

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

Date: Tuesday 16th January 2018

Time: 10:00am – 10:50am

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

Apologies: Councillor Taylor (Councillor Williams substituting)

44. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

45. MINUTES AND ACTION LOG

The minutes of the meeting held on 4th December 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

With regard to the Business Planning item, a Member noted that at the December Committee meeting, the Business Case for Street Lighting conversion to LED specified that around 2700 street lights would benefit from being updated to LED. The Member was aware that this figure had been amended significantly. Officers agreed to circulate the most up-to-date information to Committee Members. **Action required.**

Turning to the Action Log, a note was tabled relating to item 40, the cycleway schemes in St Ives and Bluntisham. A Member asked if the £650,000 for the Bluntisham to Earith scheme was additional to the sum already identified for the St Ives to Bluntisham cycleway. Officers agreed to clarify this outside the meeting. **Action required.**

Action Log item 21(1) – with regard to the gap in classified road condition in Fenland, officers explained that one of the intentions of HIAMP was to improve the standard of roads across the county, and a report on HIAMP would be presented to the March Committee meeting. However, work was being done to establish if this particular indicator was fit for purpose. A Member commented that whilst he did not have a problem revisiting the Performance Indicator, the main disparity across the county was with unclassified roads, as the Fenland roads were in much worse condition generally, and this inequality needed to be addressed.

In response to a Member question, it was confirmed that the Parking report had been deferred until the February meeting as a lot of work had been going on to accommodate the changes previously requested by Members, relating to visitors parking permits, etc.

Item 43/LHI – A Member suggested that “deliverability” should be one of the scoring criteria for Members assessing LHI schemes. He also suggested that the information sent to LHI applicants should be clearer, as he was aware of at least one Parish Council that did not feel confident enough to do a survey (consultation). He also suggested that Parish and Town Councils could be offered an enhanced pothole repair service in return for additional payment. Officers agreed to look at this in their discussions with Skanska to see if it was feasible. **Action required.**

Agenda Plan – A Member requested that the update on Skanska (*Highway Contract Monitoring*) be brought forward from July, as he had had bad experiences with that contractor in his division. Officers acknowledged the Member’s concerns but suggested that it would be preferable to stick with the July date, to give opportunity for the contract to bed down and meaningful information generated on performance. However, Members were urged to raise particular issues they encountered with contractors with officers. The Chairman echoed these comments, and advised that a number of issues had been raised with him over the Christmas period, both good and bad, and he would be raising them at the next Board meeting with Skanska.

The Action Log was noted.

46. PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

47. PROCUREMENT OF CLINICAL WASTE COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL ARRANGEMENTS

The Committee received a report on the process for awarding a framework contract for the collection and disposal of clinical waste. The current contract was due to expire on 01/04/18. A joint procurement approach was being taken, with other Waste Disposal Authorities and district and city councils within Cambridgeshire. Approval was sought to delegate the award of the contract to the Executive Director in consultation with the Chairman/Vice-Chairman.

In response to Member questions:

- Officers advised that the procurement process was far advanced, and the tender would be closing at 5pm on 16/01/18. It was anticipated that the procurement process will be concluded in February, to enable the contract to be in place by April;
- It was confirmed that the contract was above the OJEU threshold and the OJEU notice had been published;
- Officers agreed to report back on the detail, once the contract was awarded.
Action required.

It was resolved unanimously to:

Delegate responsibility for the award of the clinical waste collection and disposal framework contract to the Executive Director Economy Transport and Environment in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee.

48. FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT – NOVEMBER 2017

The Committee received a report presenting financial and performance information for Economy, Transport and Environment (ETE) for November 2017.

Whilst there were no material changes to the revenue position, there were a number of changes in the capital position:

- £490K slippage in the “Delivering the Transport Strategy Aims” as the Bar Hill to Longstanton cycleway, which was funded from Section 106 funding, would slip in to the next financial year;
- The latest work schedule indicated that the Cambridgeshire Archives construction work would not start on site until May 2018, i.e. entirely within the 2018/19 financial year;
- Responsibility for the Sawston Community Hub had moved from the Commercial & Investment Committee to Highways & Community Infrastructure Committee, and this scheme was reporting £490K slippage in the 2017/18 financial year.

