

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

Date: Tuesday 14th November 2017

Time: 10:05am – 11:40am

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

In attendance: Councillors I Bates and N Harrison

Apologies: Cllr Batchelor (Cllr Dupré substituting)

30. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

31. MINUTES AND ACTION LOG

The minutes of the meeting held on 10th October 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

In response to a question on the garden area for photographs, for the relocated Ely Registration Office, officers gave assurances that if sponsorship was not forthcoming, they would ensure that the garden would still go ahead.

With regard to what was meant by the gap in classified road condition in Fenland (item 21(2)), officers advised that this was a historical indicator that they were discussing with the Business Intelligence team: it may be amended to ensure it was fit for purpose.

Referring to the review of the Finance & Performance Report (item 21(4)), it was confirmed that this was in progress, the issue being that this was a corporate template, i.e. this Committee could not unilaterally agree to a different template.

The Action Log was noted.

32. PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

33. REAL TIME PASSENGER INFORMATION

The Committee received a report setting out the results of the procurement of the bus Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) System: Framework Agreement for the Service and Maintenance.

In December 2016, the Committee agreed to progress with a joint procurement exercise with five other local authorities for RTPI supply, installation and maintenance. The intention was to establish a single supplier framework available for implementation by 1st March 2018. Cambridgeshire County Council is the lead authority in the Consortium, and acting as a Central Purchasing Body, supported by LGSS Law and Procurement teams.

Following the procurement exercise, three bids had been received, and these were set out in a confidential appendix to the report. The Chairman reminded Members that if they wished to discuss the detail of that confidential appendix, the meeting would need to move in to confidential session.

Arising from the report:

- In response to a Member question, it was confirmed that the District authority (e.g. Cambridge City Council) was responsible for provision and maintenance of bus stops, and the County Council was responsible for the RTPI hardware. The Member agreed to take up the individual case of a RTPI stand damaged on Mitcham's Corner with officers. **Action required;**
- Officers confirmed that the current RTPI contractor was one of the bidders in the current procurement exercise. It was further confirmed that whilst the consortium needed to agree the contract framework, it was then up to individual authorities to let their part of the framework, i.e. there was not a reliance on other authorities participating as there was no minimum spend that each authority was required to put through the contract;
- The Committee noted that whilst Cambridgeshire County Council was technically the lead authority, the process had been done very much in partnership, as had the evaluation of the bids, and officers were confident that both the process and the outcome were very robust;
- The Committee noted the contract value for the six authority framework, and the possibility of a three year extension, subject to the contractor performing to the required service standard. In response to a Member question on the performance management arrangements, officers confirmed that there were Key Performance Indicators that the contractor would be measured against, and that the contract and performance would be overseen by a consortium board. The three year extension provided a significant incentive for the contractor;
- A Member asked to what extent consideration would be given to the provision of RTPI outside current areas. Officers responded that the contract aimed to both maximise the use of existing technology, and also provide RTPI in new areas, where appropriate, working with both the Local Member and the local community;
- Noting the small contribution from Section 106 funding, a Member asked officers what scope there was to secure further funding from that source. Officers agreed that it was worth pursuing and, where feasible, developers were strongly encouraged to fund infrastructure;

- In response to a Member question, officers confirmed that they were confident that they were not sacrificing quality for price, and as part of the procurement process, a market supplier day was held, where there had been a frank conversation on what was expected as part of the contract. The three bids received were all very positive in terms of quality.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) approve the award of the framework contract;
- b) approve the award of the call-off contract.

34. PARKING SCHEMES AND CHARGES

The Committee received a report on proposals developed jointly with Cambridge City Council for changes to parking charges that would help reduce congestion in Cambridge City and encourage greater use of Park and Ride. These were changes to permit fees for Residents' Parking Schemes, changes to on-street parking charges in Cambridge, the removal of Park & Ride parking charges and the introduction of the Cambridge Residents' Parking Schemes Extension Delivery Plan. The background and rationale for the changes were outlined.

The Chairman had agreed for two Members to speak on this item:

Councillor Harrison focused on the proposed changes to the Visitor Permit scheme, which involved an 88% increase to the cost, which she felt was unreasonable. Whilst supporting with the principles of promoting modal shift, she felt that the proposals were not equitable, as the proposed increase to both Residents' permits and Pay & Display charges was around 20%. The proposed 88% increase would hit the weak and vulnerable the hardest, and would not tackle congestion issues, as only around 500 Visitor Permits were issued per day, with the majority of visitors visiting outside peak hours. Whilst acknowledging the point that there was some abuse of the Visitor Permits, she felt that imposing a harsh increase was not the right way to tackle this abuse. One of the Council's corporate priorities was to support the vulnerable, and whilst there was some acknowledgement in the report of concessions for Blue badge holders and free medical permits, this would not cover all of the vulnerable residents affected. She advised that Councillor Taylor would be proposing an amendment, and she urged Committee Members to support that amendment or at least defer any decision on Visitor Permits.

