

**To: All Members of the County Council  
All Chief Officers**

**From:** County Secretary's  
Department

**Cc: Environment Officers )  
Officers named for action) e-mail  
Committee Section )**

**Ask For:** Julia Harries  
**Ext:** 25563  
**My ref:**  
**Your ref:**

**ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
21 OCTOBER 2003**

**ATTENDANCE**

**MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE**

S A Batson, M V Bayes (Vice-Chairman), B N W Hammond, S J Mills, D J Drake,  
H M Saunders, S Jones, R Roberts, B A York

**Also present:**

Executive Member: D A Ashley (Environment)

Other Members:

G R Churchard, R J M Ellis, K F Emsall, M Green, G D Game, M H T Janes,  
P A Ruffles, D T F Scudder, I Simpson

T Douris

**CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Membership Changes**

The Chairman welcomed Richard Roberts to his first meeting replacing, Janet Anderson.

Stan Mills replaced Roy Clements for this meeting only.

Bryan Hammond replaced Nigel Copping for this meeting only.

**Retirement of Mike Palmer**

The Committee thanked Mike Palmer for all his hard work and achievements for Hertfordshire over the years and wished him well in his retirement.

**MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 17 June 2003 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**PUBLIC PETITION**

Mr Chris Jackson presented a petition on behalf of the Rectory Lane Residents' Association requesting the permanent closure of Rectory Lane, Stevenage.

The petition was referred to officers for consideration and a written response.

**QUESTIONS**

None

**PART 1 (OPEN BUSINESS)****1 a REVIEW OF HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHWAYS OVERVIEW**

[Officer Contact: Mike Palmer, Assistant Director, Transport Management  
Tel: 01992 556121]

Attending for item 1 were the following:

**Alan Armson**, Strategic Client Manager Hertfordshire Highways,  
**Bob Hall**, Highways Service Manager,  
**Steve Helliwell**, Amey,  
**James Measures**, Mouchel

1.1 The Committee considered a series of reports reviewing the establishment and performance of the first nine month's operation of Hertfordshire Highways from the strategic point of view and from specific operational areas.

**1.2 Conclusions:**

- (a) The Committee agreed that the concept of Hertfordshire Highways was sound and that partnering offered the best way to achieve a quality service.
- (b) Performance so far was encouraging and all officers were thanked for their efforts at a time of significant change and very real difficulties in recruitment and retention.
- (c) There were a number of issues of continuing concern:
  - Too many routine problems were not being resolved on a timely basis
  - Communications were not as effective as they could be
  - The effectiveness of the management structure and clarity of responsibilities
  - Setting of priorities
  - The setting of challenging targets
  - The current levels of vacancies and difficulty in recruiting staff

- (d) The Committee agreed that a Topic Group should be set up to consider the best way to produce accurate and useful performance management information to enable members to effectively scrutinise performance, and any other issues raised in the debates on items 1(b) – (e).

Rob Smith

**b THE HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHWAYS PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REGIME**

[Officer Contact: Martin Jacques, contract Performance and Development Manager, Tel: 01707 356555]

1.1 The Committee considered a report detailing the performance management arrangements of the Hertfordshire Highways Partnership.

**1.2 Conclusions:**

- (a) Members expressed concern at the lack of clarity regarding scheme management.
- (b) Members questioned the 80% figure in paragraph 7.3 relating to the overall performance, in particular whether this was sufficiently challenging.
- (c) The Committee recognised the complexity of information in this area and requested a separate seminar on PI's.
- (d) The Committee agreed that the Topic Group set up under 1a should also consider the development of a performance reporting framework for members.

Rob Smith

**c HIGHWAYS SCHEME DEVELOPMENT, PROGRAMMING AND IMPLEMENTATION**

[Officer Contact: Mike Youngusband, Highways Asset Manager, Hertfordshire Highways, Tel: 01707 356551]

1.1 The Committee considered a report outlining the development, programming and implementation of Hertfordshire Highways' schemes.

**1.2 Conclusions:**

- (a) The Committee recognised the excellent work done so far by Hertfordshire Highways, with many good experiences and efficient communication on some schemes.
- (b) Members expressed concern whether the 35% of schemes completed later than programme [paragraph 10.1] represented an improvement over previous years.

- (c) The Committee asked the Transport Panel to explore the impact that public consultation and scheme supervision had on the ability to meet the scheme programme and related performance targets.

Rob Smith  
Adrian  
Service

**d HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHWAYS STRATEGIC ALLIANCE - REVIEW OF AMEY LAFARGE GENERAL WORKS SERVICE**

[Officer Contact: Chris-Allen Smith, Principal Strategy Development Manager  
Tel: 01707 356573]

- 1.1 The Committee considered a report giving a review of the Amey Lafarge general works service.

