

Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Wednesday, 23 November 2016, County Hall, Worcester -

10.00 am

Present:

Minutes

Mr P A Tuthill (Chairman), Mr G J Vickery (Vice Chairman), Mr A A J Adams, Ms P Agar, Mr A T Amos, Mr M E Jenkins and Mr J W R Thomas

Also attended:

Mr A N Blagg, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Environment
Dr K A Pollock, Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Economy, Skills and Infrastructure
Mrs E B Tucker
Mr A P Miller

Richard Bentley, Partnerships & Strategic Overview Team Leader (Shropshire & Worcestershire) - Environment Agency, Tim Smith, Flooding Analyst, Asset Management - Severn Trent Water Ltd, Ste Ashton (Broadband Project Officer), Emily Barker (Strategic Planning and Environmental Policy Officer), Nigel Hudson (Head of Strategy and Infrastructure), Matt Maginnis (Flood Risk & Gypsy Services Manager) and Jo Weston (Overview and Scrutiny Officer).

Available Papers

The members had before them:

- A. The Agenda papers (previously circulated);
- B. Presentation handouts for Items 5 and 6 (circulated at the Meeting)
- C. The Minutes of the Meeting held on 10 October 2016 (previously circulated).

(Copies of documents A and B will be attached to the signed Minutes).

255 Apologies and Welcome

No apologies had been received.

256 Declarations of Interest and of any Party Whip

None.

257 Public Participation

None.

258 Confirmation of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 10 October 2016 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

259 Flood Risk Management Annual Report and the Roles of Key Risk Management Authorities

Attending for this Item were:

Worcestershire County Council

Councillor Anthony Blagg, Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Environment
Matt Maginnis, Flood Risk & Highway Drainage Manager
Emily Barker, Strategic Planning and Environmental Policy Manager
Nigel Hudson, Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy

Severn Trent Water Ltd

Tim Smith, Flooding Analyst, Asset Management

Environment Agency

Richard Bentley, Partnerships & Strategic Overview Team Leader (Shropshire & Worcestershire)

Richard Bentley explained that as a national organisation and specifically in relation to flooding, the Environment Agency has strategic overview of all sources of flooding and coastal erosion. It also has responsibility for flood risk management activities on main rivers and the coast and regulating reservoir safety. Locally, Members were reminded of the resilience work in Worcester, Upton and Bewdley to protect communities and businesses.

On behalf of Severn Trent Water (STW) Ltd, Tim Smith provided a presentation which covered the following main points:

- STW covers a wide geographical area and is one of the largest 10 regulated water and sewerage companies in England and Wales with over 5,000 employees. It covers 28 Local Authority areas and provides a service to more than 3.3 million households and businesses
- Sewer flooding is their main responsibility and flooding can occur either to STW's assets or from them and either scenario can disrupt the water cycle
- When flooding occurs, clean-up is the main priority however, the cause is investigated and action to resolve the issue is explored. Examples were given whereby CCTV and other forms of technology are used to identify problems and

manage assets

- Over time sewers can become blocked, mainly through the disposal of unsuitable items and a programme of cleansing is ongoing. In addition, a public education programme is in place and STW work with schools to spread key messages
- Old sewers are also troublesome and a replacement programme is in place across the Country
- In relation to new building developments, modelling is undertaken to ensure there is sufficient capacity and STW work with developers on new projects. Also, all existing sewers are already mapped
- Capacity across the system is being increased, including the construction of underground storage tanks as part of flood alleviation schemes and the use of Sustainable Drainage Schemes (SUDS) to collect surface water.

