

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

Date: Monday 4th December 2017

Time: 10:00am – 11:10am

Present: Councillors D Connor (substituting for Cllr Gardener), M Howell, B Hunt (Vice-Chairman), S King, P Raynes, T Sanderson, M Shuter (Chairman), A Taylor and J Williams (substituting for Cllr Batchelor)

In attendance: Councillor M Smith

Apologies: Cllr Gardener (Cllr Connor substituting), Cllr Scutt, Cllr Batchelor (Cllr Williams substituting)

37. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

38. MINUTES AND ACTION LOG

The minutes of the meeting held on 14th November 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The Action Log was noted.

39. PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

40. INTEGRATED TRANSPORT BLOCK FUNDING ALLOCATION PROPOSALS

The Committee received a report on the proposed allocation of the Integrated Transport Block (ITB) for 2018/19.

Members noted that before the establishment of the Combined Authority, funding for the Local Transport Plan (LTP) from the Department for Transport (DfT) went directly to the County Council as local highway authority. With effect from 2017/18 the Combined Authority received LTP funding directly from the DfT. The Combined Authority Board had agreed to passport the funding to Cambridgeshire County and Peterborough City Councils. It was likely that the Combined Authority would determine, as part of its Budget setting strategy, to also passport next year's funding.

The breakdown of the Fund received by spending purpose was noted. It was also noted that the Delivering Transport Strategy Aims component would be considered at the Economy & Environment Committee, and the Local Highway Improvement

initiative would be considered at a later meeting of the Highways & Community Infrastructure Committee. Some of the allocations related to larger schemes that had been planned over several years, i.e. approval had already been granted in previous years.

One of the proposed schemes – the allocation for ITB funding to the Papworth scheme (A1198 to the A428) - was conditional on match funding from Highways England's Designated Fund. If the Highways England funding was not forthcoming, it was recommended that that scheme should not go ahead at this stage.

A Member commented that the total proposed budget for delivery (£430K) for the Cycle Route 3 (A1123 St Ives) was very high. Officers were asked what evidence there was that the scheme was required and whether it had the support of the Local Members and local community. Officers advised that they worked closely with District, Town and Parish Councils on such schemes, and this scheme had been approved previously by the Committee as part of the 2016/17 funding allocation, with the first year's funding being allocated for a feasibility study and scheme design. The scheme would then be delivered over 2017/18 and 2018/19. The scheme had originally been proposed in the St Ives Market Town Transport Strategy (MTTS). Officers agreed to provide further detail on this scheme. **Action required.** With regard to evidence of demand, officers commented that it was difficult to ascertain as some cyclists would not use a route they considered to be unsafe currently. On the subject of the high cost of schemes such as cycle paths, and whether this was attributable to 'gold plated' specifications by organisations such as Sustrans, officers reassured Members that whilst schemes needed to meet certain construction standards, they were not pitched at excessive levels.

A Member queried the scheme scoring methodology used for the delivering transport strategy criteria. Whilst he was delighted to see the Wimblington cycleway included in the list of schemes, he was disappointed to see no further funding had been allocated for Fenland. He asked if it was possible to review the criteria so that the more disadvantaged areas such as Fenland and East Cambridgeshire benefitted more from such funding. Officers explained that the criteria for prioritisation was based on criteria set out by the relevant government department. Noting that some of the scoring was subjective, the Member suggested that rural isolation and deprivation could be given greater weighting in that scoring criteria. The Chairman suggested having total highways expenditure figures presented in future, broken down by District, so that there was some comparative information on overall spend in each District. **Action required.**

Noting that £200K was topsliced from the Local Highway Initiative budget, a Member observed that this would mean that fewer schemes would be delivered on the ground. Officers acknowledged this point but added that previously other highways budgets had been effectively subsidising LHI, so the topslicing better reflected reality.

It was noted that the County-wide Minor walking and cycling improvements budget (£35K) was accessed by officers on an ad hoc basis to supplement or enhance schemes that were already being delivered. It was suggested by the Chairman that the breakdown of monies allocated from that budget would be provided at year end, so they could be confident that the funding was being allotted fairly and effectively. **Action required.**

It was resolved by a majority to:

- a) Support the allocation to the Integrated Transport Block (ITB) budget categories;
- b) Support the prioritised projects in Appendix 1 of the report for allocation of ITB funding in 2018/19, and earmarked for 2019/20 and 2020/21, and
- c) Support the prioritised projects in Appendix 1 for inclusion in the Transport Delivery Plan, subject to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority's final budget allocation;
- d) Confirm funding for the Papworth scheme (A1198 Ermine Street South to A428 new cycleway) is conditional on match funding from Highways England's Designated Fund.

41. REVIEW OF DRAFT REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUSINESS PLANNING PROPOSALS FOR 2018-19 TO 2022-23

The Committee received an overview of the draft Business Plan revenue and capital proposals for Economy Transport and Environment that are within the remit of the Highways and Community Infrastructure Committee. Minor corrections to Appendix 5 (ETE: Non-Statutory Schedule of Fees and Charges, p54-55) were tabled and noted. The Executive Director apologised for a reference to a political party in the Business Case for the removal of the Park & Ride charges.

