

ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE: MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 8th July 2014

Time: 10.00 a.m. to 1.10 p.m.

Present: Councillors P Ashcroft (substituting for D Divine), I Bates (Chairman), R Butcher, B Chapman, J Clark, E Cearns (Vice-Chairman), D Harty, R Henson, D Jenkins, N Kavanagh, A Lay, M Mason (substituting for J Hipkin), J Reynolds, J Schumann, M Shuter, A Walsh and J Williams

Apologies: Councillors D Divine and J Hipkin

Also present: Councillors Taylor and van de Ven

12. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Councillors declared non-statutory disclosable interests in accordance with paragraph 10.1 of the Members' Code of Conduct:

- Councillor Jenkins in Minutes 15 and 19 as a Governor of Impington Village College and in item 18 as a Parish Councillor
- Councillor Mason in Minute 19 as he held a pre-determined position on the location of solar parks on agricultural land. He took no part in the discussion
- Councillor J Reynolds in Minute 15 as the Chairman of the County Council's Planning Committee
- Councillor Schumann in Minute 19 as the Chairman of East Cambridgeshire District Council's Planning Committee
- Councillor Shuter in Minutes 15 and 19 as a Governor of Bottisham Village College
- Councillor Williams in Minutes 15 and 18 as a member of South Cambridgeshire District Council.

13. MINUTES AND ACTION LOG

The minutes of the meeting held on 27th May 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. In relation to page 10 of the minutes, the Executive Director: Economy, Transport and Environment agreed to ask officers leading on the economic agreement with Nanjing to contact Councillor Lay.

The action log was noted. In relation to item 11, Councillor Schumann noted that he would liaise with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman and then report back to the Committee on his work on adult learning and skills. Councillor Cearns reported that he had a further meeting booked to progress his work on reducing reoffending.

14. PETITIONS

The Committee received one petition.

Improving Nuffield Road and Green End Road, Cambridge

Mr Klaas Brumann presented a petition with 560 signatures on paper and 721 electronic signatures, which read:

We, the current and the possible future users of Nuffield Road, request that:

- A new access to the industrial and trading estate on Nuffield Road is built from Milton Road along the first section of the future Science Park Station Busway and then through Nuffield Close, and that
- When the new access road is built, the residential section of Nuffield Road (to Green End Road) be cut off to motorised through traffic just past Discovery Way (in the bend by the allotments) to reduce the number of motor vehicles, particularly heavy commercial types, driving past Shirley School and the medical practice.

The Chairman thanked Mr Brumann for the petition and noted that a full written response would be sent within ten working days of the meeting.

15. SECONDARY SCHOOL PROVISION IN EAST CAMBRIDGE: CAMBRIDGE CITY AND SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL LOCAL PLANS

The Committee received a report explaining that the County Council had previously registered objections to the Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District Council Local Plans relating to secondary school provision in east Cambridge. It was considered that a new school was needed by 2021 to meet forecast demand and planned growth in this part of the city and three possible sites had been identified.

The Head of Growth and Economy updated members on negotiations with the City and District Councils. Both acknowledged the need for a new school but still considered that it could be delivered through a departure planning application, rather than through inclusion in Local Plan policy. The County Council was therefore seeking to agree a Statement of Common Ground with the two Councils, ideally before the Examination in Public of the Local Plans commenced in November 2014. If this was achieved and aligned with the requirements set out in the report, the County Council's education policy objections could be conditionally withdrawn.

As an update to the report, the Head of Growth and Economy reported that negotiations with South Cambridgeshire District Council had not progressed as far as had been hoped, meaning that it would be premature at this stage to approve the conditional withdrawal of the education objection to their Local Plan. A revised recommendation was therefore proposed.

Members asked whether the capacity of existing nearby schools, including those in South and East Cambridgeshire, of schools in the private sector and of the new secondary schools planned for Clay Farm and the north-west fringe had been taken into account. The Education Officer – Planning, Policy and Review noted that all had been considered but neighbouring schools were expected to be at capacity; private sector

schools had no stated intentions to expand within the relevant timescale; and the new secondary schools would be sized to meet the needs of their developing communities. The Committee noted that Marshalls had been asked about the possible release of land through Section 106 negotiations to provide a site for the new school but that discussions had not progressed to date.

