **Forward Together - The Way Ahead**

139.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director for Environment and the Economy which provided an update and progress being made on The Way Ahead workstreams for the Directorate's Transformation Programme; these being the Directorate's restructuring, Holistic Transport Services Review, and Highways Service Delivery Model. Confirmation was provided that the financial savings target for the Holistic Transport Services Review was £2m.

139.2 Members were informed that each workstream continued to progress well and co-ordination with the Forward Together Programme and governance arrangements had been put in place. Officers reported that where risks and issues had been identified, these were being mitigated and managed accordingly.

139.3 With regard to the Highways Services Delivery Model, two options were being taken forward for detailed business cases, these being:-

- an improved mixed economy delivery arrangement with strategic partners, and
- the establishment of a County Council owned, arm's length, Local Authority Trading Company (LATC), under 'Teckal' exemption.

with the Director explaining what progress was being made in respect of both of these options. He reported that, in the particular circumstances relating to highways, it appeared that the provisions of a LATC did not meet the requirements to realise the necessary efficiency savings and therefore would not appear to be worth pursuing.

139.4 Officers agreed to provide members with a chart showing the Directorate's new organisational structure and it was suggested that the Member's Gateway would provide a means of access to this.

139.5 The Committee acknowledged the progress being made regarding the need to change the way in which the Directorate worked, both operationally and in how its

resources were used and recognised that the Forward Together Programme was the key driver to achieve this.

### **Noted**

#### **Proposed Revision of Scheduled Highway Gully Cleaning**

140.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director for Environment and the Economy on a proposed revision of scheduled highway gully cleaning arrangements. Officers explained the current arrangements for gully cleaning, with gullies on the rural road network were cleaned on an annual basis and urban gullies being attended to once every two years. However it had become apparent that a revised approach to cyclical gully emptying should be developed which established a cleansing regime based on need and risk and routes would be prioritised on that basis.

140.2 Accordingly it was proposed to move to a revised regime which would provide for all gullies on priority and community salting networks being emptied on an annual basis with all other gullies being emptied as and when a problem was identified, either through the scheduled highway inspections or by notifications from the public. This was seen to be a more proactive approach to take rather than the reactive one which had previously been employed and it was proposed that the highway drainage teams could deal with any sporadic blockage episodes and be able to dislodge these with their jetting equipment.

140.3 Members were informed that with new techniques and processes being introduced to meet the challenges of the savings programme, the means by which this could be achieved was now available. Technology within the gully emptier fleet was now able to capture data on the condition of gullies on the network, providing the necessary calculations within the 'Confirm' data system the Directorate used, identifying the frequency for, and necessity of, their cleaning. This greater flexibility allowed for resources to be directed to where they were needed in the most cost effective way and it was envisaged this would enable efficiency savings of £60,000 per annum to be realised.

140.4 Whilst understanding the principles behind this proposed revision and broadly supporting the approach being taken, members raised some concerns that some gullies which were not currently identified as posing a problem would subsequently prove to be an issue, given the relaxation of the regime. Officers assured the Committee that a combination of the routine inspections, together with the technology available, would provide the basis for sustainable arrangements to be successful, with noted flooding hotspots being able to be targeted.

140.5 Officers were confident that the development of the new regime would determine where resources should be focussed and more effectively used and confirmed that arrangements would be put in place for this to be monitored, with the Committee being provided with regular updates on progress being made.

140.6 The Committee recognised the part parish and town councils had to play in this process, in their drawing particular issues to the attention of the Service and that elected members would also have a role to play in encouraging their communities to play an active part in identifying and reporting issues using their specialised local knowledge.

140.7 Members also considered that land drainage played an important part in the road condition and officers confirmed that they were continuing to engage with landowners in this respect. Officers also noted that the management of vegetation was also crucial in ensuring that gullies were kept free of obstruction.

140.8 Members acknowledged the principles in having a targeted approach to controlling the issue so that gullies were working effectively, but still retained some reservations that problems could well be being stored up for future years despite officers opinion that this was not expected to be the case. Members asked that the local members be informed when works were being programmed for their electoral division so that they might be aware of this and play their part in ensuring that kerbsides were free of vehicular obstruction. Officers agreed to that course of action.

**Recommended**

141. That the Cabinet be asked to agree that a revised gully cleaning and emptying frequency be introduced with immediate effect, with gullies on the Priority and Community salting routes being emptied once per annum, with the remainder of the gullies being emptied on an ad-hoc basis.

**Reason for Recommendation**

142. To operate within a restricted revenue budget by moving towards a risk/needs based approach to gully cleansing.

**Community Signs Policy**

143.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director for Environment and the Economy which provided information relating to the authorisation and installation of community signs on the highway.

