

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

Date: Tuesday 17th January 2017

Time: 10:00am-11.25am

Present: Councillors Butcher, Chapman, Criswell, Chapman, Connor, Gillick, Hunt, McGuire (Chairman), Reeve (Vice-Chairman), Rouse, Scutt and Williams

Apologies: Councillor Ashwood

229. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

230. MINUTES AND ACTION LOG

The minutes of the meeting held on 7th December 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

215/Ely Archives Building - A Member asked officers for an update on the new Archives Centre in Ely. Officers explained that the Assets & Investment (A&I) Committee had agreed in principle to the new Archives Centre in Ely, but had asked for a search on alternative sites to take place first. That search had been concluded and no suitable alternative had been proposed, and those findings would be presented to the A&I Committee on 27th January. It was confirmed that the process had paused for a couple of months whilst the search for alternative premises had taken place. Officers agreed to come back to Members with the revised programme plan following the A&I Committee on 27th January. **Action required.**

Councillor Gillick commented that the Archives Centre would provide very few benefits to the people of Fenland, and most residents opposed the scheme and the money being spent on it. Another Member pointed out that an Archives Centre in Ely would be easier for Fenland residents to travel to than Cambridge.

224/Business Planning/Member Working Group – following the decision at full Council in December to reinstate the previous year's gritting routes, there was less urgency for the Member Working Group to meet, but the Group would still be reconvened. The Chairman of that Working Group, Councillor Criswell, commented that it was a good opportunity to look at winter maintenance more generally.

The Action Log was noted.

231. PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

233. ANGLIA LEVEL CROSSING REDUCTION STRATEGY – CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL FORMAL RESPONSE

The Committee received a report providing the proposed formal response to Network Rail's updated proposals for seven level crossings in the county. Members were reminded that a report had been presented to the Committee at its last meeting in December, but on the day of the meeting, Network Rail had issued changes to seven of the proposals as a 'public information update', and withdrawn one scheme entirely (C19 Wicken Road (FP106 Soham)). The seven Network Rail proposals, and the proposed County Council responses, were as follows:

- 1) C09 Second Drove Ely (FP49 Ely) and C24 Cross Keys (FP50 Ely): significantly improved – suggested that the County Council withdraw its holding objection;
- 2) C26 Poplar Drove (UCR) and C27 Willow Row Drove (BOAT 30) Littleport – as above;
- 3) C06 Barrington Road, Foxton – whilst the proposal had improved, officers still had concerns, and it was suggested that the County Council and City Deal work with Network Rail to reach a suitable permanent long term solution;
- 4) C08 Ely North (FP11 Ely) – despite significant improvements, it was recommended that the County Council continued to object;
- 5) C20 Leonards (FP101 Soham) – whilst the officer recommendation was to withdraw the objection, following the amended proposal, the Local Member Councillor Palmer, the Town Council, East Cambridgeshire Ramblers' Association and the local Open Spaces Society still objected to the proposal for this Level Crossing.

The formal response to Network Rail would include responses on the 32 other Level Crossings that had been agreed at the December Committee meeting. In response to a Member question, officers explained in detail why they felt Network Rail's revised proposal for C20 was significantly better than the previous proposal.

Officers stressed that whilst this was a decision for the Committee to make, Members had to consider what was a reasonable position for the authority to take, and how it might be viewed at a Public Inquiry, as it potentially opened up the Council to a significant degree of risk.

A number of Members spoke strongly in favour of objecting to C20, given not only the Local Member's view, but the views of the Town Council, District Councillors and other local stakeholders. They felt that elected Members' opinion should be given more weight.

Councillor Hunt proposed the following amendment, seconded by Councillor Criswell:

Replace existing report recommendation (d) with:

(d) object to the proposal for C20.

In discussion, a number of Members indicated strong support for Councillor Hunt's amendment, and felt that the Local Member views should take precedence. One Member suggested that the whole approach by Network Rail and the priority given to rail over local highways and residents was flawed. It was also pointed out that for any Level Crossings that were closed, the process would be irreversible.

Whilst agreeing that the local views should be given priority in principle, another Member stressed that any objection needed to be robustly justified, so that the Council was not put at risk.

Following an adjournment for officer discussion, the Chairman proposed to replace the current recommendations with the following, seconded by Councillor Scutt:

Defer the issue to a future meeting, to enable a full discussion with Local Members, Soham Town Council and other stakeholders on proposal C20 Leonards (FP101 Soham), to establish the reasons for supporting or objecting to the proposal, and to explore alternative proposals.

Officers explained that deferring the report in its entirety until the next scheduled Committee meeting on 21st February would enable them to work with the Chairman, Local Members and other interested parties to agree a way forward. The crucial point was that if the decision was taken to oppose the C20 proposal, there needed to be substantiated, legitimate reasons to do so. The timescale would still enable a full response to be submitted to Network Rail prior to their deadline.