In the ensuing discussion, the following main points were raised:

- It was reported that there was a good working relationship across the Agencies represented, however, Members felt that the general public would not differentiate between the Authorities, rather, in the event of an incident, be more concerned that it was dealt with in a timely manner. By coincidence, flooding had occurred in recent days and Members recalled some local incidents and the response to them.
- Members were concerned about the increased levels of severe flooding, both locally and nationally and stressed that the impact of flooding was wide reaching.
- It was suggested that climate change could be a possible cause, yet statistics continued to refer to a 1 in 100 year event for example. Authorities were now using different terminology, for example, 1% yearly chance of flooding, however it would take time to move across to this refined terminology. Some Members felt using words to reflect impact of a recent incident such as 'it's the same level as 2007' would be more helpful to the public.
- Worcestershire had been particularly affected in recent years and lots of work had been undertaken to manage future flooding and prevent future incidents. As there were numerous reasons for flooding incidents, there was not just one solution available. A variety of measures were

**260 Futurefit -
Proposals for
Change and
Reform to
support the
Medium Term
Financial Plan:
Economy and
Environment**

available to provide defence and resilience.

- In relation to Planning, some Members suggested that not enough was being done, however it was reported that working collaboratively across all Agencies was the biggest strength to the process.
- It was reported that as approaches evolved, there was a drive to manage flooding, rather than prevent occurrences.
- The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Economy, Skills and Infrastructure asked whether household macerators continued to be installed to be informed that they had become less welcome as a means of disposing of waste products.

The Flood Risk Management in Worcestershire Annual Report 2016 was welcomed, with the activity undertaken far reaching. One Member in particular highlighted the natural solutions listed, whereby local nature organisations were also working in partnership to manage and improve local watercourses and the Panel learned that a bid had been submitted to the European Union, which may enhance the level of natural solutions available.

The Chairman thanked all those present for their attendance.

Attending for this Item were:

Anthony Blagg, Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Environment

Stephen Ashton, Senior Project Manager – Strategic Change Team

Nigel Hudson, Head of Strategic Infrastructure and Economy

A presentation was given which provided some context to the savings proposed within the Economy and Infrastructure (E&I) Directorate and an update on those from previous savings plans.

Members were reminded that the previous Business, Economy and Communities Directorate had a savings requirement of £23.120m, of which at least £18.535m was the responsibility of the new Economy and Infrastructure Directorate.

The budget for E&I in 2016/17 is £64m and savings of £11.715m had already been delivered by 2015/16.

Although £6.820m savings was left to be delivered in existing plans and of that £2.040m is required to be

delivered in 2016/17, new savings proposals were submitted from Corporate Strategy Planning requiring a further £1.7m, mainly from the waste management contract in 2017/18.

Around £29m is spent each year on waste management and £1.5m in savings had already been achieved, however, existing savings plans assume savings of £3.25m in 2017/18.

The additional saving of £1.7m in 2017/18 was proposed through the use of Private Finance Initiative reserve, with consideration made for housing growth, waste prevention and contract review.

Outstanding required savings included an amount from Children's Transport, which had been highlighted as a concern year on year as the financial gap was not reducing as quickly as profiled.

Ongoing work included driving efficiencies through shared services, smarter working, transport operations and fleet, street lighting and Act Local. In addition, monitoring would be ongoing.

Members learned that the Waste Management contract was outcomes based, therefore any change to grant monies would have no impact.

The Panel was concerned that required savings had not been achieved from Children's Transport. Although plans had been worked through and it was acknowledged that the required service was unpredictable, Officers reported that savings could be achieved over a longer period of time. Members agreed that the Chairman and Vice Chairman would investigate further with responsible Officers.

Future projects, such as the roll out of real time information at bus stops would have a positive impact for both the Council and the public and the major schemes either in design or build would enhance the County as a whole.

Councillor Tucker was invited to contribute to the discussion and asked whether the £1.7m saving from waste management was being double counted alongside Concept Paper 2: Achieving Extra Savings from External Contracts. In response, Officers clarified that the £1.7m quoted was in addition to other pieces of work.

The Panel Chairman thanked everyone for a useful discussion.

The meeting ended at 12.10 pm

Chairman