

MEETING OF HIGHWAYS AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE POLICY AND SERVICE COMMITTEE: MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 7th July 2015

Time: 10:00am-11.40am

Present: Councillors Ashwood, Butcher, Connor, Criswell, Gillick, Hickford (Chairman), McGuire (substituting for Councillor Hunt), Reeve (Vice-Chairman), Rouse, Scutt, Taylor and Williams

In attendance: Councillors Harford and Tew

Apologies: Councillors Hunt (Councillor McGuire substituting) and Mason

120. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

121. MINUTES AND ACTION LOG (2nd JUNE 2015)

The minutes of the meeting held on 2nd June 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, with the following change:

Page 3/last bullet point amended as follows: ~~A Member~~ observed that a number of respondents...

The Action Log was noted. It was noted that the minutes of the Special Meeting held on 26th June 2015 would be considered at the next Highways & Community Infrastructure Committee meeting.

Councillor Scutt raised her concerns regarding the cancellation of the full Council meeting scheduled for 9th July, requested by 26 Councillors, which the Director of Law, Property and Governance had advised that he would be cancelling at the Special Meeting on 26th June. She believed that this cancellation did not accord with the Constitution. The Chairman asked that constitutional issues be raised outside the meeting.

122. PETITION

There were no petitions.

123. CAMBRIDGE AND NORTHSTOWE HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING CENTRE (HRC) PROVISION

The Committee considered a report on the proposed provision for the Household Recycling Centre (HRC) provision for Cambridge and Northstowe. Whilst the County Council waste planning policy identified four new HRCs in Cambridge and Northstowe, it was unlikely, in the current financial climate, that the Council could afford to maintain its existing nine HRC sites, let alone adding a further four. Despite £2M of Section 106 (S106) funding being secured for the four sites across Cambridge and Northstowe, it was suggested that this may be better utilised in the creation of one facility capable of serving the whole area.

Local Member Councillor Harford spoke on this matter. She noted that the S106 contribution from the Northstowe development was critical to the viability of the proposal, but that the capital would be released at the end of Phase 1, which could be some time ahead. She asked if negotiations were going to take place, what alternative use may be proposed for land to be allocated at Northstowe i.e. would it be used for housing. Officers confirmed that both land and a financial contribution formed part of the S106 for Northstowe Phase 1. In terms of potential renegotiations, these would not be entered into until a steer from members was given on whether the 'one site' approach was acceptable for the Cambridge and Northstowe area. A report going to the Economy & Environment Committee next week in relation to S106 contributions for Northstowe Phase 2 included a section on HRCs and made reference to this discussion / decision being made by the Highways and Community Infrastructure Committee, so officers acknowledged that there was a joined up Council approach when seeking contributions. In terms of alternative uses, it was confirmed that the site was within an employment zone, and could only be used for a HRC unless otherwise renegotiated.

In response to a question on S106 of expiry dates, it was confirmed that the normal timescale was ten years. The best solution would be for the S106 funding to be renegotiated, as the site was clearly too close to the Bluntisham site to be ideally located. Councillor Harford expressed concern that if renegotiated, the land currently ringfenced for a HRC may be allocated to commercial use, specifically commercial with residential use above, increasing the value significantly.

A Member observed that the proposal was not in line with the Council's current waste planning policy and development plan, and asked if it would not be more appropriate to find a proposal that was, rather than ignore a policy that was inconvenient? Officers outlined the relevant policy framework, including CS16 of the Core Strategy. They advised that whilst these have been approved in the last few years, due to the financial climate, four HRCs for Cambridge and Northstowe were no longer an option. It was not unusual for planning policy to change through practice: the relevant Planning Committee or Inspector would need to take into account the material factors that had taken place, and the focus had now turned to having the best facility in the right location against a backdrop of limited funding. In terms of accessibility, this would still be within the good practice guidelines of residents being within 20 minutes' drive of a HRC facility. It was further noted that technically, only one or two HRC sites were required within the whole of the county from a statutory perspective.

Members discussed consultations with neighbouring authorities, and it was noted that officers met with representatives from neighbouring authorities on a quarterly

basis. Members noted that many neighbouring authorities had already reduced their number of HRCs.

A number of Members spoke in support of the proposal, observing that even when S106 funding covered the capital costs, the ongoing revenue costs were often unaffordable.

With regard to a Member question on whether the Northstowe land allocation could be effectively 'landbanked', it was agreed that this issue would be taken up with the Member outside the meeting **ACTION: Tom Blackburne-Maze to follow up with Cllr Reeve.** It was confirmed that a consultation would have to take place if the HRC site went to planning application stage.

Councillor Scutt proposed an amendment that the proposed recommendation be preceded with "on the basis that any application will generate a consultation...". As there was no seconder, the amendment fell.

It was resolved by a majority:

To approve the arrangements for the Household Recycling Centre (HRC) provision for Cambridge and Northstowe as set out in Section 3 of the report.

