

HIGHWAYS AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE: MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 23rd September 2014

Time: 10.00am to 12.20pm

Present: Councillors Ashwood, Bates (substituting for Cllr Frost), Butcher, Connor, Criswell, Gillick, Hickford (Chairman), Hunt, Kavanagh, Mason, Palmer, Reeve (Vice-Chairman), Rouse, Taylor, Tew and van de Ven

Also present: Councillor Orgee

Apologies: Councillors Frost (Councillor Bates substituting) and Walsh

33. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

34. MINUTES – 19th AUGUST 2014

The minutes of the meeting held on 19th August 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

With regard to Minute 25 (Prudential Borrowing Investment Profiling), Councillor van de Ven reminded the Committee that she had queried the annual amount for financing debt (£34.1M per annum, increasing to £44.8M by 2018-19), having seen a higher figure referenced elsewhere. It was agreed that officers would report back on this point to the Committee. **Postscript: Officers confirmed that the figures quoted above (£34.1M per annum, increasing to £44.8M by 2018-19) were correct.**

35. PETITIONS

The Committee received a petition:

Request for traffic light controls at the Church Road/A10 junction in Hauxton

Mr Wilkinson presented a paper petition with 394 signatures, requesting traffic light control system at the junction of Church Road and the A10 in Hauxton. Two letters from Mr Wilkinson had been circulated to the Committee Members.

In addressing the Committee, Mr Wilkinson explained the layout of the village and junction in question, and the traffic problems experienced. He also outlined how the problems would be exacerbated by the major development at the former Bayer site, which would double the population of the village, and would clearly impact on the number of vehicles using the junction. The petition had the overwhelming support of residents, who asked for traffic lights and/or changes to the road layout to improve the safety and congestion in the village.

Members asked Mr Wilkinson the following questions:

- what was happening to the former Fisons Sports Ground. Mr Wilkinson advised that as part of the Section 106 agreement, the sports ground would be passed on to the village. However, this could potentially lead to more accidents or be under-utilised, as it was dangerous to cross the road;
- asked if any representation on the points raised in the petition was put forward in the planning process. Mr Wilkinson advised that he did attend the planning appeal eight years ago, but the road layout at this location was not specifically referred to;
- in response to a question about S106 funding mitigating the impact of the development, Mr Wilkinson advised that S106 funding was set aside to deal with infrastructure;
- confirmed that Local Member Councillor Orgee had supported residents on this matter, and had been very actively involved.

Local Member Councillor Orgee addressed the Committee. He explained how the Section 106 funding would be used for the site access to the new development, and not for the junction in question. He felt that the issue needed addressing urgently, and he was very sympathetic to the views of the petitioners.

The Chairman thanked the petitioner for his presentation, and advised that he would receive a full written response within ten working days of the meeting.

36. SERVICE COMMITTEE REVIEW OF THE DRAFT 2015-16 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Committee received a report on the draft Business Plan Capital Programme for Economy, Transport and Environment.

The Executive Director: Economy, Transport & Environment explained that the capital and revenue elements would ultimately be presented in the Business Plan to full Council, which would be submitted for consideration early in 2015. It was stressed that the capital schemes presented were proposals. Members' attention was drawn to the Waste proposal: Members were aware that a review of waste recycling facilities was underway, which aimed to achieve a significant reduction in revenue costs.

Members were asked to focus on those elements which came under the Highway & Community Infrastructure Committee's remit, including the proposed budget for Local Highways Improvement (£482K) and Road Safety Schemes (£594K).

