

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

Date: Tuesday 10th July 2018

Time: 10:00 -12.00

Present: Councillors J French (substituting for Councillor Raynes), I Gardener, M Howell, B Hunt (Vice-Chairman), D Jenkins, S King, T Sanderson, J Scutt, M Shuter (Chairman) and A Taylor

Apologies: Councillor Raynes (Councillor French substituting)

65. NOTIFICATION OF CHAIRMAN/WOMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN/WOMAN

The Committee noted the appointment of Councillors Shuter and Hunt as the Chairman and Vice Chairman respectively of the Highways and Community Infrastructure Committee for the municipal year 2018/19.

66. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

67. MINUTES AND ACTION LOG

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th March 2018 were confirmed as a correct record.

The following items were discuss under the Action Log item:

Although not included in the Action Log, at previous meetings Members had discussed developing a new set of Performance Indicators. It was noted that these were being worked on and would be available by September.

Action log item 53/charging for internet use at libraries – Members noted that *“following discussion with DWP it was agreed to create a new library user category for job hunters and benefit claimants for whom all internet use was free”*. A full report on this would be presented to the September Committee meeting. Officers agreed to respond to Councillor A Taylor with a list of the benefits and allowances included.
Action required.

The Action Log was noted.

68. PETITIONS AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no petitions.

A public question was presented by Lilian Rundblad (attached at Appendix 1). The Chairman advised Ms Rundblad that she would receive a full written response within ten working days of the meeting.

The Chairman commented that this was mainly a Highways England issue, and better signposting was needed, although there had been some improvements lately. Unless there was a specific reason, e.g. weight restriction, Heavy commercial vehicles were entitled to use any public highway. However, there was a case for being more proactive about signage e.g. mobile speed indicators on a temporary basis, to make drivers aware when they are exceeding the speed limit.

In discussion:

- a number of Members praised Highways officer Sonia Hansen, who had been very responsive and helpful to both Councillors and residents on the Histon Road issue;
- in response to a Member question, Ms Rundblad advised that she had made complaints to Highways England via Twitter and the A14 website, and had the support of the Cambridge MP, Daniel Zeichner. She had also raised her concerns with Environmental Health;
- Ms Rundblad advised that the problem was not quite as bad at the moment due to utility works on Histon Road, which meant it was an unattractive option for diverting traffic. No indication had been given as to when the A14 work would be finished and the night-time closures would stop;
- a Member suggested that the County Council's Highways complaints page should include a link for complaints about the A14, and also Environmental Health;
- a Member commented that this was not unique to Cambridge, and many communities adjacent to the A14 were experiencing similar problems. A number of Members agreed that better signage for the diversion from Highways England would be a good starting point, as would better enforcement by the Police for weight restricted routes.

It was resolved to:

1. note the questions;
2. send a written response within ten working days of the meeting.

With the Committee's agreement, the Chairman agreed to change the order of the agenda so that the following item could be considered next:

69. FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT – MAY 2018

The Committee received a report presenting financial and performance information for Place and Economy for May 2018.

There were two significant pressures in the Revenue budget, Coroners Services and Waste. The Coroners issue would be discussed in a separate report later in the meeting. The £500K waste pressure resulted from delays in signing the new contract, which should be implemented in September. The Place and Economy service was showing that it would make £790K savings by year end to bring the budget back into balance, through either underspends and additional income, or planned reductions in service.

In the Capital Budget, new funding had been awarded since the publication of the Business Plan, comprising £2.415M Pothole Grant and £128K Safer Roads funding.

Seven of the fourteen performance indicators were currently red: five of these related to delays in Local Highway Initiative projects, and the other two were Classified Road Condition and the numbers Killed or Seriously Injured on the county's roads.