124. OUTCOME OF LOCAL HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVE MEMBER REVIEW

Members considered a report on the outcome of the member review of the Local Highway Improvement Scheme (LHIS). This scheme provided a mechanism for local communities to partner with the County Council to deliver their priorities for minor improvements to their roads and paths. The scheme had been significantly over-subscribed, attracting approximately 450 applications since its inception, and over 200 schemes implemented. A Working Group was established in February 2015 to review the scheme.

The Chairman, speaking as a member of the Working Group, commented that he felt the Group's recommendations made a good scheme better. It was noted that one of the recommendations was to limit applications to one per Parish/Town Council, outside the city. Approximate numbers of applications were noted, and officers agreed to follow up a specific Member query on numbers. **ACTION: Andrew Preston to contact Councillor Taylor.**

A Member asked how schemes that should be undertaken in any event, on safety grounds, were filtered out of the process. It was explained that these were usually identified at an early stage, in applicants' discussions with officers, and examples were given of instances when this had occurred.

Discussing the report, individual Members made the following points:

- a specific issue in Whittlesey, where the Local Member covered four villages which did not have parish councils. Officers confirmed that they were taking a

pragmatic approach and there would be flexibility in the operation of the scheme;

- expressed concern with the approach, suggesting that this was another way of taking money from the taxpayer. Officers pointed out that the scheme required a minimum contribution of only 10% from Parish/Town Councils, and it enabled schemes that local communities wanted to be realised;
- spoke in support of the LHIS, and asked if Parish Councils had been notified of the 2015/16 round. Officers confirmed that pending the outcome of today's meeting, the guidance document would be issued week commencing 13th July;
- thanked officers and Members of the Working Group. It was clarified that anyone could sponsor schemes, e.g. individuals or community groups;
- noted the proposal to improve the website to provide potential applicants with information such as indicative infrastructure costs;
- discussed the proposals for Cambridge, and agreed a change to the report recommendations to "agree to encourage Area Committee prioritised applications in Cambridge City, to a maximum of eight applications per Area". There was also a discussion on whether City Councillors sitting on the Cambridge Joint Area Committee should be permitted to vote on this issue, as County Councillors at Area Committee could not vote when schemes were being prioritised. It was observed that Area Committees were City Council Committees, and the County Council could not dictate to the City Council how those meetings were run. However, the ultimate decision rested with the Cambridge Joint Area Committee, who would be considering a similar report at their meeting on 14th July;
- discussed the likely financial capacity of Parish and Town Councils.

It was resolved to:

- a) agree to the development of a LHIS webpage resource for applicants with a formal application process timeline;
- b) agree to the addition of an 'added value' category and reduction in the maximum category score to 5;
- c) agree to the introduction of a technical assessment to inform the member scoring panel scoring process;
- d) agree to encourage Area Committee prioritised applications in Cambridge City, to a maximum of eight applications per Area.

125. FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT - OUTTURN REPORT 2014/15

The Committee considered the final outturn report for 2014/2015, for Economy, Transport & Environment.

Arising from the report, Members:

- asked if it would be possible to allocate resources to staff running events/fundraising in the Library Service, in light of the Library review, as this would effectively be about invest to save scheme. It was confirmed that there were resources that could be flexibly deployed to this area of work;

- stressed the importance of income generating areas of work going forward, not just a focus on cuts and savings;
- queried the inclusion of consultant fees, stressing the importance of using the experience of staff rather than consultants, where possible. Officers confirmed that consultants were only used when particularly specialist skills were required, which were not available in-house. Any plans to use consultants were shared with Spokes. Members also suggested using skilled staff from other authorities i.e. peer reviews, as a preference to using consultants;
- noted in the Performance report that there were actions identified for April 2015, which had passed. Officers explained that this was the year end position i.e. for the period ending 31st March 2015, which was why it referred to April 2015 in the future tense;
- queried whether £30,000 was sufficient for the level of enforcement and management for planning breaches. Officers confirmed that it was;
- advised that the Section 151 Officer had indicated it would be possible to use £20,000 to investigate/explore whether a local lottery could be established as a revenue earner.

Councillor Reeve put the latter point forward as an additional recommendation, which was seconded by Councillor Connor:

“allocate £20,000 to investigate the possibility of a lottery scheme to secure an additional revenue stream”

The motion was carried unanimously.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) review, note and comment upon the report;
- b) approve the use of the ETE Service carry-forward reserve on projects in 2015-16 and future years as detailed in Section 3.2 of the report;
- c) allocate £20,000 to investigate the possibility of a lottery scheme to secure an additional revenue stream.

126. FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT – MAY 2015

The Committee received a report setting out financial and performance information for Economy, Transport and Environment as at the end of May 2015. Members noted that the areas under the stewardship of the Highways & Community Infrastructure Committee were showing a forecast revenue overspend of £145,000.

There was a query as to why actual spend for Local Infrastructure & Streets was listed as -£2,000 as at the end of May. Officers explained that the current variance was due to delayed payments for work completed.

It was resolved to review and note the report.

127. AGENDA PLAN AND APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Members noted that it was likely that one of the September Committee meetings (1st September and 22nd September provisional date) would be cancelled. The Democratic Services Officer would contact Members once this had been clarified.

Chairman