Members asked for an update on progress with negotiations to be circulated to members of this and the Children and Young People Committees in September/October 2014.

It was resolved:

- a) To delegate to the Executive Director: Economy, Transport and Environment in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman the authority conditionally to withdraw the education objections to the Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District Councils' Local Plans if a suitable statement of common ground can be agreed
- b) To support the study to identify the most suitable site for a school to serve east Cambridge and to progress the new school site through a departure planning application.

16. HILLS ROAD AND HUNTINGDON ROAD CYCLEWAYS

The meeting of the Committee held on 27th May 2014 had considered proposals to implement segregated cycleways on Hills Road, Cambridge and Huntingdon Road, Girton. At the meeting, members had expressed a number of reservations and had therefore resolved to defer a decision on the proposals to this meeting, asking officers to consider in the meantime whether their concerns could be addressed.

The Team Leader – Cycling Projects now presented updated proposals, highlighting key changes, particularly to the design of the island bus stops.

Two members of the public spoke on this item:

- Dr Oliver Mytton of the Medical Research Council's Epidemiology Unit spoke in support of the proposals, which would encourage cycling and walking. He explained that regular physical activity was important in preventing a range of medical conditions. In response to a question, he accepted that increased cycling could lead to more cycling injuries, but noted that for most age groups, the benefits significantly outweighed the risks. Dedicated infrastructure such as that proposed would help to reduce the risk of accidents.
- Mr Martin Lucas-Smith of the Cambridge Cycling Campaign reiterated his support for the scheme, noting that it represented a step change in the Council's approach to cycling, which was particularly timely given Cambridge's hosting of the Tour de France the previous day. He also commended the updated bus stop designs and noted that these had been welcomed by disability groups.

One local member spoke on this item:

- Councillor Taylor reported that local residents wished to promote safer cycling but continued to have some concerns about the implications of the proposals for Hills Road. These included concerns about rat-running and the consequences for local schools and nurseries; and parking arrangements for vehicles visiting properties on Hills Road that did not have drives. She suggested that a loading ban might be necessary to keep the cycleway clear. She asked for traffic surveys to be carried out before the scheme was implemented and six months afterwards, to assess its impact.

Most Committee members welcomed the revised proposals, particularly the increased width of the island bus stops, although some continued to express concern about vulnerable pedestrians using the island bus stops and about their impact on buses and other vehicles entering the City. Assurance was sought that the public would be kept informed as the scheme was implemented. Members also welcomed Councillor Taylor's suggestion of before and after traffic surveys.

It was resolved to approve subject to Traffic Regulation Orders:

- a) The implementation of a kerb segregated cycleway on Huntingdon Road where space permits, and a raised segregated cycleway elsewhere
- b) The implementation of a raised segregated cycleway on Hills Road
- c) The introduction of island bus stops on both routes
- d) The introduction of a cycling zebra crossing on Huntingdon Road in the vicinity of Oxford Road, subject to Department for Transport (DfT) approval
- e) The advertisement of the necessary Traffic Regulation Orders
- f) A study before and after implementation of the schemes of the traffic impact on streets immediately adjacent to the routes, to be completed and reported to the Committee, with a review of overall scheme outcomes, within one year of scheme implementation.

17. LIGHTING THE GUIDED BUSWAY MAINTENANCE TRACK

The Committee considered a report proposing the allocation of additional funding from available developer contributions for the installation and operating costs of lighting along the urban sections of the Guided Busway maintenance track. The sums involved were an additional £300,000 from the Southern Corridor Area Transport Plan (SCATP) for lighting on the southern section and £40,000 from the SCATP and £10,000 from the Northern Corridor Area Transport Plan (NCATP) for maintenance and operation of the lighting.

One local member spoke on this item:

- Councillor Taylor spoke in full support of the scheme, noting that the maintenance track provided an excellent opportunity to encourage modal shift to cycling and walking. Lighting the track would help to reduce accidents and would also help to reduce potential users' concerns about personal safety.

