

PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14 June 2016

Present:-

Councillors R Radford (Chair), K Ball, P Bowden, C Clarence, T Dempster, A Eastman, G Hook (Vice-Chair), B Hughes, J Owen, R Radford, R Vint and J Yabsley

Apologies:-

Councillors R Edgell, J Hawkins and N Way

* **1** Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2016 be signed as a correct record.

* **2** Public Participation

In accordance with the Council's Public Participation Rules, the Committee received and acknowledged oral representations made by:

(a) a Mr P Allen on a matter to be considered by the Committee that day, namely the review of 20mph Speed Limits (Minute 3 below refers) commenting in particular on compliance with national guidelines.

(b) a Ms J Elson on a matter to be considered by the Committee that day, namely Community Transport (Minute 10 below refers) commenting in particular on service alignment and the grant process.

(c) a Mr B Mitchell on a matter to be considered by the Committee that day, namely Connecting Devon and Somerset Programme Update (Minute 5 below refers) commenting in particular on broadband issues in the village of Kingston.

The Chairman responded, thanking the above for their attendance and presentations which would be taken into account by the Committee during its subsequent deliberations.

* **3** Department of Transport Study of 20mph Speed Limits and Police Accident Data and Police Speed Enforcement Policy.

(Councillor Hook declared a personal interest in this item by virtue of being a member of "20 is Plenty", a national campaign group.)

The Committee received and noted the Report of the Head of Highways, Capital Development and Waste (HCW/16/44) setting out the present position relating to the County Council's Policy on Local Speed Limits together with a copy of the current Devon Traffic Policy and Devon Traffic Advice Note.

Members were advised that publication of the Department for Transport's (DfT) study on a national review of 20mph speed limits had been delayed and was not now anticipated until 2017 and that only after publication of any new guidance from DfT to Local Highway Authorities could the current Devon Policy on Local Speed Limits be reviewed.

Members nonetheless recognised concerns expressed about speed limits and enforcement acknowledging also that these concerns could be dealt with by working with the Police, local communities and the Speed Complaint Action Review Forum (SCARF) whose reviews could include enforcement via police or speed management safety cameras or education (using vehicle activated speed warning signs). It was important to continue collating data. Working with local communities on self-help schemes was another option, details of which were on the Highways web pages.

The Committee also welcomed Inspector Richard McLellan and PC Mark Goulding from Devon and Cornwall Police who addressed the meeting at the invitation of the Committee outlining the action taken particularly in respect of repeat offenders and the need for collection of data.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Hook, and **SECONDED** by Councillor Ball and

RESOLVED that Cabinet be recommended to make representations to the DfT expressing the Council's disappointment at the continuing delay in publication of the DfT's new guidance on 20mph speed limits and Devon MPs be also urged to exert pressure on the DfT for early publication.

* **4** **Mobile Phone Reception in Devon**

The Committee considered the Report of the Head of Economy and Enterprise (EE/16/8) on mobile phone reception in Devon; its impact on the economy and work being undertaken to address areas where there was no effective coverage by any operators ("not spots").

The Head of Service's Report confirmed, inter alia that:

- Ofcom 2015 coverage data showed that Devon was still significantly behind the UK average coverage level, particularly with 4G coverage;
- a Government Written Statement to Parliament on 17 March 2016 stated the intention to increase permitted development rights allowing for some taller masts.
- the Council had successfully obtained (with other Connecting Devon and Somerset partners) £2.5m growth deal funding for spend in 2016/17 onwards to pilot mobile solutions to increase 4G coverage
- a further Growth Deal 3 bid had been submitted to take the learnings from this pilot project to increase coverage a further 10%, whether or not the bid would be successful would not be known until the Government's Autumn Statement.

The Head of Service also reported that as a means of improving coverage three new masts had been installed and were operative and a further six would be live by the end of January 2017.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Ball, **SECONDED** by Councillor Hook and

RESOLVED that this matter be further considered at the Masterclass in September and at Committee in November.

* **5** **Connecting Devon and Somerset Programme Update**

(Councillor Bowden declared a personal interest in this item by virtue of being a past member of South West Audit Partnership at East Devon District Council.)

The Committee considered the Report of the Head of Economy and Enterprise (EE/16/9) on further progress made on the Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) Programme.