In discussion, a Member suggested that the rest of the recommendations, as set out in the report, should be agreed, and only the C20 proposal deferred. Following officer advice, most Members agreed that it was best to defer all of the report recommendations until the next meeting.

Following a show of hands, the majority of Members voted in favour of the Chairman's amendment.

It was resolved, by a majority, to:

Defer the issue to a future meeting, to enable a full discussion with Local Members, Soham Town Council and other stakeholders on proposal C20 Leonards (FP101 Soham), to establish the reasons for supporting or objecting to the proposal, and to explore alternative proposals.

234. FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Committee received a report setting out financial and performance information for Economy, Transport and Environment (ETE) as at the end of November 2016.

It was noted that at this stage of the financial year, there were no significant variances, with ETE currently showing a £68,000 forecast underspend. Progress against the capital programme and performance against the ten Committee performance indicator was noted.

Arising from the report:

- a Member queried the profiling of Highways Maintenance expenditure, specifically the reduced budget for future years. It was noted that following an underspend in 2015/16, good progress had been made by the Contractor and more schemes completed than anticipated, hence the apparent reduction in subsequent years – the £90M total budget had not changed;
- Members discussed the increase in Killed and Seriously Injured (KSI) road accidents in 2016. Officers advised that the long term trend was downwards, albeit subject to some random variation, but the increase in 2016 was being monitored to establish whether this was a blip or a more sustained trend. It was confirmed that KSI statistics related to all road accidents in the county, and included those on roads managed by Highways England. Councillor Criswell, as Committee representative and Chairman of the County's Road Safety Partnership, advised that this information was monitored closely. He suggested that a report to the Committee could be provided, to reassure Members and inform Members of what was happening. It was confirmed that this information could be provided on a District and more local basis. Members discussed the factors which could impact on road accidents.

A Member observed, in relation to the street lighting replacement programme, that lighting columns were not always being removed when new columns were erected;

A Member was disappointed to note that the replacement of accrued streetlights with LEDs was not taking place within the current financial year. Officers reassured Members that this would take place early in the next (2017/18) financial year, and an update could be provided.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- 1) review, note and comment on the report.

232. CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH TRADING STANDARDS SHARED SERVICE

The Committee considered a report on the case for merging Cambridgeshire County Council's Trading Standards Service and Peterborough City Council's Trading Standards Service.

Members were advised that in order to deliver significant savings, Trading Standards had undergone a complete service transformation, and was now operating with just 15 staff to cover the whole of Cambridgeshire. Any future reduction in budget would result in the further loss of front line staff and would leave Trading Standards unable to meet its statutory duties. The primary driver for the proposed merger between the two Trading Standards services would be increased resilience. The two services were already working closely together and sharing expertise across a number of areas. However, to protect the Service and provide greater resilience, a single

management structure was required, which would also reduce duplication and inefficiencies.

The proposal was to TUPE transfer Cambridgeshire County Council Trading Standards Officers to Peterborough City Council, and the reasons for this approach were outlined. County Council Trading Standards staff would remain at their current locations in Cambridgeshire. The benefits of the merger, and the planned apportionment of budgets between the two authorities were outlined.

A Member asked what the purpose of the staff consultation was. Officers explained that staff were already aware that this merger was proposed, essentially the consultation was on the TUPE situation.

In response to a query on sports grounds, it was confirmed that this related to larger sports grounds over a certain capacity, and included sites such as Newmarket Race Course, Cambridge United FC, Histon FC and Cambridge Rugby Club.

A Member queried the reference to the “Better Business For All” agenda. Officers explained that this was a national initiative, supporting businesses to access the information they need to grow. Better Business For All was separate to the Local Enterprise Partnership but had similar objectives. Officers explained that the Service had been proactively working with businesses for a number of years, asking them to come to Trading Standards for advice on compliance rather than other agencies. This area of work was a chargeable service.

A Member expressed great support for the Service, particularly their proactive approach and professionalism, and welcomed the proposed merger as the right approach going forward. He asked about any liabilities arising from the merger within Peterborough, particularly in respect of a major case Peterborough were dealing with. Officers advised that to their knowledge, no formal action had been launched against Peterborough.

It was noted that Trading Standards does not deal with Gangmaster or slave labour issues, but Trading Standards Officers were trained in recognising potential issues and would always pass intelligence on to the Police and relevant agencies.

It was unanimously resolved to:

- a) approve the proposal to merge Cambridgeshire County Council’s Trading Standards service with Peterborough City Council’s Trading Standards Service with effect from 1st April 2017;
- b) delegate the responsibility for agreeing the details of an Inter Authority Agreement with Peterborough City Council, and implementing it, to the County Council’s Executive Director of Economy, Transport and Environment in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Committee.

235. COMMITTEE AGENDA PLAN AND APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Members reviewed the Agenda Plan, noting that there would be a further report on Level Crossings at the 21st February Committee meeting.

It was noted that the Ely Archives issue would be picked up through the Action Log.

It was resolved to:

- 1) note the Agenda Plan

Chairman