

Highways and Transport Committee: Minutes

Date: 3 October 2023

Time: 10:00am to 12.42pm

Present: Councillors Alex Beckett (Chair), Neil Shailer (Vice-Chair), Piers Coutts, Claire Daunton, Doug Dew, Lorna Dupré, Jan French, Ian Gardener, Neil Gough, Anne Hay, Bill Hunt, Simon King, Brian Milnes, Catherine Rae and Alan Sharp

Venue: New Shire Hall, Alconbury Weald, Huntingdon, PE28 4YE

162. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

Apologies were received from Councillor Bird (Councillor Catherine Rae substituting) and Councillor McGuire (substituted by Councillor Hunt).

There were no declarations of interest.

163. Minutes – 4 July 2023 and Action Log

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

The action log was noted.

164. Petitions and Public Questions

There were three public questions (attached at Appendix A) and no petitions.

165. Street Lighting Energy Savings

The Committee received a report that provided an update to the Committee on the progress of the Street Lighting LED Implementation programme. The report sought the approval of delegated authority to award the contract and proceed with implementation of the project.

During discussion of the report, Members raised the following points:

- Expressed support for the principle of investing to save and requested a half-yearly update report be provided to Spokes.

- Drew attention to Westry in March and report that streetlights were turned on day and night and requested they were repaired. **ACTION**
- Drew attention to the experience of South Cambridgeshire District Council that had undertaken a LED replacement programme and suggested officers review and learn lessons from the experience.
- Suggested approaching Parish Councils regarding the streetlights they were responsible and support them to make the switch to LEDs.
- Emphasised the importance of ensuring the future proofing of lighting units in order that they could be used for Electric Vehicle charging points.
- Noted the savings that would be achieved through a reduction in maintenance, as existing stock was more difficult to source and the cost of the LED units had reduced significantly.

It was resolved to:

- a) note the update report and the progress made with the Street Lighting LED implementation.
- b) delegate authority to enter into contract via the Street Lighting PFI Contract with Connect Roads Cambridgeshire to the Executive Director of Place and Sustainability in consultation with the s151 officer and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee, to implement the project.

166. Local 20mph Process Delivery Programme

The Committee received a report that sought to inform members of the outcome of the 20mph prioritisation process and agree the prioritised 20mph applications for the 23/24 20mph delivery programme.

During discussion of the report, Members raised the following points:

- Noted that there were two schemes in East Cambridgeshire and not three.
- The over-subscription of the scheme demonstrated the importance in which road safety is held by communities and welcomed the search for additional resources to fund such schemes. Members expressed hope that the necessary funding could be identified to meet the demand.
- It was sensible that 20mph zones were installed in the centre of villages. There was also sense in such schemes in villages that had no footpaths or streetlights. However, concern was expressed for blanket schemes across towns and villages. In response to concern expressed regarding the level of consultation with local members, the Committee noted paragraph 4.6 of the report that detailed the engagement with stakeholders, including the local member.

- Noted that the schemes were community driven. However, members questioned what support there was available for communities that were not successful. Officers explained that the website was being reviewed and applicants that likely did not understand the nuances of the process were being contacted. It was also hoped that the best applications could be shared as exemplars.
- Concern was expressed that there was no mention of 20mph zones outside school premises within the prioritisation list. Officers confirmed that it could be reviewed and made more explicit.
- Questioned whether there were plans to introduce variable 20mph schemes. The Committee noted that they could be applied for through the Local Highway Improvement (LHI) process.
- Attention was drawn to villages that have no pavements and suggested they were potentially such applications were unsuccessful due to their small populations and commented that population size should not be the only determining factor when assessing applications. Officers explained that funding for schemes was limited and there had been significant discussion about prioritisation and further discussion would take place at the Member Working Group.
- Expressed concern that Fenland District Council submitted 5 applications but was unsuccessful in all and requested a list of the bids to better understand how bids could be improved. Action
- Welcomed the schemes for communities and praised the process.
- Expressed doubts about blanket 20mph schemes, but welcomed schemes around schools as they were important from a road safety perspective.