In response to Member questions, Councillor Harrison commented that visitors came from many destinations, both within and outside of the city— the emails she had received and distributed to the Committee Members demonstrated that. She also advised that the majority of visitors using the Visitor Permits did so outside peak hours, e.g. care and social visits to elderly and vulnerable residents by carers and/or family.

A number of emails from concerned residents had been tabled. The Chairman advised that he had also received numerous similar emails and letters, and he shared some of the concerns expressed by Councillor Harrison, and wanted to explore if anything can be done for those vulnerable residents, as he did not want

any policy to conflict with Council's objective of enabling people to live in their own homes as long as possible.

Councillor Bates declared an interest as a Member of the Executive Board of the Greater Cambridge Partnership. Whilst understanding Councillor Harrison's viewpoint, he advised that a lot of work had been done, and significant consultation undertaken, and he felt that it was quite crucial to approve the recommendations set out in the report. He urged the Committee Members to approve the recommendations as they see appropriate.

Discussing the report:

- A Member observed that the relevant legislation prohibited the Council from making a profit out of residents' parking, and sought assurance that no profit was being made. Officers advised that the legislation was very clear, in that the Council was not allowed to set out to generate an income stream. However, it was acknowledged that a surplus may be created, and in those cases that surplus must be used or reinvested to support transport infrastructure. The Council had a duty to produce an Annual Report setting out the detail of any financial surplus or deficit, and how any surplus was being used. That Annual Report would be presented at a Member Seminar in January. It was noted that there were so many variables impacting on parking issues, it was impossible to pitch charges so that they balance perfectly. The scheme had been in deficit over recent years, and without the proposed increase in charges, the scheme would move into considerable deficit, whereas with the proposed charges, it would move into a slight surplus. The key objective was that the scheme should completely cover its costs. The Member commented that since Resident and Visitor Parking permit charges had not been increased since 2011, effectively all residents of Cambridgeshire had been subsidising those residents that live in areas where there is Resident parking schemes. Officers advised that any such deficit had to be met within the wider Economy, Transport & Environment (ETE) budget;
- A Member asked what evidence there was that these measures and increases brought about modal shift. Officers advised that management of parking was one of the key parts of total transport infrastructure planning. National best practice does draw on data that clearly demonstrates that if parking is managed effectively i.e. on-street parking working in tandem with off-street parking, the cost of passenger transport and Park & Ride charges, there were incentives for people to leave their cars at home and use other transport modes. Any surplus generated through parking schemes enabled the Council to invest more in schemes that increased the attractiveness of cycling and pedestrian facilities. The Member commented that it would be good to see the evidence at a future meeting;
- A number of Members indicated support for the removal of Park & Ride parking charges, and indicated that the Liberal Democrat and Labour groups had opposed those charges from the outset, on the grounds that such charges would reduce usage of Park & Ride services and move parking to residential streets. One Member asked if there was scope to extend the hours of operation of Park & Ride services. Officers responded that any extension of hours would require the Council to subsidise Park & Ride services, which it had never done;

- A Member commented that many people feel strongly about Residents' parking, but he also acknowledged that parking schemes were currently not covering their costs. Whilst supporting the proportionate increases in Residents Permits, she felt the proposed increase in Visitor Permits was astonishing, and the increase should be at the same level i.e. around 20% as the increase proposed for Residents' Permits. She observed that there was little consultation, even with Councillors, and the drivers for the increase, as set out in the report, appeared muddled. Park & Ride was not an option for residents in many areas of the city, or for many journeys undertaken by those living in or outside the city. Whilst the report mentioned concessions for those with Blue Badges and medical permits, this did not cover a wide range of necessary social support provided by visitors;
- With regard to the exemption through medical permits for those receiving medium/long term care in their homes, it was confirmed that details were required from the resident's GP, explaining the care required and level of visits. Visits could be from medical professionals or family, but the onus was on the resident to initiate this process;
- A number of Members observed that one of the reasons the increases appeared so substantial was because charges had not been reviewed for up to six years. It was suggested that charges should be reviewed annually. Officers acknowledged this point, but suggested that actual increases might only be implemented every couple of years so that there were no small increases, e.g. by a few pence each year;
- Members discussed issues relating to fairness, including whether costs would be redistributed from Park & Ride users to Cambridge residents;
- One Member was not convinced that removing the Park & Ride parking charge would increase ridership levels. It was agreed to review this in two years' time, following the removal of charges. **Action required;**
- Officers advised that in many City parking zones, there were three times more parking permits than space i.e. oversupply of permits leads to more problems. Limiting Visitor Permits was also an issue, as there was evidence of abuse e.g. Visitor Permits being sold on, so that needed to be pitched and managed at an appropriate level. The suggestion of capping any increase to Visitor Permits at 20% would result in a deficit situation for parking schemes overall;
- A Member suggested that there could be scope for an extra level of visitor parking i.e. short stay rather than all day, which would be particularly appropriate for carer or family visits for elderly or vulnerable residents. A number of other Members supported this approach;
- A Member pointed to the explosion in property prices, particularly in Cambridge, pushing people out to "less unaffordable" areas of the county, and how in terms of maintaining family cohesion, it was vital that Visitor Permits do not provide an obstacle to achieving that. The proposed 88% increase in the price of Visitor Permits was not pragmatic because many of the visits enabled people to continue having a quality of life at their home in Cambridge, and it was unrealistic