The Head of Service reported on or responded to issues during discussion, indicating, inter alia that:

- from the January to March 2016 quarter end, the CDS Programme had delivered a total of 288,563 Total Homes Passed;
- Airband had reported that their wireless transmitters were live on South West Dartmoor and that a 'wholesale open access platform' would be set up to make the service available to a range of Internet Service Providers;
- Dartmoor testing was now complete and a launch event would be organised for early July;
- a second procurement exercise would be run by CDS with award of contracts anticipated in December 2016;
- CDS was set to receive an extra £4m of funding (from the £14.5m of funding announced in the Government's Budget for Ultrafast Broadband in the South West);
- Teignbridge District Council had confirmed further funding of £250k to the programme.
- South West Audit Partnership had concluded its independent audit of the CDS phase 2 procurement and this was now available on the CDS website.

* **6** **Highways Communications with Parish Councils**

The Committee received and noted the Report of the Head of Highways, Capital Development and Waste (HCW/16/45) regarding Highway communication with local Parishes relating to works in their area.

In discussion with Members, the Head of Service advised that:

- an Engagement Survey carried out on Town and Parish Councils elicited 155 responses, the results of which would be published on the Devon Highways web pages and were summarised at Appendix II to the Report;
- work programmes were accessible on the relevant web pages not only to local Councils and Members, but also to the general public, www.roadworks.org was also a good source of local information.

* **7** **Tender Process for Highway Maintenance Contract Update**

The Head of Highways, Capital Development and Waste reported on the procurement process for the Highway Maintenance Contract jointly with Plymouth and Torbay Councils. The tender process was currently in the negotiating stage; was on target and a Report would be brought to Cabinet in September.

* **8** **Air Quality and Car Emissions**

The Committee received the Report of the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment (PTE/16/29) containing information about air quality associated with transport emissions as a result of recent issues relating to the impact on health; petrol and diesel emissions; vehicle speeds and testing.

* **9** **Rail Infrastructure: Possible Future Rail Routes and Resilience of the Rail Infrastructure**

The Committee considered the Report of the Head of Planning Transportation and Environment (PTE/16/30) summarising the work undertaken to date by the Peninsula Rail Task Force (PRTF) and Devon Metro rail projects in relation to rail infrastructure.

The Government had asked the PRTF to work with the Department of Transport, Network Rail, train operators, communities, businesses and rail users to develop a plan for better rail resilience and connectivity for the SW Peninsula in the 21st century.

The Report acknowledged that:

- the events of two successive winters, culminating in the flooding of the Somerset Levels and the breach at Dawlish, confirmed that the railway needed improvement across many aspects before it could provide much needed reliability and connectivity;
- PRTF had explored options for additional railway routes into the Peninsula that not only offered improved resilience but also the potential for greater capacity and additional freight paths;
- the new rolling stock (AT300) which were to be introduced from 2018 onwards would enhance services across the SW, deliver faster journey times and 26% more capacity on its trains;

Members expressed disappointment at the findings in the report relating to the Northern Route (Exeter to Plymouth via Okehampton) where it stated, "*Within the context of the 20 year plan, these route options are therefore unlikely to be deliverable.*". Members also noted that there was no comment in the Report from Network Rail, acknowledging that the Devon and Exeter Rail Project Working Party would be better placed to address these concerns.

* **10** **Community Transport**

The Committee received the Report of the Head of Services for Communities (SC/16/6) on progress made by the Transport Co-ordination Service in engaging Community Transport (CT) operators in Devon to assist with replacement bus services.

Members commended the excellent service provided to communities by the Community Transport operators and acknowledged that the Council should do everything they could to support them.

11 **Place Scrutiny Committee Work Programme**

The Committee reviewed the Scrutiny Work Programme and determined those items of business to be included therein for its sphere of activity, having regard also to the Cabinet/Council Forward Plan. The Work Programme was endorsed.

[NB: The Scrutiny and Cabinet Work Programmes are available on the Council's website at <http://democracy.devon.gov.uk/mgPlansHome.aspx?bcr=11>.]

***DENOTES DELEGATED MATTER WITH POWER TO ACT**

The Meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 5.50 pm