It was resolved to:

- a) approve the delivery of the 20mph programme as identified in the prioritised list attached to this report as Appendix A.
- b) delegate authority to the Executive Director Place & Sustainability, in consultation with Chair and Vice Chair of Highways & Transport committee to add and remove individual projects from the 20mph delivery programme as required.

167. Civil Parking Enforcement Policy

Members were presented a report that sought the Committee's approval of the Civil Parking Enforcement Policy for consultation and to delegate authority to the Executive Director of Place and Sustainability to approve the policy following consultation. If approved, the policy would support consistent parking enforcement across all districts with Civil Parking Enforcement.

During discussion of the report individual Members:

- Confirmed that the policy would apply to areas where Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) powers were currently being applied for.
- Emphasised the importance of ensuring residents understood that CPE was not intended as a revenue generating exercise and was to prevent inconsiderate and illegal parking. It was suggested that a report or briefing note be produced at an appropriate time that illustrated how revenue from CPE and bus lane enforcement was spent.
- Clarified the observation periods for when a car is parked on double yellow lines to allow loading and unloading and questioned whether cars parked on yellow lines could be ticketed immediately. Officers explained that cars were able to be ticketed immediately, however it was not considered good practice to do so.
- Expressed the advantages to linking such proposals 20mph schemes outside schools.
- Questioned how the Police would redeploy resources as they would no longer be having to undertake enforcement action.
- Requested that the timescales for the rollout to all areas be provided to members, Officers advised that they would be added to the regular service update issued to members. **ACTION**
- Commented that a zero tolerance approach to parking contraventions quickly encourage adherence to the rules, citing incidences where PSCOs had been ignored outside of schools.
- Highlighted the poor condition of signage and lines that resulted in action being unenforceable and required urgent attention.
- Commented that a key concern of residents was illegal and inconsiderate parking, particularly in market towns. The report presented a good set of policies and emphasised the importance, for those District Councils that were planning to adopt CPE powers, of a standardised system of enforcement.

It was resolved to:

- a) approve the updated the Civil Parking Enforcement Policy for consultation, as set out in Appendix 1.
- b) delegate authority to the Executive Director of Place and Sustainability in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee to make minor amendments to the Civil Parking Enforcement Policy following the consultation and in future.

168. Soham to Wicken Non-Motorised User Route

The Committee received a report that presented progress with the Soham to Wicken Non-Motorised Route and sought approval to enable the project to progress to detailed design and construction aligned with the Soham to Wicken Non-Motorised Route project timeline constraints.

The Committee received a public question which together with the response is attached at Appendix A to these minutes.

During discussion of the report, Members:

- Welcomed the proposals and drew attention to the link it would provide with Soham Station and Wicken Fen which was of national importance. The Committee noted that recommendation d) would include consultation with the local member.
- Drew attention to the surfacing of bridleways and sought assurance that consultation had taken place with the Local Access Forum and the British Horse Society. Officers explained that part of the bridleway was very narrow and it was intended to be as wide as possible for equine users. The proposed surface was one that was supported by the British Horse Society. Consultation had not yet taken place. However, their guidance had been incorporated within the design and there would be grass sections on the by-way element of the scheme.
- Expressed thanks to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and East Cambridgeshire District Council for the funding provided for the scheme. Commenting further, it was often challenging for such schemes to get off the ground in rural areas. It was also vitally important that the scheme was open to all users.
- Noted that Soham Town Council, in light of the funding it had provided, had an officer sit on the project board and would be consulted.