1.2 **Conclusions:**

- (a) The Committee recognised the great improvement in pothole repair and were reassured that there was a balance between patching and resurfacing.
- (b) Concern was expressed regarding fading road markings and the Committee welcomed investigations into the use of new road marking materials.
- (c) Members questioned whether enough was being done to address the issue of trips, the number of claims against the County Council due to trips; the impact such an accident on individuals, particularly those with walking difficulties, was recognised.
- (d) Concern was expressed regarding traffic light sequencing and the time taken to adjust such lights.
- (e) The street light performance indicator should make sense to the public.
- (f) The Committee agreed that the Topic Group set up under 1a should also consider providing useful management information on the following areas:
- Street lighting
  - Road markings
  - Trips
  - The setting of traffic lights

Rob Smith

**e MOUCHEL CONTRACT**

[Officer Contact: Alan Armson, Strategic Client Manager, Hertfordshire Highways,  
Tel: 01707 356552]

1.1 The Committee considered a report giving an overview of Mouchel's role within Hertfordshire Highways, outlining the contract arrangements between HCC and Mouchel and summarising added value service benefits that Mouchel bring to Hertfordshire Highways.

**1.2 Conclusions:**

(a) The Committee expressed general satisfaction with the consultant and recognised the importance of the partnership.

(b) The Committee sought clarification on the following areas:

- Gully maintenance programmes in the county
- The management of the development control activity
- How the Authority ensured that a single supplier represented best value

Rob Smith

(c) The Committee agreed that the Topic Group set up under 1a should also consider recruitment and retention, in addition to the items in (b) above.

Rob Smith

**2 REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE OF EDF ENERGY (PREVIOUSLY 24SEVEN)**

[Officer Contact: Alan Armson, Strategic Client Manager,  
Tel: 01707 356552]

2.1 **Clive Witherly**, Fault Manager for EDF Energy attended the meeting to answer questions on this item.

2.2 The Committee considered a report on the performance of EDF Energy in dealing with street lighting electricity supply faults and new connections.

2.3 Martin Saunders requested, and the Committee agreed, that a list of all EDF faults for the relevant area could be supplied to Joint Member Panels on a regular basis.

Rob Smith

**2.4 Conclusions:**

(a) The Committee accepted the apparent overall improvement in the performance of EDF Energy, but did not accept that these improvements represented an acceptable standard of service to the public.

(b) Concern was expressed regarding how well the figures in the report reflected the current problems.

- |     |   |           |
|-----|---|-----------|
| (c) | The Committee recognised the goodwill gesture made by EDF Energy by sponsoring a Community Project to develop a good relationship with the communities of Hertfordshire, but wished to see more contribution towards resolving lighting problems. | Rob Smith |
| (d) | The Committee encouraged EDF to formalise an agreement which ensured acceptable levels of service. The progress on this should be reported to the Topic Group set up under 1a.  | Rob Smith |

### 3 FINAL REPORT OF THE STREET LIGHTING TOPIC GROUP

[Officer Contact: Nick Gough, Principal Strategy Development Manager,  
Tel: 01707 356561]

3.1 Mary Bayes, Chairman of the Topic Group, introduced a report outlining the work of the Topic Group and presenting the Group's recommendations, final report and information leaflet for publication.

3.2 The Seventh report of the Commons Select Committee on Science and Technology was circulated to members of the Scrutiny Committee.

#### 3.3 Conclusions:

- |     |  |                             |
|-----|--|-----------------------------|
| (a) | The Committee endorsed the recommendations of the Topic Group at paragraph 5 of the report [with the word 'Special' being added before 'Sites of Scientific Interest', and point 1 being reworded to focus on minimising light pollution]. | Nick Gough                  |
| (b) | The Committee agreed to the wide publication of the final report and information leaflet.  | Nick Gough                  |
| (a) | Members of the Topic Group and officers were thanked for all their hard work in this area.   |                             |
| (b) | The Committee asked the Director to contact all local MP's asking them to lobby Government to produce a PPG on light pollution.  | John Wood                   |
| (c) | The Committee agreed to a Press Release on this item.  | James Odling-Smee/Jane Vine |

**4 OPERATION COACHMAN**

[Officer Contact: Rob Smith, Integrated Transport Services Manager,  
Tel: 01992 556118]

- 4.1 The Committee considered a report detailing the output from Operation Coachman together with other issues associated with taxi licensing, as requested by the Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee.
- 4.2 Members of the Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee had been invited to attend for this item.