Several Committee members expressed reservations about this proposal:

- It did not make sense to install new lighting when the Highways and Community Infrastructure Committee the following week was due to consider the savings that might be made by turning off street lighting.
- Costs had escalated since the scheme was originally approved by Cabinet. Proposals for meeting ongoing maintenance and energy costs were not clear.
- Other parts of the County might also benefit from better lighting of cycle routes, but currently managed without. There was no clear case to light this particular route.
- Alternative lighting technology might be more effective or cheaper.

Responding to these speakers, the Executive Director: Economy, Environment and Transport explained that Cabinet had previously approved the scheme with indicative costs of £100,000 for the northern section and £100,000 for the southern section. Feasibility and design work had shown that the actual costs would be higher than this, but funding was available in the SCATP and the NCATP. This funding could be used only in the local areas covered by the Plans and the scheme was supported by local members. The funding allocations now proposed would cover maintenance and energy costs for 10 years.

Members speaking in support of the scheme noted that the track was already well used, but that lighting it would increase participation in cycling. It would also reduce the risk of accidents and promote the perceived and actual personal safety of users of the route during hours of darkness, including students from Cambridge Regional College.

The following amendment to the recommendation as set out in the report was proposed by Councillor J Reynolds and seconded by Councillor Shuter:

To defer this item to the Committee's next meeting on 16th September 2014.

On being put to the vote, the amendment was carried and so the item was deferred.

18. RESPONSE TO SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY – CHARGING SCHEDULE CONSULTATION

The Committee considered the County Council's draft response to South Cambridgeshire District Council's consultation on its draft charging schedule for the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

One local member spoke on this item:

- Councillor van de Ven expressed concern at the implications of the introduction of CIL to funding for Parish Councils. She also expressed concern at the proposed exemption from CIL of social housing constructed outside village frameworks and of self-build housing, which could still be sold for profit.

Committee members made the following comments on the report:

- Noted that charging authorities were required to set out an agreed list of infrastructure to be funded through CIL, known as a Regulation 123 list. A link to South Cambridgeshire District Council's Regulation 123 list had been included in the report.
- Commented that it was difficult to gauge the suitability of the proposed charges without any indication of likely income.
- Suggested that South Cambridgeshire District Council could be bolder in its charging. Particular concern was expressed at the proposed nil rate for commercial and business developments. However, officers noted that the District Council had carried out viability testing of its proposed charges. The draft charging schedule would be tested at the Examination in Public in the autumn.
- Suggested that consistency across the County should be encouraged. The Head of Transport and Infrastructure Policy and Funding explained that East Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire District Councils had already introduced CIL charges, based on their assessments of viability; she reminded members that land values varied significantly within Cambridgeshire.

It was resolved:

- a) To agree the current proposed draft response
- b) To delegate to the Executive Director: Economy, Transport and Environment, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Economy and Environment Committee, the authority to make minor amendments as necessary to the response prior to submission.

19. MOBILISING LOCAL ENERGY INVESTMENTS (MLEI) PROJECT – KEY RISKS

Cabinet at its meetings on 29th October 2013 and 28th January 2014 had agreed to set up a local authority fund and to borrow £15 million from the Public Works Loan Board, initially to invest in two key MLEI projects, a solar park at Soham and energy performance contracting for public buildings and schools. The work of the Council and its partners on the MLEI initiative was supported by a £700,000 grant from the European Union.

The Executive Director: Economy, Transport and Environment and the Project Director now advised the Committee of increased risks for both projects. For the solar park, the risks related to the date of connection to UK Power Networks and to proposed changes

by Government to the financial support available for solar photo-voltaics. For the second project, the main issue related to securing financial investment for energy improvements to academy schools. These challenges meant that there was an increased risk that the projects might ultimately not be delivered.

Members noted that by the end of February 2014, the Council had spent £230,000 on MLEI. If it withdrew from the projects now, it might have to repay this funding to the European Union. By December 2014, the Council was likely to have incurred additional costs of £60-100,000, which might also have to be repaid.

Members:

- Asked to receive an update after the meeting on 14th July 2014 with UK Power Networks.
- Asked if possible to receive details of Impington Village College's agreement with Skanska on energy improvements, and for this to be shared with other academies.
- Commented if the projects did not proceed through no fault of the Council's own, a robust case should be made to the European Union for the Council not to have to repay the funding.