Arising from the report, a Member asked if the demise of Carillion would have any impact on the County Council. Officers advised that the only County Council scheme that Carillion was currently involved in was the first phase of the Abbey Chesterton Bridge, jointly with Tarmac. As this was a two stage contract, a new contractor would probably need to be procured through the Eastern Highways Alliance for the second phase of that scheme. It was confirmed that the Abbey Chesterton bridge was one element of the Chisholm Trail.

A Member expressed concern that the Council may be exposed to the financial collapse of other huge conglomerates such as Carillion in future, and consideration should be given to the risk of such failures when procuring contracts. Whilst acknowledging the Member’s concerns, officers advised that the Council does not build its own bridges or roads, so was dependent on contractors for this work, and almost all schemes were undertaken by large national or international companies, as they were often the only organisations capable of delivering such schemes. In theory, any of these companies could collapse, but all measures were taken, including extensive due diligence and ongoing contract monitoring to ensure this did not happen on Council contracts. It would be impractical to specify that the Council would not contract with a partner who was not involved in multiple projects, given the diversified nature of these companies, instead the contract specification had to focus on the outcome.

Councillor Scutt commented that in the *Significant Implications* paragraphs of the report there were “no significant implications” within the “risk” category, but the collapse of Carillion indicated that this was not the case – there were risks that were not being picked up. The Chairman responded that there was no flaw in the Council’s assessment process, as everyone had made the same judgement. Councillor Scutt commented that there were also inherent Diversity implications resulting from the Council’s political direction and insistence on reducing budgets e.g. dropped kerbs, libraries. Whilst understanding that this was essentially a monitoring report, she felt that the political decisions taken by the administration required officers to make difficult decisions to cut or limit service to vulnerable users or essential services. For these reasons she felt unable to endorse the report.

A Member observed that there had been reports in the news about potential issues with Balfour Beatty, and he asked what would happen if that contractor was no longer able to meet its obligations. Officers confirmed that contractors were monitored closely, and the contract was written in a way that would protect the Council's interests. However, it was stressed that at the moment there was no indication that there were any issues with Balfour Beatty.

With regard to the higher than expected income for Highways Development Management (i.e. Section 106 and Section 38 fees for new developments – road adoptions, etc) it was confirmed that this was being held for the Waste PFI. The reasons for the higher than expected income were outlined

Discussing contracts more generally, officers confirmed that whilst both price and quality were the two major factors when evaluating bids for major contracts, they were not bound to take the lowest price, and the quality aspect of the price/quality ratio had a greater weighting. A Member suggested that given the recent example of the failure of Carillion, viability should also be a consideration.

With regard to the Performance Indicator on the number of people Killed or Seriously injured (KSI) on the county's roads, it was noted that whilst all the 2017 data was available, it had not yet been validated, but would be included in future Finance and Performance reports and the Road Safety Report which would be considered by the Committee at its March meeting.

It was resolved, by a majority, to:

review, note and comment on the report.

49. HIGHWAYS AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE AGENDA PLAN, TRAINING PLAN AND APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

The Committee considered its agenda plan and training plan.

Members were asked if they were interested in attending a visit to the Amey waste site in Waterbeach on Monday, 12th February (11am), and a number of Members indicated that they were keen to attend. **Action required.**

Members indicated that they would be interested in attending training on potholes, specifically temporary versus permanent repairs, repairs by utility companies, and the work that the dragon patcher could do. Officers agreed to arrange a training session on this. **Action required.** With regard to utility works, Councillor Scutt asked to put on record her thanks to Graham Armstrong for his recent work with Anglia Water in Chesterton. Members were asked to let officers know of any instances where utilities undertook unsatisfactory temporary repairs.

It was resolved to:

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