There was a discussion on recovering costs from developers for non-statutory highways work. It was noted that the reference being discussed related specifically to Local Highways Initiative work, so did not relate to developers, but Members were reassured that full costs were recovered from developers for highways work where appropriate.

A Member was encouraged to note that the overall funding gap had been reduced by about half, but was disappointed to note that the savings identified were reducing in future years. The Member also asked what scope there was to devolve the setting of fees and charges which were currently set statutorily. Officers clarified that savings past the current budgetary horizons (i.e. the next two years), and savings beyond those timeframes had not yet been identified in any detail, but would be worked up in due course. It was also stressed that all savings were cumulative.

Members discussed the streetlighting contract, and noting the increase in charges to developers, a Member suggested that developers should be paying for streetlighting. It was confirmed that the County Council only adopted roads when street lights had been brought up to an appropriate standard: once adopted street lights become assimilated and part of the Balfour Beatty contract. Whilst all new lights would have LED bulbs, existing lights would not be replaced, as they were already very efficient. Officers confirmed that the streetlighting contractor, Balfour Beatty, was now performing well, and that significant sums of money had been deducted where they had failed to perform in the past. Regrettably the County Council had only limited powers to adopt new roads e.g. when developers entered in to Section 38 Agreements. Where developers do not sign up to agreements and refuse to

cooperate, or a developer goes bankrupt, there was little that the local authority can do. It was agreed that a future seminar would be helpful in exploring this issue further. **Action required.**

In response to a Member question, it was confirmed that the increase to charges for library Meeting rooms were proportionate across the county, but differential rates were charged depending on size of room, location, etc.

A Member asked officers if there was anything within the Business Plan proposals which gave them cause for concern. The Executive Director commented that officers had worked through a range of options on savings that they believed were appropriate, and which they were comfortable with, but ultimately the decision was a political one for Members.

A Member noted that Citizens Advice Bureau Cambridge and Rural had a significant operating reserve of £786K, and he asked if there was any explanation for this. Officers responded that they had no explanation as CAB was a separate organisation, and this information had been provided to give Members some background on the budget proposals.

Councillor Taylor advised that the Liberal Democrat group would not be supporting the Business Plan proposals as those proposals were predicated on a particular increase in Council Tax.

It was resolved, by a majority, to:

- a) note the overview and context provided for the 2018/19 to 2022/23 Business Plan revenue proposals for the Service, updated since the last report to the Committee in October;
- b) comment on the draft revenue savings proposals that are within the remit of the Highways and Community Infrastructure Committee for 2018/19 to 2022/23, and endorse them to the General Purposes Committee as part of consideration for the Council's overall Business Plan;
- c) comment on the changes to the capital programme that are within the remit of the Highways and Community Infrastructure Committee and endorse them to the General Purposes Committee as part of consideration for the Council's overall Business Plan;
- d) consider the proposed fees and charges for those Economy, Transport and Environment services that are within the remit of the Highways and Community Infrastructure Committee for 2018/19.

42. FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT – OCTOBER 2017

The Committee received a report presenting financial and performance information for Economy, Transport and Environment (ETE) for October 2017. Members noted that the pressure in Waste had increased from £1M to £1.6M. There were no significant changes on the capital side. The Performance Indicator section of the report reflected the new 2017/18 suite of key indicators.

In response to a Member question, it was confirmed that the increase in Waste was not attributable to a particular authority, but rather reflected population increases and economic trends i.e. increasing prosperity leading to more waste.

It was noted that the transfer of Cultural Services in to ETE included half of the “Strengthening Communities” service, which had previously sat within Corporate Services. This change had been agreed in August. Those individuals were a body of professional librarians, building community resilience and working within the Library service. There was also a member of staff working with Museum services, and a member of staff responsible for grant funded projects, specifically arts and library projects.

With regard to the streetlighting contractor, it was confirmed that there were 19 of the 25 year contract left to run.

It was resolved to:

review, note and comment on the report.

43. HIGHWAYS AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE AGENDA PLAN AND APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

The Committee considered its agenda plan. It was noted that there was an additional item on “Clinical Waste Contract Award” going to the January Committee.

In response to a Member request, it was agreed that there would be an update on progress made by the LHI Panels. **Action required.**

The Democratic Services Officer advised that there was a new group that the Committee needed to appoint to, the Libraries National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) Steering Group. One Member representative was required, and Members were asked to forward any nomination to the Democratic Services Officer, who would then pass names on to the Chairman and Executive Director, who would agree the nominee under the delegated authority arrangements.

It was resolved to:

1. note the agenda plan, including the updates provided orally at the meeting;
2. note the arrangements for Member nominations to be made to the new Outside Body, the Libraries NPO (National Portfolio Organisation) Steering Group.

Chairman