Arising from the report, Members:

- observed that interest in the Alconbury Enterprise Zone was less than expected, and asked if there was any strategy in place to ensure that the funding would go to other areas, where there was greater demand. The Executive Director responded that whilst the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) was responsible for the funding, and most of the risk was carried by the developer, Urban & Civic, significant benefits were still forecast for Alconbury. The Growth Deal had included significant allocations to the LEP, whilst the direct allocations to local

authorities had been disappointing. The Council was working very hard with LEP partners to ensure that it could access as much funding as possible;

- observing that the County Council's Planning Committee had recently voted to support the Ely Southern Bypass, asked how much the delays were costing the authority. The Executive Director advised that he could not be specific: there were clearly the costs to those using the existing, congested roads, but there was also construction price inflation, which was currently running at 5-10% per annum;
- queried the funding situation for the King's Dyke scheme, variously attributed to prudential borrowing, growth funding and Network Rail, and how vital this scheme was. The Executive Director advised that the scheme had been a long-term aspiration of the County Council, and explained how the problems at King's Dyke often led to congestion, with the situation frequently being exacerbated by flooding. The overall scheme cost was £13M and it was likely that Network Rail would still make a significant contribution to this total. Local Member Councillor Butcher advised that this crossing had been an aspiration of local people for at least 45 years, and it was further noted that it had been the subject of a recent report to the Economy and Environment Service Committee;
- noted that it was pre-emptive to include firm proposals for waste sites, as the review was still ongoing;
- suggested that a further reappraisal of capital schemes may be required, as the Council may not be within the targets for borrowing. The Executive Director advised that in terms of the sustainability of the overall budget, the Council was aiming to manage within the three year 'rolling' cap;
- asked if the shortfall in the Council's overall funding due to the funding gap in Children's, Families and Adults (CFA) of £32M would be addressed partly by rephasing. The Executive Director confirmed that there would be no virement but that overall capital budgets had been given careful consideration as to how the Council allocated funding and its overall borrowing position;
- asked why funding was remaining in place for Cambridge Science Park station, when it was expected that Network Rail would fund this scheme. Officers advised that final agreement from Network Rail had not yet been secured, and until that point, the borrowing requirement should be kept within the budget. From the Council's perspective, even if Network Rail did not meet the costs of the scheme, it would be cost neutral, as the funding would be provided by DfT and train operating companies. The absolute value of Cambridge Science Park Station for the Cambridgeshire economy was stressed.

It was resolved to:

- a) note the overview and context provided for the 2015-16 Capital Programme for Economy, Transport and Environment;
- b) endorse the development of the draft proposals for Economy, Transport and Environment's 2015-16 Capital Programme.

37. TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER (TRO) OBJECTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH:

(A) PARKING CHARGES (HUNTINGDONSHIRE)

The Committee received a report on proposals to increase on-street parking charges in Huntingdonshire. A report had previously been considered at the July Highways & Community Infrastructure Committee, but Members had agreed to defer a decision, pending further discussions with Local Members and Town Councils. The outcomes of these further consultations were noted.

Local Member Councillor Bullen spoke, objecting to the proposals. He stressed that parking charges in the market towns were not beneficial, as they reduced business in those market towns and encouraged customers to use out-of-town superstores and retail parks, where there was free parking. Furthermore, the greatest impact of these charges was not on the residents of the market towns, but those who lived in surrounding villages and rural areas, who were usually dependent on their cars due to poor public transport. He observed that the results of the consultation had illustrated that there were more objectors to supporters of these parking charge increases.

Arising from the report, Committee Members:

- commented that there was a misconception that parking charges were a 'cash cow' for local authorities – the main purpose of parking charges was for traffic management, and the aim of the parking policies was to encourage people to use the most appropriate parking facilities. Civil parking enforcement had to be cost neutral and abandoning all parking charges was not an option;
- another Member suggested that the big retail parks do not charge for parking because they know free parking attracts customers, and was essential for vital and vibrant market towns;
- a Member commented that he lived near a number of market towns, and all of them offered free parking, but this did not appear to benefit businesses – shoppers still preferred to go to the out-of-town retail parks.

It was resolved to:

- 1) approve and make the Order as advertised;
- 2) inform the objectors accordingly.

(B) LYNN ROAD, WISBECH

The Committee received a report on an objection received to the proposed waiting restriction and extension of double yellow lines in Lynn Road, Wisbech.

The background to the proposed scheme, and the outcomes of the statutory consultation process were noted. The reasons for the objection by the Police, which were listed in the report, were noted. The scheme had the support of both Local Members. A Committee Member who lived locally felt that the measures were not necessary as they did not address the issues on that road, which related to cars for sale, left in the lay-bys.