143.2 Officers reported that public bodies and local community establishments often requested additional highway signage to direct highway users more efficiently. Members were informed that a policy for community sign usage was designed to provide for a more consistent and uniform approach towards the administration and installation of new signs.

143.3 The Committee were informed that the policy would formalise the process which was currently taking place and practices to be exercised in progressing such requests for signage. Officers emphasised that this policy covered requests for community signage from local public bodies, as opposed to tourism signage or enterprises advertising on a commercial basis.

143.4 The costs which the applicant would be asked to incur in respect of the process were also explained and how these would be applied and what they would cover. Members were advised that before any costs were incurred, pre-application discussion between officers and the applicant would resolve much of what was needed to determine if the scheme was a viable proposition.

143.5 The Committee welcomed the opportunity for this process to be formalised so that a policy could be consistently applied.

**Recommended**

144. That the Cabinet be asked to approve the new Community Signs Policy, as attached at Appendix 1 to the Director's report.

**Reason for Recommendation**

145. To assist local communities to sign and direct highway users to local destinations more efficiently

**Advisory Disabled Parking Bays Policy**

146.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director for Environment and the Economy on proposals for a new policy relating to the possible provision of Advisory

Disabled Parking Bays designed to provide assistance to those disabled persons, living in a vehicle owing household, to park in close proximity to their property.

146.2 Members were advised that the installation of traditional Disabled Parking Bays, enforceable by a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) were both time consuming and expensive. The benefits of utilising the use of Advisory Disabled Parking Bays was that, whilst not enforceable, they provided for a more relaxed process to allow the bay to be provided more quickly, less expensively and with greater flexibility than otherwise would be the case by the traditional method. Officers confirmed that there would be no difference in the way in which the bays were delineated on the ground so would be indiscernible from those covered by TRO's.

146.3 Officers explained that the advantages of this policy would mean that requests for such bays could be assessed quickly to determine if they met the current installation criteria and, if appropriate, proceeded with without the need for a protracted process, taking into account the practicalities of doing so. Costs too would be some 10% of those associated with the current arrangements, including the costs associated with advertising the TRO.

146.4 Whilst the bays could not be formally enforceable, Civil Enforcement Officers would monitor their use to ensure that they were not being abused. Members expressed some concern as to how any sanctions might be applied if abuse of their usage was determined and how disputes over their usage might be resolved.

146.5 Whilst not necessarily anticipating any insurmountable problems, officers once again confirmed that there would be monitoring over their usage to ensure that those who were entitled to use them were being able to do so. However if it could be determined that contravention was taking place, in the first instance, a pragmatic approach would be taken to resolve the matter, with there always being the traditional mechanism of applying a TRO if this was subsequently felt to be necessary.

146.6 The Committee recognised the significant part that local members could play in ensuring that the application of the bays was successful by working with the community to ensure this was the case.

### **Recommended**

147. That the Cabinet be asked to approve the new advisory Disabled Parking Bays Policy, as contained in Appendix 1 to the Director's report.

### **Reason for Recommendation**

148. In order to provide an assistance to disabled persons living in a vehicle owing household, who are in receipt of one of the stated mobility allowances to be able to park in close proximity to their property.

## **Environmental Performance and Greenhouse Emissions 2014**

149.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director for Environment and the Economy which presented the 2014 County Council's greenhouse gas emissions report and provided a snapshot of the County Council's performance against its environmental policies and targets for energy, water, waste and transport for 2014.

149.2 The Committee received a visual presentation which illustrated what the County Council was doing in the reduction of its carbon footprint and how mechanisms to achieve this were being applied.

149.3 How the performance was being managed was explained to members, together with how the County Council was performing against its targets. Members noted the key observations and opportunities set out in section 5 of the Director's report.

149.4 Whilst considerable progress had been made in reducing energy consumption and carbon reduction, more was required to achieve the targets envisaged. Getting the best use out of the County Council's existing buildings was critical in achieving this, particularly with their efficiency and in how staff might play their part in that regard. Crucially the efficient use of the County Hall campus and Local Education authority school buildings would go a considerable way to achieving the targets envisaged.

149.5 Members suggested a number of ideas for efficiency savings, both in terms of energy and costs, including how vehicles were being used; insulation considerations and renewable energy generation. Accordingly members were encouraged to contact officers with any suggestions they might have towards energy efficiencies or carbon reduction.

