

Highways and Transport Committee: Minutes

Date: 7 March 2023

Time: 10:00am to 4.07pm

Present: Councillors Alex Beckett (Chair), Neil Shailer (Vice-Chair), Gerri Bird, Piers Coutts, Steve Corney, Douglas Dew, Jan French, Ian Gardener, Neil Gough, Mark Howell, Simon King, Peter McDonald, Mac McGuire, Brian Milnes, Alan Sharp

Venue: New Shire Hall, Alconbury Weald, Huntingdon, PE28 4YE

128. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

Apologies were received from Councillor Dupré, (substituted by Councillor Neil Gough) and Councillor Anne Hay (substituted by Councillor Mark Howell) and Councillor Ryan Fuller (substituted by Councillor Steve Corney)

Councillors Gough, McDonald, Milnes and French declared interests in agenda item 8 – Civil Parking Enforcement as Cabinet members for South Cambridgeshire District Council and Fenland District Council and their involvement in the decision-making process at their respective District Councils.

Councillor Gough also declared an interest in agenda item 4 – Mill Road Bridge Traffic Regulation Order as he was a former member of the Greater Cambridge Partnership Executive Board in November 2021. Together with the Chair who informed the Committee that he was a resident of Coldham's Lane, Cambridge.

Councillor King declared an interest as a member of the Local Access Forum

129. Minutes – 6 December 2023 and Action Log

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2023 were agreed as a correct record and the action log was noted.

130. Petitions and Public Questions

There were several public questions and requests to speak. They were heard under the relevant agenda item. The questions and submissions are attached at Appendix A to these minutes. There were no petitions.

131. Mill Road Bridge Permanent Traffic Regulation Order

The Committee received a report that sought the determination of the Mill Road Bridge Traffic Regulation Order. Following the consideration of the Greater Cambridge Partnership's consultation on Mill Road modal filter proposals at its July 2022 meeting, the Committee would now consider the objections registered against the TRO received through the statutory process.

An amendment (attached at Appendix B) was proposed by Councillor Sharp and seconded by Councillor McGuire. Speaking to the amendment, Councillor Sharp expressed doubts regarding the validity of the consultation that contained several leading questions and the legitimacy of the GCP as an organisation, citing a perceived democratic deficit.

- The consultation was supported at Committee because it was believed data on the impact of the proposals on nearby streets would be included and it was a major flaw that it had not. Therefore, unless the determination of the TRO was deferred it was necessary to support the amendment.
- Expressed concern at the potential unintended consequences of the scheme. Focus should be maintained on business as they made Mill Road a unique community. There was substantial risk that, if the bridge was closed, the community would be adversely affected.
- Commented that when assessing the amendment, it was necessary to understand the issues and question whether there was sufficient information on which to base and balance a decision. It was clear there was. This was a place where there were businesses and people living and the Committee was being asked to balance that argument.
- Expressed the view that the amendment was not consistent with the debate that took place at the July 2021 meeting as it delayed progress unnecessarily. There was sufficient information and the Committee needed to reach a decision.
- The ETRO that had been put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic had provided a substantial amount of data that together with further consultation enabled a decision to be made
- In summing up, Councillor Sharp assured the Committee that the amendment was not designed to unduly delay the scheme but provide an opportunity to ensure that all voices were heard and fully understand the potential negative impacts on surrounding roads.

It was requested and agreed that a recorded vote be taken for the amendment.

On being put to the vote the amendment was lost.

[For: Beckett, Bird, Coutts, Dew, Gough, McDonald, Milnes and Shailer]

[Against: Corney, French, Gardener, Howell, King, McGuire and Sharp]

During debate of the substantive motion, Members:

- Acknowledged that the topic had been divisive, and the Committee had spent many hours debating. Sympathy was expressed for traders who were fearful for their businesses. However, it was clear that there would be an economic benefit to the area. Other areas of the city that had similar restrictions in place benefited from increased footfall and therefore would be a benefit to traders.
- Noted the discussions that had taken place regarding Mill Road to date and cited the biggest concern throughout was the economic impact on the area. Paragraph 2.8 of the report failed to address those concerns and therefore it was not possible to support the proposals.
- Recognised Mill Road as a special community and highlighted that the responses to the consultation had been from a broad range of residents. The concerns of traders along Mill Road were serious and genuine, and it was therefore essential that everyone supported their businesses. The consultation undertaken by the GCP was thorough and the impact on businesses had been considered carefully. The decision to be made was one of balancing the costs and benefits of the proposals and it was clear the benefits outweighed the costs. It was essential that active travel was not delivered at the expense of local businesses and that funding was identified for improvements to the public realm.
- Commented that a key issue was whether the proposals would cause displacement of traffic or replacement of traffic. Mill Road was a thoroughfare on which cycling was uncomfortable due to the narrowness of the street. The traffic and current layout acted as a deterrent to active travel and the proposals would address this and encourage people to move from their cars on to alternative forms of transport.
- Reminded the Committee of the debate that took place in July 2021 when the matter first came for determination. Concerns remained with the proposals, particularly regarding access for carers and how people apply for exemptions that appeared to be accessed through online means only. Concern was also expressed regarding night-time safety where reduced traffic levels had made the street considerably quieter and people feeling more vulnerable. Officers confirmed that there would be a telephone number through which exemptions could be requested and applied for.
- Drew attention to the wider impact of the school street scheme on Vinery Road where inconsiderate parking by parents was causing significant issues on Coldhams Lane. It was noted that additional street furniture would be installed along Mill Road, however, it was essential that careful consideration be given to its placement as planters that had been installed had caused issues for cyclists. Although the road was narrow, it was this that gave the road its character.
- Noted the concerns regarding exemptions for carers and the ability of people to apply for an exemption. However, this was a process that would be monitored and evolve as a result. Following the decision of the Committee at its July 2021 meeting, the Council lost funding as a result and the Department for Transport had advised that it would welcome the reintroduction of the closure. The consultation

undertaken by the GCP was comprehensive and thorough. During traffic counting during the previous closure, a three-fold increase in cycling had been observed because of the improved safety. If parents cycled with children to school, it was likely they would continue their journey to work by bicycle. By agreeing the recommendations set out in the report it would honour the will of residents and enhance the local community.

- Welcomed the different views within the debate and noted the desire of all to improve their communities. The impact on businesses and the displacement of traffic were serious concerns. However, the city centre provided a clear example of what could be achieved in terms of footfall and improving the environment through traffic management. There was still much to do regarding public realm improvements and the network hierarchy.
- Noted comments that it was possible for arrangements to be made by blue badge holders that would allow their carers to use a badge without the holder being in the vehicle*

*following the meeting it was confirmed that Blue badge holders can register up to a maximum of two vehicles. The exemption to use the bridge would apply to Blue Badge holders present in the vehicle ([Mill Road bridge TRO - Cambridgeshire County Council](#))

A request for a recorded vote was made with the support of the Committee.

It was resolved by majority to:

- a) Approve the proposed modal filter on Mill Road bridge, as advertised; and
- b) Inform the objectors accordingly

[For: Beckett, Bird, Coutts, Dew, Gough, McDonald, Milnes and Shailer]
[Against: Corney, French, Gardener, Howell, King, McGuire and Sharp]

132. Cambridgeshire Active Travel Strategy

The Committee received the Active Travel Strategy for Cambridgeshire. The report summarised the outcomes from public consultation and presented an updated strategy for the Committee's approval.

There were several public questions and submissions to the Committee attached at Appendix A together with the responses where applicable.