**4.3 Conclusions:**

- (a) The Committee noted the report.
- (b) A number of issues arose from the debate:
  - The rationale for the numbers of inspections in Hertfordshire
  - The sustainability of taxis as school transport
  - The possibility of banning smoking in taxis
  - The clearance procedures used for taxi drivers transporting school children
- (c) Rob Smith agreed to clarify for members the District Council’s clearance procedure as Licensing Authorities.
- (d) The Committee agreed that child protection issues should be referred back to Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee.

Rob Smith	Rob Smith
John Harris	John Harris
John Evans	John Evans
Nick Powley	Nick Powley
Julia Harries	Julia Harries

**5 NOISE LEVELS ON OUR TRUNK ROADS**

[Officer Contact: Martin Stagg, Highways Services Manager, Hertfordshire Highways,  
Tel: 01727 816002]

5.1 The Committee considered a report referred by County Council on 1 April 2003 following a motion by Chris White providing details of the Highways Agency's policy on road noise on trunk roads.

**5.2 Conclusions:**

- |   |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
| <p>(a) The Committee noted the importance of noise reduction measures on our own roads.</p> <p>(b) The Committee asked the Director to write to the Highways Agency setting out concerns regarding lack of action in dealing with motorway noise and asked to be kept informed of progress.</p> <p>(c) The Committee agreed that it should be made clear to the Highways Agency that noise mitigation measures should be included in the consultation proposals for the M25 and M1.</p> | <p>John<br/>Wood<br/>Rob Smith</p> |
|---|------------------------------------|

**6 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT – MANAGING SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS**

[Officer Contact: Anne Fisher, Assistant Director, Strategy,  
Tel: 01992 555203]

6.1 The Committee considered a report outlining the recommendations of the Internal Audit report.

**6.2 Conclusions:**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>(a) The Committee welcomed the findings of the report and noted that there were improvements being made in accordance with these.</p> <p>(b) Two issues arose from the debate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The speed and turnaround time of Section 106 agreements</li> <li>• The tracking of the outcomes of Section 106 agreements</li> </ul> <p>(b) It was suggested that a list of outstanding Section 106 agreements should go to Joint Member Panels.</p> <p>(c) The Committee agreed that this report should go to the Planning Obligations Topic Group set up by the Resources Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>(d) The Committee agreed that a further report should be submitted to their March meeting.</p> | <p>Anne<br/>Fisher</p> <p>Anne<br/>Fisher<br/>Adrian<br/>Service</p> <p>Anne<br/>Fisher</p> |
|--|---|

**7 a 2002/03 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

[Officer Contact: Trevor Mason, Senior Engineer, Transport Policy,  
Tel: 01992 556193]

7.1 The Committee considered a report presenting the Best Value and local performance indicators published in the Best Value Performance Plan and comparing the results with the targets for 2002/03.

**7.2 Conclusions:**

- |  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| (a) Bryan York requested that the issue of footpaths being easy to use and obstructions on footpaths be added to the Committee's Work Programme.   | Julia<br>Harries |
| (b) The Committee questioned the rationale behind a number of the Performance Indicators, in particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pedestrian crossings</li><li>• Road deaths</li><li>• Affordable housing</li></ul> |                  |

**b TRAFFIC LIGHT MONITOR**

[Officer Contact: Geoff Brown, Head of Performance Improvement,  
Tel: 01992 555370]

7.1 The Committee considered a report giving the latest data for the promises monitor 2003/04, as requested by the Scrutiny Co-ordination Panel in May 2003.

**7.2 Conclusion:**

The Committee noted the report.

**8 BUDGET MONITOR TO 31 JULY 2003**

[Officer Contact: Mike Collier, Assistant Director, Resources,  
Tel: 01992 556010]

8.1 The Committee considered a report on the budget monitor to 31 July 2003, as requested by the Scrutiny Co-ordination Panel in May 2003.

8.2 The Committee were made aware by the Executive Member that the average percentage rise in the cost of bus contracts was 27%, with the largest percentage rise running at approximately 170%.

**8.3 Conclusion:**

The Committee noted the report.

**9 SCRUTINY UPDATE AND WORK PROGRAMME 2003/4**

[Officer contact: Julia Harries, Committee Administrator  
Tel: 01992 555563]

9.1 The Committee noted a report setting out the progress on scrutiny items and outlining a work programme for future meetings of the Committee.

9.2 **Conclusion:**

The Committee noted the report.

**REPORT TO COUNCIL**

The Opposition chose agenda item 1, Review of Hertfordshire Highways, to be reported to Council on 25 November 2003.

**Andrew Laycock  
County Secretary**