149.6 Whilst all new County Council build incorporated energy efficiencies, with a view to minimising the carbon footprint, those same efficiency improving measures would only be installed in established building as and when other refurbishment works were being undertaken so as to be cost effective. In particular, renewable energy sources, such as solar or wind power, were incorporated in new build design as applicable and to modern building regulation standards and such good practice led the way as being seen as a responsible Authority.

149.7 Whilst the performance data for 2013-14 continued to be encouraging, with the County Council continuing to make significant progress in improving its environmental performance and reducing its carbon footprint, members noted that the increase in electricity consumption and associated costs was particularly disappointing. It was hoped that the arrangements proposed to be put in place to address this would see improvements in this over time, with initiatives being put in place to achieve this, such as the usage of LED lighting where applicable.

149.8 Members recognised that the increase in energy costs had a direct effect on what could be achieved with many proposed carbon savings being reliant on key aspects of the Forward Together Programme such as the transformational programme for work styles; building rationalisation; changes in ICT infrastructure and; the rationalisation of transportation arrangements.

149.9 The Committee were pleased to see the progress being made but hoped that the targets envisaged for energy consumption reduction could be realised in the near future.

### **Recommended**

150. That progress in improving the County Council's environmental performance be noted and the Cabinet be asked to agree that the opportunities noted in section 5 of the Director's report be pursued by officers.

### **Reason for Recommendation**

151. These support the County Council's key objective of Enabling Economic Growth, set out in Corporate Plan 2014-15, by supporting an energy efficient, low carbon economy, tackling global environmental change and ensuring good management of our environmental and historic assets.

### **Public Bus Services in Dorset**

152.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director for Environment and the Economy which set out the current position regarding the County Council's supported public bus services in Dorset, together with current development work on Public Transport, Community Transport and School Transport being undertaken in preparation for the next major procurement of transport in 2016.

152.2 Members were informed that the report had been prepared in direct response to the receipt of a motion by Janet Dover, which had asked 'that the County Council carry out an urgent review of its prioritisation of resources to make sure that vital bus services were retained' which, under Standing Order 14 (2) of The Constitution, the Committee was authorised to consider.

152.3 Officers reminded the Committee of the reasoning behind the rationalisation of the bus services; the part the County Council played in subsidising particular routes and how prioritisation of services was driven by the need to make efficiency savings as part of the Forward Together Programme.

152.4 Members were reminded of the background and effect which bus deregulation had on the provision of services and what this had meant for the relationship between commercial operators and the County Council and the arrangements between the two in how commercial routes and subsidised routes both operated.

152.5 The Committee was reminded of the current strategy for transport, which explained the reasons for the decisions which had been taken and their effects. Members were reminded of the criteria which had been agreed for the withdrawal of uneconomic bus services from April 2014 and how the criteria were being applied.

152.6 In applying those criteria, it was recognised that some areas which had received a limited service could potentially be left without access to a public bus service of any kind so it had been agreed that no community would find themselves in that position, with some form of public/community transport provision being retained, where a service had previously existed.

152.7 The report also explained the changes to commercial bus services since 2011 and the part that community transport played in meeting the shortfall in rural transport needs. The Committee were informed that the County Council's Audit and Scrutiny Committee was looking into the role which community transport played in supporting public transport needs, particularly as a means of supporting rural employment, education and skills.

152.8 The County Council Member for Colehill and Stapehill was then provided with the opportunity to address the Committee. In speaking to the motion she had presented, she considered that there needed to be an immediate review of public bus service provision in Dorset as she was of the view that the arrangements now in place were inadequate and did not meet the needs of the community, and left many isolated and unable to gain access to vital amenities or visit family and friends.

152.9 She considered that many vulnerable people relied on the provision of a regular bus service which, since April 2014, they had been denied. Such services provided vital links for education and employment opportunities and those who relied on public transport often had no access to alternative provision. The basis of the petition which she had submitted to the Committee earlier in the meeting was much to that effect (see minute 138.3 above).

152.10 She asserted that even where services were still being provided, they were not adequately coordinated, leaving an unacceptable hiatus between how differing services' were timetabled and their accessibility. She considered that the report did not provide for the full extent of the changes which had been experienced or took into account the adverse effects that the changes had made on communities.

152.11 Accordingly, given the adverse effects now being experienced, she asked that a review of the changes begin immediately, rather than having to wait until 2016. She suggested that monies from an underspend in the Dorset Passenger Transport budget might go some way to redressing the issues being experienced.

152.12 Officers explained that whilst it was proposed that the provisions of any review would not be enacted until 2016, there would be a need to lay the practical foundations for this review well in advance given the amount of work required in assessing how the arrangements were operating. However, in order to ensure that a meaningful assessment might be made of the arrangements currently in place, officers considered that it was important that those arrangements had the opportunity to fulfil what they were designed to achieve.