Arising from the report:

- Members agreed that the Finance & Performance report should be routinely scheduled earlier in the agenda;
- noted that the 118 Local Highway Initiative projects referred to in the report related to the schemes from the 2017/18 financial year. A Member commented that although the report suggested that “a small number of schemes” were not due to complete until April/May 2018, these actually comprised around 20% of the total schemes, and many were still not complete. It was noted that although the manager in charge of the schemes had moved to another post, an interim manager had been appointed, and whilst resource pressures were a continuing challenge i.e. filling vacancies, when projects such as the A14 in the region was limiting the potential pool of applicants, Highways officers were working with Human Resources colleagues to find ways to address this. However, the inclusion of the feasibility stage within the LHI process, and bringing forward the application window should have a positive impact on future timescales within which schemes were designed and delivered;
- Members noted that the Road Safety information on “slight injuries” was from validated data collected by the Police at the scene of incidents, and that it was generally less accurate than the Killed and Seriously Injured (KSI) data;
- a Member suggested that the reduction in visitors to libraries and community hubs could result from the charge for internet usage. Whilst acknowledging that job hunters and benefit claimants were exempt, the Member queried how this would work in practice, and suggested it could have a negative impact on staff;
- following a recent Members' visit to Huntingdon Library, a Member commented positively on the spectacular effort and enthusiasm taken by Library Services staff, to make libraries social hubs, and he felt staff should be complemented on their hard work;

- a Member commented that it would be helpful if the report gave more detailed information e.g. likely timescales for the delayed King's Dyke scheme, including the reasons for the land acquisition delays. **Action required;**
- in response to a Member query, officers agreed to provide more up to date and detailed information on tree planting. There was a discussion on the replacement of damaged or diseased trees, and how this worked in practice, e.g. liaison with communities and Local Members, and it was agreed that more information would be provided in future reports. **Action required.** It was also agreed that it would be helpful to have retrospective data for comparison.

It was resolved unanimously to:

review, note and comment on the report.

70. CAMBRIDGESHIRE HIGHWAYS CONTRACT ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18

The Committee considered a report on Cambridgeshire Highways Annual Contract, which covered the period July 2017 to April 2018. 'Cambridgeshire Highways' is the partnership between Cambridgeshire County Council and Skanska, covering design and operational services for a variety of highway improvements and maintenance work.

Members noted:

- challenges faced, including the relocation of County Council Highways staff and Skanska staff to Vantage House in Huntingdon, in time for the start of the contract;
- the governance arrangements and how the Joint Management Team, which reports to a Strategic Board, was supported by four contract management groups, covering Commercial, Performance, Culture, and Safety, Health & Environmental;
- particular achievements and areas for improvement.

Arising from the report:

- a number of Members spoke very favourably on the work of specific officers including Evan Laughlin and Graham Armstrong;
- in response to a Member query, it was noted that the Dragon Patcher had not been used on Histon Road or Milton Road. Other Members spoke favourably about the Dragon Patcher being used in their divisions;
- whilst welcoming the report, suggested that further detail was required in future reports;

- asked if governance arrangements could be made more transparent by making the agendas and minutes of the Strategic Collaboration Board available. It was agreed that these could be circulated to Members. **Action required;**
- a Member commented that problems had been caused in his Division by road closures taking place earlier than advertised. He stressed the importance of effective and accurate communications with communities;
- commented that whilst the report covered asset resilience, e.g. filling potholes, there was nothing in the report on addressing the long term condition of the roads, which was declining. Officers confirmed that this was covered in the Highways Asset Management policy, which detailed how investment was prioritised in to the highways network, lifecycle planning, etc. The most recent Highway Operational Standards (HOS) report had been considered by the Committee earlier in the year;
- a Member observed that asset management was currently being financed by prudential borrowing, and he asked what would happen when this funding ran out. Officers advised that work was being undertaken to explore options, and this would be discussed more broadly with Members as part of the Business Planning process;
- in response to a Member question on the biggest differences with the new contract, officers advised that these included the development of a stakeholder survey for the life of the contract, with the aim of enhancing services to customers, ensuring e.g. minimisation of disruption to travelling public. The Member commented that it would be very useful to have clear improvement outcomes identified when the Committee next considers the Highways Contract, looking both backwards and forward;
- a Member noted that whilst community engagement was included in the report, there was no mention of liaison with Parish and Town Councils. Another Member commented that surveys and stakeholder engagement needed Member involvement from the outset, and local residents needed to be consulted as well as those who use roads. Officers advised that a communications plan had been developed jointly between Skanska and the County Council. Post-scheme completion cards were always posted to residents living adjacent to schemes. Officers were happy to share with the Committee the stakeholder survey that was being developed. **Action required;**
- a Member suggested that there needed to be more consideration on how to deal proactively with prolonged spells of extreme weather i.e. prolonged hot or freezing weather, or long term heavy rainfall, and future reports should reflect lessons learned from extreme weather;
- a Member requested that a report back on the plastic asphalt trial was reported back to this Committee. **Action required;**

