

DRAFT MINUTE

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
25 OCTOBER 2011

Highways & Transportation Task Force Report

The Chairman of the Committee introduced the report of the Highways and Transportation Task Force, which had met five times between July and October 2011 to consider and make recommendations on:

- The Council's draft "Approach to Parking";
- The managing agency contract (MAC) with Amey LG; and
- The Council's draft approach to road and footway maintenance – "Approach to Delivering a Sustainable Highway Network".

It was noted that the Task Force, to inform their deliberations, had looked at the operation of residents' parking zones (RPZs) in the Prince Regent area of Dunstable to test their concerns that RPZs were not an effective solution. There had been a good response from the residents there to a survey, with 68% of residents either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with RPZs, feeling that the scheme did not represent value for money and did not solve the problems of residents not being able to park near their own homes. The Task Force had concluded that RPZs were not satisfactory and did not cover their own operating costs. They recommended the use of controlled parking zones (CPZs) instead, although it was noted that small areas of RPZs could be created as part of those wider CPZs if they were considered appropriate.

The Task Force also looked at the managing agency contract with Amey LG and concluded that the contract operated well and offered good value for money. Officers were asked, however, to remind Amey that where sub-contractors were used they should have the same quality standards as Amey themselves.

It was noted that the public needed to have confidence in the enforcement of car parking issues and that this should be the case under the automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) system which would be in place shortly.

Members asked that the executive be made aware of the condition of the highways asset in Central Bedfordshire, which was deteriorating and would not be repairable if maintenance was reduced.

A member referred to the need for car parking charges to be sensitive to encourage use of town centres. It was noted that car parking charges were reviewed each year as part of the annual setting of fees and charges and such issues were considered at that time.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE:

- 1. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee endorses the following recommendations and comments of the Highways and Transportation Task Force for submission to the Executive in respect of the draft Approach to Parking:**
 - i) the draft Approach to Parking is supported as the basis for the development of parking services in Central Bedfordshire.**
 - ii) that controlled parking zones be used as a major measure for the management of car parking, provided that such zones are selectively introduced following proper evaluation and are sufficiently and adequately funded**
 - iii) that residents' parking zones as such should not be used by the Council in the future as a parking control measure and that any further requests should be considered in the context of controlled parking zones.**
 - iv) that the parking standards (as set out in Appendix C to the draft Approach to Parking) are fair and reasonable.**
- 2. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee advises the Executive that the MAC contract is the right type of contract for Central Bedfordshire Council and recommends that such a contract should be the default option when considering options for the re-letting of the contract.**
- 3. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee endorses the Task Force's conclusion that the MAC contract is operating well and delivering value for money.**
- 4. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee endorses the potential improvements as identified in paragraphs 57 to 62 of the report of the Assistant Director (Highways and Transport) to the Highways and Transportation Task Force of 24 August 2011 and that those which have not yet been implemented be authorised by the relevant Executive Member (or Executive if deemed necessary) for action by officers and Amey.**
- 5. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends to the Executive that additional funds of £4m for each of the next four years be included in the highways maintenance budget.**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee requests the officers to explore with Amey a mechanism to ensure that cases retain**

their Highways Help Desk reference number when they are passed on to other teams etc within the Council so that they can continue to be tracked.

- 2. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee requests the officers to:**
 - i) make provision for centralised information to be made available so that Members can be fully briefed about the emerging situation in respect of planned infrastructure and other developments over the ensuing three months;**
 - ii) explore the implementation of a computerised GIS map to support such an arrangement**
 - iii) request Amey to liaise with the Council's planning division to ensure Amey is better apprised of matters such as Section 106 agreements, major schemes etc; and**
 - iv) requests the officers to update and reissue to all members the "Highways and Transport – Service provision Guide for Members" along with the one page map and contact details of Amey's area teams.**