It was resolved

To continue with the MLEI project and review the risk position by December 2014, when there should be greater clarity on:

- a) The timescales to connect to UK Power Network's local network
- b) The result of the first auction for financial incentives for solar parks
- c) The funding opportunities for energy performance contracting for academy schools
- d) The scope for the set-up of a Cambridgeshire Energy Company.

20. FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT – OUTTURN 2013/14

The Committee received the final outturn report for Economy, Transport and Environment for 2013/14.

Members commented that it was difficult to establish from the report how much of the £30 million underspend on the capital programme was due to slippage and how much to real underspending.

In relation to this and the following item, it was agreed that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman would meet with the Executive Director: Economy, Transport and Environment and a Finance officer to review the presentation of financial and performance information to members under the new Committee system.

It was resolved:

To note the report.

21. FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT – MAY 2014

The Committee received a report setting out financial and performance information for Economy, Transport and Environment as at the end of May 2014. Members were advised that Economy, Transport and Environment was showing no outturn forecast variances on either revenue or capital at this point in the year.

The Lead Business Development Officer agreed to e-mail members more information about the recent increase in the number of cyclists killed or seriously injured.

It was resolved:

To note the report.

22. SERVICE COMMITTEE REVIEW OF THE BUSINESS PLAN: ECONOMY, TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

The Executive Director: Economy, Transport and Environment presented a report explaining the business planning process for 2015/16. The report included an overview of Council-wide issues and then focussed on issues specific to Economy, Transport and Environment, including information about capital funding; savings targets from 2015/16 to 2018/19; 2014/15 and 2015/16 revenue savings and income proposals within the remit of the Economy and Environment Committee; and outline revenue savings and income proposals for 2016/17 to 2018/19. The report also set out the timetable for Committee members' involvement in the development of the Business Plan proposals, including a workshop in August 2014.

Members noted that across Economy, Transport and Environment, £0.5-£1.5 million of the 2015/16 savings proposed were now unlikely to be achievable, constituting a further pressure that would need to be addressed through the business planning process.

Members made the following comments on the 2015/16 revenue savings and income proposals:

- Asked for the table to be amended to show the full budget for each heading, as well as the proposed saving, to enable members to see the percentage reduction.
- Asked if charges were introduced for car parking at Guided Busway sites for full passenger services to be offered.
- Noted that the proposal to charge concessionaires on Park and Ride services was unlikely to be achievable, since concessionaires could be charged only if something additional to the bus service was being provided; with the introduction of car parking charges at Park and Ride sites, this was no longer the case.

- Noted that it was not possible to identify specific savings to employee costs at this stage but that a number of the savings would involve overall staffing reductions, which would be covered in due course by a Section 188 notice.

It was resolved:

- a) To note the Council-wide financial overview set out in section 2 of the report
- b) To note the overview and financial context for Economy, Transport and Environment
- c) To comment on the review of 2015/16 savings proposals and the approach to future savings for Economy, Transport and Environment
- d) To request officers to work with members of the Economy and Environment Committee to develop more detailed proposals for presenting to future meetings of the Committee.

23. APPOINTMENTS TO INTERNAL ADVISORY GROUPS AND PANELS, AND PARTNERSHIP LIAISON AND ADVISORY GROUPS

The Committee considered an additional external appointment, which had been identified since the full report to the previous meeting on 27th May 2014.

It was resolved:

To appoint Councillor P Brown to the Huntingdon Bid Board.

24. ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE AGENDA PLAN

Members received the Economy and Environment Committee agenda plan. The following points were discussed:

- The formal Committee meeting on 12th August 2014 had been cancelled and had been replaced with an informal Business Planning workshop
- A report to the meeting on 11th November 2014 should be retitled, 'Huntingdonshire and Godmanchester Market Town Transport Strategy'. The Executive Director: Economy, Transport and Environment agreed to advise members of the timescale for bringing the St Neots Market Town Transport Strategy to Committee.

It was resolved:

To note the agenda plan, subject to the amendments set out above.

Chairman
16th September 2014