- one Member commented that she was not happy with performance, e.g. issues with the work on Milton Road having to be done twice. It was noted that that work had been undertaken under a different programme;

It was resolved unanimously to:

1. note the performance and achievements of the highways contract.

The Item on “Traffic Signals Design and Operational Guidance” had been withdrawn, as further work was required with partner organisations.

71. ROAD SAFETY ACTION PLAN

The Committee considered a report on the action plan for proposals agreed at the March Committee, for future delivery of road safety in Cambridgeshire.

The Committee was reminded that at their last meeting, Members had had a comprehensive discussion on various aspects of road safety, and they had requested some additional analysis on road casualty data. The report presented contained this information, along with an update on the action plan agreed at that meeting.

The data produced showed that on average, 85% of collisions were on County Council roads, but this varied across the Districts: in Fenland, East Cambridgeshire and Cambridge, around 90% of collisions occurred on the County Council network, reducing to 75% in Huntingdonshire and South Cambridgeshire. Demographics were also reviewed including the age profiles of drivers and casualties, and whilst very similar, there was a slightly higher proportion of males involved in collisions on trunk roads (62%) compared to non-trunk roads (58%). This breakdown of information by road type would be included in future annual reporting.

Members noted the Action Plan for the Hub model implementation within the Highways Service restructure, and the plans for Safety Camera Digitalisation.

Arising from the report:

- a Member suggested that it would be helpful to see the data for collisions by individual years rather than collectively (2013-2017). Officers responded that when looking at the trunk road network, numbers were relatively small, so it would be difficult to interpret or make judgements on the data for individual years. However, the action plan for annual reporting was based on the new software, which will enable patterns and demographic trends to be identified. It was confirmed that cluster sites were also identified, and this information could be shared with Local Members on request;
- a Member queried the amber status given to “mobilisation of AccsMap software”. It was confirmed that this had been due to some slight delays in the IT infrastructure network, but was now complete. Officers also confirmed that they were satisfied that progress was being made against other targets;

- Members noted the actions taking place within the Safety Partnership to reduce the numbers of Killed and Seriously Injured (KSI) on the County's roads by 2020;
- a Member commented that there were regrettably many "near misses" which were never recorded, but which did highlight road safety issues. The Member also observed that the report was very focused on road traffic accidents, and did not really explore road conditions (pot holes, etc) and the behaviour of all road users;
- a Member queried why the assumption had been made that young drivers in Fenland would not be inclined to access road safety interventions. Officers explained the resources that were available, such as the "DriveIQ" scheme, targeted at 16-18 year olds. It was also noted that most insurers now insisted on telematics for younger drivers;
- it was noted, from the Finance & Performance report, that the data on "slight accidents" tended to be underreported, and this was a national trend, so not too much emphasis was placed on this data as a result.

With regard to Bikeability, officers confirmed that there was a proposal as part of the wider service restructure, that Bikeability would sit better within the Hub. The Chairman agreed to discuss this with the Chairman of the Economy & Environment Committee. **Action required.**

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) note the updated casualty data in section 2.1 of the report;
- b) approve the action plan outlined in Appendix 1 of the report;
- c) note and endorse the potential for Bikeability to be incorporated in the Road Safety Hub.

72. CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH CORONER SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee considered an update on the work of the Coroner Services over the past twelve months, and information about future plans, issues and considerations for the next twelve months.