It was resolved to:

- 1) approve and make the Order as advertised;
- 2) inform the objectors accordingly.

(C) ELY ROAD, LITTLE DOWNHAM

The Committee received a report on objections received to a proposed reduction in speed limit on Ely Road in Little Downham, from 40mph to 30mph. The background to the proposed scheme, and the outcomes of the statutory consultation process were noted. It was noted that the scheme had the support of local District Councillor Bailey.

A number of Members local to the area indicated their support for the proposed scheme, and explained the issues at this location. Other Members noted the strong local support for the scheme.

It was resolved to:

- 1) approve and make the Order as advertised;
- 2) inform the objectors accordingly.

(D) BYWAYS OPEN TO ALL TRAFFIC IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE

The Committee received a report on an objection received to a proposed seasonal closure (1st October – 30th April) of Byways Open to All Traffic (BOAT) in Huntingdonshire. The restriction would prevent costly damage being caused by heavier vehicles during the wetter winter months, therefore reducing overall maintenance costs. The background to the proposed scheme, and the outcomes of the statutory consultation process were noted.

During discussion, Members:

- noted that all BOATs across the county were being reviewed, but due to resource constraints, the review was taking place on a District by District basis;
- noted that farmers and riparian owners would still have access keys to use BOATs during the winter months;
- suggested that usually the damage was caused by people who did live locally behaving inconsiderately;
- noted that it was difficult to physically stop motorbikes accessing the BOATs, but they did not cause as much damage as heavier vehicles. The value of working with Parish Councils and interest groups was noted;
- noted that the BOATs were part of the public highway network, but access could be restricted through Traffic Regulation Orders.

It was resolved to:

- a) approve and make the Order as advertised;
- b) inform the objectors accordingly.

38. PAVEMENT LICENCE OBJECTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE CHEQUERS, COTTENHAM

The Committee received a report on objections received to the Pavement Licence application associated with The Chequers pub in Cottenham. The background to the proposed scheme, the outcomes of the statutory consultation process, and a map outlining the location of the premises, public highway and proposed seating were noted.

The pavement licence applicant and landlord of The Chequers, Mr Mould, addressed the Committee. He advised that The Chequers had had something of a poor reputation in the past, in terms of clientele, disturbances, etc. Since taking ownership of the pub just over a year ago, the pub had changed a great deal, and was now very family and food oriented. The pub had also improved aesthetically and was a focal point in the village. The intention of the pavement licence was to further enhance the business and the facilities available for customers. The objections on the grounds of “disturbances late at night” were inaccurate, as there had been no such disturbances since he had taken ownership, and the pavement licence would only go up to 10pm. The objection on the basis of (an informal) parking space being lost was also misleading, as there was sufficient alternative parking in the location. Similarly there had been no issues with smoke or noise.

Arising from Mr Mould’s presentation, Members:

- queried arrangements for Remembrance Sunday and any other events at the adjacent war memorial. Mr Mould said that he recognised the importance of these events and would be happy to remove benches for those occasions. He further advised that the real need for the outdoor tables would be in good weather;
- noted that the area in question was part of the public highway that was currently used for informal parking;
- noted that the pub had cycle parking;
- discussed whether tables would be left out at all time – for security reasons, Mr Mould thought that he would probably not leave them out all the time;
- expressed support for local businesses.

It was resolved to:

- 1) approve and issue a Pavement Licence for the proposal;
- 2) inform the objectors accordingly.

39. ECONOMY, TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT RISK REGISTER UPDATE

The Committee received an update on the Risk Register for Economy, Transport & Environment. It was noted that the areas covered in the report were within the remit of the Highways & Community Infrastructure Committee and the Economy & Environment Committee. The scoring identifies risks and measures it at a place in time. There were issues around *inherent* risk as opposed to *residual* risk, the latter referring to the risk that existed after mitigation measures had been put in place, which was the main focus.