to expect carers and family members to use buses for shopping and social visits. Pricing out those kind of visits was effectively undermining the fabric of families, and also acted as a disincentive to residents to vote for future residents' parking schemes, as residents would see that they would be subject to volatile, unexpected large increases in charges. The Member suggested that officers be tasked with reviewing the proposal and finding a way to incorporate a more modest increase in Visitor Parking permits;

- A Member observed that whilst the focus of this report and debate was on managing parking charges to manage demand, with those charges covering the costs of the scheme, the other perspective would be to look at reducing the £500,000 costs of managing those parking schemes i.e. reduce the cost to the taxpayer. However, as the focus was on parking charges, the Member supported the previous speaker's proposal that officers be tasked with reviewing the proposals for Residents' Parking scheme more widely, focusing on exemptions and how to meet the Council's objectives with regard to vulnerable and elderly residents;
- With regard to the removal of the Park & Ride parking charge, it was noted that whilst the Committee broadly supported this proposal, it was on the understanding that the Greater Cambridge Partnership Executive Board would fund 50% of the financial pressure at their meeting on 22nd November 2017: the remaining 50% would be addressed through the County Council's business planning process.

Councillor Taylor proposed an amendment to the recommendations, to raise Visitor Permits in line with other increases, i.e. 20%, increasing Visitor Permits from £8 to £9.60. Councillor Dupré seconded Councillor Taylor's amendment.

In discussing Councillor Taylor's amendment, a Member observed that if the charges for Visitor Permits did not increase, the scheme would be in deficit, and she could not therefore support a proposal which deliberately resulted in the Council being in deficit. In response, a Member commented that Councillor Taylor's amendment was not assuming a deficit, but tasking officers to come back with proposals which would result in lower Visitor Permit charges but still balance the budget for parking schemes.

On being put to the vote, Councillor Taylor's amendment was lost.

Following discussion with Members, the Chairman proposed the following amendment to the recommendations:

Change recommendation (a) to read "*Request that officers review proposals for residents' parking charges with particular reference to Visitor Permit charges, and bring a report back to the January Committee meeting*", and to add an additional recommendation (e) "*Agree to receive reports annually on parking charges*".

This amendment was seconded by Councillor King, and on being put to the vote, the amendment was carried.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) request that officers review proposals for residents' parking charges with particular reference to Visitor Permit charges, and bring a report back to the January Committee meeting;
- b) approve On-street Parking Charges;
- c) approve the removal of Park and Ride parking charges;
- d) approve the Cambridge Residents' Parking Schemes Extension Delivery Plan;
- e) agree to receive reports annually on parking charges.

35. FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT – SEPTEMBER 2017

The Committee received a report presenting financial and performance information for Economy, Transport and Environment (ETE) for September 2017. A£290K underspend was currently being forecast. There was currently a £384K underspend forecast for Street lighting, due to a higher number of deductions for performance failures than expected. Members were pleased to note that the contract was being firmly managed and penalties imposed where appropriate.

Noting the virement to support former Whippet bus routes, a Member asked about whether the Stagecoach services 30 and 35, serving Chatteris, could be similarly supported. Officers advised that the responsibility for these services sat with the Economy & Environment Committee, and that this was currently out to tender.

It was resolved to:

review, note and comment on the report.

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

The Committee considered its agenda plan.

It was noted that the December meeting had moved from Tuesday 5th to Monday 4th December, to accommodate those Members attending the annual Kings College Carol Service. As the Meetings Calendar was always set well before the date of the Carol Service was known, the Clerk advised any such clash was always accommodated once the date was known.

It was resolved to:

1. note the agenda plan, including the updates provided orally at the meeting.

Chairman