152.13 Officers therefore recommended that the current arrangements should continue to be maintained so that a satisfactory assessment might be made of their effectiveness. The Group Finance Manager clarified that the underspend referred to was encompassed within the Holistic Transport Review and contributed towards the £1.5m savings target of that workstream.

152.14 The Committee recognised that the relationship between community/public transport provision, which was subsidised by the County Council, and the way in which commercial routes were operated by commercial operators was dynamic but, in either way, that provision was based on need. Therefore, before any consideration was given to reconsider a particular route, each case was assessed on its merit and reviewed against the criteria.

152.15 Officers hoped that the development of competition between bus operators who already existed and new providers, could well result in increased scope for choice. Further assessment of procurement options and the management of contractual agreements were managed would play a key part in this being realised.

152.16 Members welcomed the part local members were being asked to play in the consultation process. One member considered that the District and Borough Councils' responsibility for housing provision and allocation affected where public transport service provision was needed and should be taken into account in any review.

152.17 Similarly, the way in which bus and train timetables were coordinated should be taken into consideration and officers confirmed that the Integrated Transport Strategy would play a part in determining that. Members considered that the part NHS transport should play in the strategy should also be factored into any assessment of provision. Officers confirmed that the health service was part of the Community Transport Review, feeding into the Holistic Transport Review.

152.18 Whilst some members expressed their concern at the effects the current arrangements might have, the majority of the Committee acknowledged the considerable amount of work that was required in developing the groundwork for a review and the time needed to ensure that this was done properly. The need for this to be progressed as soon as was practicable in order that the necessary assessments could be made was understood.



However they considered that, for now, a period of stability and consistency was necessary so that the merits of the new arrangements could be meaningfully assessed.

152.19 The Committee acknowledged that the changes being made were essentially budget driven and that there was a need to look at what was needed strategically to ensure that the commitment to ensure that communities had some form of public transport was met. Accordingly it was considered that the arrangements being proposed would give the opportunity and time to examine what services were essential so that future judgements could be made on that basis. Whilst members were sympathetic towards the sentiments of the motion, the majority of members considered that now was not the time to disrupt the arrangements which had only recently been put in place, as a meaningful assessment of their merit could not be achieved.

152.20 On being put to the vote, the Committee agreed that the current arrangements should be maintained in order that their merits should be given an opportunity to be fulfilled.

#### **Resolved**

153. That the Committee agree that no changes should be made to the existing public transport network or supported services until contracts were due for renewal in July 2016.

#### **Reason for Decision**

154. The annual budget of £2m was fully committed to existing public transport routes and there was currently no scope to increase the level of subsidy to either increase the amount of provision or to support routes where the operator de-registered or reduced commercial routes. A period of stability was required for existing routes to enable the public transport team to monitor current passenger numbers and also to consult with stakeholders about the future requirements for Dorset. The Audit and Scrutiny Committee recently agreed to review community transport provisions and, given that an integrated solution across public community, school (and potentially wider) transport services was likely to offer the best value, any changes ahead of that review would be premature.

#### **Revenue Budget Monitoring 2014/15, including Forward Together Update**

155.1 The Committee considered a report by the Chief Financial Officer setting out budget monitoring information as at the end of August 2014, which showed a forecast overspend against all service budgets for the County Council of £7,419,000.

155.2 For the Environment and the Economy Directorate, this represented a projected overspend of £378,000, or 1% of the budget for the year, with the details attributable to each cost centre being set out in the report.

155.3 The Committee noted the forecast budget position for the Directorate and the actions which had been, and would continue to be, taken to reduce the projected overspend position before the end of the financial year.

#### **Noted**

#### **Corporate Performance Monitoring Report: First Quarter 2014/15 (1 April – 30 June 2014)**

156.1 The Committee considered a joint report by the Chief Executive and the Director for Environment and the Economy which contained analysis of the Council's progress against both of its corporate aims and presented the results of the monitoring of the

County Council's Corporate Balanced Scorecard for the first quarter of 2014/15. Members were reminded that as well as the Corporate Plan, the Balanced Scorecard was the principal means by which the County Council could monitor high priority performance measures on budget management, customer service and staff development and wellbeing. Whilst the Scorecard summarised performance monitoring analysis across the whole Authority, there was a specific focus on those elements of the plan which were managed by the Environment and the Economy Directorate. Officers explained that the way in which the performance monitoring report was now being produced was in direct response to how members had requested they be provided with such information in future.