It was resolved to:

- a) note progress to date;
- b) agree that the Council accept £1,130,000 of funding from the Soham Town Council for detailed design and construction of the Soham to Wicken Non-Motorised User Route;
- c) delegate authority to the Executive Director; Place and Sustainability in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee and the Section 151 Officer to enter a Grant Funding Agreement with Soham Town Council;
- d) approve the ongoing development of the design, including consultation with stakeholders;

- e) delegate authority to the Executive Director; Place and Sustainability. In consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee to awarding and executing a contract and any other associated legal agreements or documents for the provision of the construction of Soham to Wicken Non-Motorised User Route.

169. Developing a Performance Management Framework.

The Committee received a report that provided an update on developing an agreed performance framework for the Committee. The performance framework would enable the tracking of performance against the agreed policy objectives of the Committee.

Members noted a minor amendment to recommendation c) that changed January 2024 to December 2023.

The Committee received 2 question that, together the responses, are attached at Appendix A to these minutes.

During discussion, Members:

- Welcomed the report and commented how helpful it was when looking at the network. It was suggested that an element of regional and national benchmarking would complement the framework. Officers confirmed that benchmarking would be possible as many councils collected similar data and the contractor provided services to many other councils.
- Noted that once a draft set of indicators had been developed, a member workshop would take place at which they would be discussed.
- Expressed concern at the number of killed and seriously injured on the county's roads.
- Noted the vacancies across the service and commented that the decision to cover the posts with interims was sensible. There were benefits to employing interims, as they were easier to terminate in the event of underperformance. Officers commented that interim staff would always form part of the overall mix of the service owing to some of the specialist skills required for certain projects. There was also a clear objective and desire to train and develop staff. It was noted that certain vacancies had been difficult to recruit to even with interims.
- Sought greater clarity regarding the indicators relating to cycling and walking contained on pages 123 and 124 of the agenda. Officers confirmed that an explanatory note would be circulated to the Committee. **ACTION.**
- Noted that measurements of walking were made against 2013 patterns taken at counting points around the county. The COVID-19 pandemic shifted behaviours and reduced the numbers that were measured at the count points, largely due to how journeys changed during that period.

- Suggested that informing Parish Councils of when gulley maintenance was scheduled so they could support in making sure they were clear when maintenance was undertaken.
- Commented that providing data relating cycling and walking by District Council area would be useful in order to see the difference between rural and urban areas.
- Drew attention to the importance of line painting in terms of road safety and suggested that a focus on re-painting would make a substantial difference.
- Highlighted the relationship between clearing gullies, weed control and road sweeping and suggested that aligning schedules would improve the condition of gullies greatly.
- Noted that communications had been issued to District Councils to understand their experience of non-regular weed spraying and a report to the Committee would follow that would require a decision on whether to continue or not.

It was resolved to:

- a) Note the progress that is being made in developing a performance framework for the Highways and Transport Committee.
- b) Note and comment on the performance information updates those indicators where that is available.
- c) Note that a full performance framework will be reported to the Committee from ~~January 2024~~ **December 2023** onwards.

170. Finance Monitoring Report – August 2023

The Committee received the August 2023 iteration of the Finance Monitoring Report.

During discussion Members:

- Noted that the overspend within the directorate was driven by areas that were the remit of the Environment and Green Investment Committee. All services were in the process of assessing cost control measures. Additional spending controls were implemented from July 2023 together with staff recruitment where vacancies were being reviewed by the Executive Director.
- Queried the transfer of funding relating to domestic violence. The presenting officer explained that it was funded through a ring-fenced grant and would continue to be reported to the Communities, Social Mobility and Inclusion Committee.

It was resolved to:

Review and comment on the report.

171. Highways and Transport Committee Agenda Plan and Appointments to Outside Bodies and Internal Advisory Groups and Panels

The Committee received a report that presented the Committee agenda Plan together with the appointments to outside bodies and internal advisory groups and panels. Members noted the following changes to the respective group places:

The Committee noted its Agenda Plan and appointments to Outside Bodies and Internal Advisory Groups.

Members were reminded that suggestions for the agenda plan should be escalated through their relevant Spokes.

Chair