Arising from the report, Members:

- commented on an apparent discrepancy between the risk around the Cambridgeshire Future Transport (CFT) project (CRR22) identified as high risk compared to deregistration of commercial bus services (ETR24), which was not high risk. It was noted that these issues were under the remit of the Economy & Environment Committee. It was clarified that the CFT risk was around the programme failing to meet its objective within the available resources, and did not relate to the perceived value of CFT;
- commented that the *failure to effectively transfer from a Leader/Cabinet model to a Committee system* (ETERR25) implied that the Committee system was a 'risk' that suggested a lack of faith by officers, when this was a political decision agreed by the majority of the Councillors. The Executive Director responded that this was not a reflection on Members, but the work undertaken by officers to support the Committee system e.g. training, agenda management. The Chairman observed that a thorough training programme had been run, but some of these sessions had been poorly attended. In addition, there were resource implications, especially given the increased frequency of Service Committee meetings, and the support required by officers;
- a number of other issues were discussed, including Guided Busway, flood risk management and Park & Ride charges, but it was noted that these issues were under the remit of the Economy and Environment Committee. Some issues which genuinely impacted on both Committees had been raised through joint Spokes meetings.

It was resolved to:

note the position in respect of Economy, Transport and Environment Directorate risk management.

40. CAMBRIDGESHIRE ARCHIVES – NEW ACCOMMODATION

The Committee considered a report on progress in identifying a suitable solution to the longstanding need for adequate accommodation for historical records and associated public access.

Members noted that the Cambridgeshire Archives were currently housed in the Shire Hall basement, but this accommodation was not satisfactory due to numerous issues including damp and mould, which potentially affected both staff and documents. The current accommodation had been condemned by National Archives. Identifying new accommodation had been a priority for many years, and officers were pleased to have identified a suitable site in Ely, which had the benefit of being significantly below the original cost estimates. The new facility would be large enough to house other office accommodation, so it would be possible to accommodate staff from other County Council offices in Ely. It was noted that the decision on the actual acquisition would be taken by the General Purposes Committee.

Arising from the report, Members:

- noted that the site would be purchased freehold;
- noted that up to 108 full-time staff would be relocated to the new Centre, depending on final confirmation of proposals for teams;
- noted the benefits to Ely in terms of economic impact, visitors, etc;

- congratulated Christine May and her team, and welcomed the move, which would be beneficial to staff in terms of a more healthy environment;
- discussed opportunities for the Archives team to raise revenue, e.g. by extending the range of charges, royalties from documents available electronically, etc;
- commented that this was a fantastic opportunity to combine Archives with the local collection, in a very accessible location;
- asked if all efforts had been made to ensure the best possible prices for the new accommodation. Officers reassured Members that the vastly experienced Property team;
- applauded the benefits of the move to Ely,.

It was resolved to:

Approve the relocation of the Archive service to premises suitable for long term operation, subject to confirmation of property acquisition by the General Purposes Committee.

42. FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT – JULY 2014

The Committee received a report setting out financial and performance information for Economy, Transport and Environment as at the end of July 2014.

It was highlighted that at the end of July, that ETE was forecasting a yearend underspend on revenue of £24,000 and a yearend underspend on capital of £17.283 million. It was highlighted that there was a forecast overspend on the Waste PFI of £131,000 due to diverting CLO (Compost Like Output) materials from landfill. An underspend of nearly £4M was forecast on the capital budget, relating to the rephasing of the highways maintenance budget, as approved by the Committee at its August meeting.

In response to a Member question, it was confirmed that there had been an increase in KSI (Killed or Seriously Injured) casualties from road accidents, and whilst unfortunate, this was a temporary fluctuation – the overall trend was still downwards.

A Member noted with disappointment the response rate for complaints in respect of street lighting responded to within ten days. It was clarified that this was for all complaints received by ETE, and not specifically for street lighting.

It was resolved to:

- 1) review and note the report

43. SERVICE COMMITTEE AGENDA PLAN AND APPOINTMENTS

The Committee noted its agenda plan.

It was resolved to:

- 1) note the agenda plan.