156.2 Officers reported that the Corporate Plan now contained 36 performance measures of which twelve were associated with the Enabling Economic Growth corporate aim and 24 related to the Health, Wellbeing and Safeguarding theme. Five of the Enabling Economic Growth measures were the responsibility of the Environment and the Economy Directorate, in the areas of economic development, waste management, superfast broadband delivery and highways management with three of the Health, Wellbeing and Safeguarding measures being their responsibility too, in the areas of access and countryside management, rights of way access and reducing traffic accidents. Detailed performance information for all of these measures was provided in the appendix to the report.

156.3 Members noted that at the end of August 2014 there was an amber forecast corporate overspend on £5.7 m or 2.2% on the net budget for the year. The headline issues for the Directorate were as follows: -

- Enabling Economic Growth - just 61% of the Growing Places Fund had been committed to active projects, against a target of 90%.
- Budget - at the end of August 2014, there was a "red" forecast overspend (i.e. more than 5%) on road network management.

156.4 As part of the performance commentary for the Directorate, encouragingly, there had been a significant improvement in road conditions, with only 3% of principal roads and 5% of non-principal roads requiring maintenance compared to the 5% and 10% respectively, as seen in previous years. This was due to increased investment through prudential borrowing, the receipt of additional funding following the previous winter's severe weather and by the use of more creative and cost effective approaches to road repairs, particularly on unclassified rural roads.

156.5 Members were also pleased to learn that performance was strong for the measures associated with access and countryside management and that the number of people killed or seriously injured on Dorset's roads continued to reduce, with performance in reducing those casualties being good compared to other upper-tier authorities.

156.6 Members appreciated the new look, streamlined means of presenting the performance monitoring information and welcomed the inclusion of benchmarking information in those assessments.

### **Noted**

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

157. The Committee considered and agreed its work programme for the first meeting of 2015, together with the addition of an update on progress with the Weymouth/Dorchester Park and Ride arrangements and the potential parking services partnership with Borough and District Councils.

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

158. The Committee's attention was drawn to the Schedule of Members' Seminars and Events for the rest of 2014 and the Chairman drew attention to the Dorset Fire Authority seminar scheduled for early that afternoon on the proposed combination between the Dorset Fire and Rescue Service and the Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service.

**Noted****Outside Bodies**

159. The Committee noted that Margaret Phipps had provided a submission on the Bournemouth International Airport Consultative Committee and Hilary Cox would provide updates on those relevant outside bodies on which she served and these would be emailed to them in due course.

**Noted****Member Briefings**

160. The Committee were provided with the opportunity to identify topics for future member briefings but decided that there was no need for any to be held at the present time.

**Noted****Questions**

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

**Exempt Business****Exclusion of the Public****Resolved**

162. That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for minute numbers 163 to 165 because it was likely that if members of the public were present, there would be a disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 indicated of Part 1 of Schedule 12A and the public interest in withholding the information outweighed the public interest in disclosing that information.

**Proposed Draft Policy on Highway Vegetation Management**

163.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director for Environment and the Economy which summarised the work of the Policy Development Panel on Highway Vegetation Management, which included a review of the highway vegetation management service in the 2014 growing season and made recommendations for the future arrangements.

163.2 The Panel concluded that, in view of the level of public expectation which surrounded this service, and taking into account the ecological viability of roadside verges, there was a need to address the current under investment in highway verge management, and for more resources to be made available in the short term to achieve this, on an invest to save basis. Consequently the Panel recommended that an integrated package of measures to deliver a service which achieved higher levels of public satisfaction, and kept control of costs should be taken forward to address this which would involve four elements, these being:-

- Reduce soil fertility (short and long term)
- Inject more resources (short term)
- Improve community engagement (short and long term)
- Reform operational/contractual arrangements (short term)

163.3 The Committee then received a visual presentation on the 'Living Verges' project which was designed to play its part in the management of highway verges.

163.4 The Chairman of the Panel acknowledged the considerable efforts which had been made over the 2014 growing season to ensure that the way in which the verges were maintained was successful and the role which officers had played in achieving this.

163.5 The Committee welcomed the approach being taken in how highway verges were proposed to be managed in future and the emphasis being placed on community engagement and suggested that this be published so that the public was aware of the Authority's intentions.

**Recommended**

164. That the Committee endorse the approach recommended by the Panel, and the Cabinet be asked to agree the approach set out in Section 4 of the Director's report, including developing a detailed business case.

**Reason for Recommendation**

165.1 To support corporate plan aims on enabling economic growth, specifically the commitments to manage and maintain highway infrastructure, and to ensure good management of our environmental and heritage assets.

165.2 To respond to community concerns about the County Council's arrangements for highway vegetation management.

Meeting duration: 10:00am – 1.05 pm