There had been a sharp increase in the number of deaths registered in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Coronal area, and correspondingly, the number of referrals to the coroner service had increased significantly. Coupled with an increased complexity of cases, this has led to the Service exceeding its budget, beyond the increase that had been anticipated for demographic growth.

Despite these pressures, effective management had reduced the backlog of cases compared to previous years, and officers expected to be able to clear backlogs by March 2019. A major success within the year has been the introduction of a new case management system, which the Committee agreed to fund last year. The roll out of a "partner portal" as part of this new system means that the Service is likely to

be the first in the country where hospital doctors and GPs will be able to refer cases to HM Coroner electronically.

Arising from the report:

- in response to a Member question, officers explained how the Coroner worked with faith groups in the county to provide a swift and efficient service for faith groups i.e. those that required urgent death registration so that burial could take place within a certain timescale;
- noting the conservation planning issues at the Service's offices in Lawrence Court, Huntingdon, it was suggested that Members would be happy to use their influence to help progress these issues;
- a Member requested that further contextual information be provided in future reports, to help Members judge performance, especially against the backlog of cases;
- a Member commented that the structural nature of the increased workload and therefore increased costs, in what was very much a demand-led service, needed to be acknowledged and factored in to future budgets;
- a Member thanked officers for the recent Members' Community and Cultural Services Tour, which included Coroner Services, and had been very interesting and informative.

It was resolved unanimously to:

1. note the report and continue to support the work of HM Coroner and the Coronial Service;
2. recommend that officers determine the appropriate level of funding required for the Service going forward, reflecting both demographic and other pressures.

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

The Committee considered its agenda plan, training plan, and appointments to Outside Bodies.

The following item had been added to the Agenda Plan for the September meeting:

Safety Camera Digitalisation (Key Decision)

Officers agreed to check the Clay Farm Centre Advisory Group appointment and report back to Councillor A Taylor. **Action required.**

Issues relating to Performance Indicators and long term capital funding for Highways would be included under the appropriate reports on the Agenda Plan.

It was resolved to:

1. review the agenda plan attached at Appendix 1 to the report, including the updated provided orally at the meeting;
2. review the training plan attached at Appendix 2 to the report;
3. agree the appointments within the schedule attached at Appendix 3 to the report;
4. agree to delegate, on a permanent basis between meetings, the appointment of representatives to any outstanding outside bodies, groups, panels and partnership liaison and advisory groups, within the remit of the Highways and Community Infrastructure Committee, to the Executive Director: Place and Economy, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Committee.

Chairman

Thundering HGVs Question to Highways and Community Infrastructure Committee

July 10th 2018 Agenda Item 4 Petitions and Public Questions

The residents along Histon Road B-1049 have for some months endured the nightly HGV traffic tail-gating in groups of 10-20 trucks from 8pm to 6am every weekday. We have complained to Highways in writing and twittering, Environmental Departments, and Police and had assistance from our city and county councillors. Our MP Daniel Zeichner has written Highways England and received promises of improvement. MP Zeichner has also forwarded my twitter messages and after 20 days we received a reply from David Bray, A14 Project Director (Scheme 18770354).

In this latest reply there was one statement that concerned me in particular:

When closures are required they are designed to keep traffic to local A roads, some of them County Highway roads, which should be able to take the type of traffic that would travel in the A 14. In extreme circumstances, and then only with the permission of the County Council would we divert through-traffic onto suitable but smaller roads.

As mentioned above Histon Road is a B-road (B1049) and should as such have been subject to permission of the County Council.

1. Has such a permission been given by the County Council?
2. On what grounds was such an extreme circumstance taken?
3. Can this decision be withdrawn until such a time that traffic calming measures have been installed e.g. enforced speed limits and technical speed camera updates?
4. Will improved communications directly with the residents living along the road be given bearing in mind that twitter may not be available to every person? Weekly information of the time plans is a minimum.

Best Regards

Lilian Rundblad, Chair, Histon Road Area Residents' Association HRARA