During discussion of the report Members:

- Emphasised the ambition that existed in the north of Huntingdonshire and sought reassurance that active travel would continue to be developed in the area.
- In drawing attention to the Huntingdonshire map for active travel, commented that there were few routes within that area. However, it was known that residents were campaigning to have routes established. There was a focus on urban areas, but it was essential that there was route provision in rural areas in order that people were provided alternatives to the car.
- Commented that there was a need in the district areas for active travel routes and there appeared to be a focus on the Cambridge side of Huntingdonshire. Concern was expressed that there had been no update provided on some of the routes marked in orange since the annual update to the Local Cycling Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).
- Noted the continued concern relating to inhibitors such as consistency of routes, junction design, kissing gates and in particular, road surfacing.
- Requested that the road classification review was presented to the Committee.
- Drew attention to new developments in rural areas. Active travel schemes on those developments were often excellent, however, there was no connectivity between villages. In referencing the tool kit for new developments, it was essential for issues to be address through the planning process. Although the toolkit was welcome, it was noted that it only applied to developments of 150 dwellings or more and suggested that it should apply to all developments. Concern was also expressed that there was a Cambridge-centric approach where it was possibly easier and cheaper to establish that those in rural areas
- Highlighted the issue of shared use paths and the yet unknown classification of e-scooters by the Department of Transport.
- Recognised the value of the active travel network and commented that ambition would always be far greater than available investment. It was therefore the prioritisation and how that was carried out that was essential.
- Suggested that the imagery used within the strategy be reviewed.
- Expressed support for the review process for the strategy, and draft guide and welcomed the work of the working group. The draft tool kit was concerning and would welcome it being presented to Committee following consultation.
- Questioned the funding arrangements for active travel schemes and whether funding that would have been used to improve and repair roads in Fenland would be diverted to active travel schemes within Cambridge. Officers provided assurance that the funding was explicitly for active travel schemes. Regarding ongoing maintenance of the routes additional funding would be sought to support that on a network-wide basis.

It was resolved to:

- a) Note the feedback from public consultation on the draft Cambridgeshire Active Travel Strategy.
- b) Note progress to date and the next steps for the process for the prioritisation of active travel schemes as part of an updated LCWIP. and for annual review.
- c) Adopt Cambridgeshire's Active Travel Strategy.
- d) Approve the draft supporting active travel documents noted below, and delegate approval of further changes or updates to the Director of Highways and Transport and the Chair and Vice Chair of Highways and Transport Committee.
- e) Draft Active Travel Toolkit for New Developments - for stakeholder engagement
- f) Draft Cambridgeshire Active Travel Design Guide – for adoption

133. Fenland Transport Strategy

The Committee received a report that presented the Fenland Transport Strategy, developed in partnership with Fenland District Council and the Member Steering Group. The strategy focussed on improving accessibility and connectivity across the district and replaced the Market Town Strategies for Chatteris, March, Whittlesey and Wisbech.

The Committee received a public question / comment attached at Appendix A together with the response where applicable.

During discussion of the report Members:

- Questioned how the Committee and the Council would affect the thinking and work of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) as it was the lead for transport for the county.
- Noted the work of the CPCA regarding Wisbech Rail and the close work officers were undertaking with the CPCA. Members emphasised the importance of the scheme to the wider area.

It was resolved to:

- a) Note the feedback from stakeholder and public consultation on the draft Fenland Transport Strategy;

- b) Note progress to date and the next steps for the development and prioritisation of schemes contained in the Fenland Transport Strategy; and
- c) Adopt the Fenland Transport Strategy

134. Huntingdonshire Transport Strategy

The Committee received a report that presented the Huntingdonshire Transport Strategy developed in partnership with Huntingdonshire District Council and the Member Steering Group. The strategy focussed on improving accessibility and connectivity across the district and replaced the Market Town Strategies for Huntingdon and Godmanchester, Ransey, St Ives and St Neots.

The Committee received public questions and submissions to the Committee attached at Appendix A together with the responses where applicable.

During discussion of the report Members:

- Noted that officers were lobbying the Government to release funding to be able to progress tier 2 routes.
- Commented that people wanted more active travel options and highlighted Non-Motorised User (NMU) routes and the link with active travel. It was essential that rural areas had better connectivity. The links to other areas of the Council such as public health and environmental goals were also made.
- Requested that clear signage be displayed leaving it in no doubt as to whether a route was a shared use route or not.
- Noted the challenge in being able to reduce car miles in rural areas given the challenges faced in connectivity and public transport.

It was resolved to:

- a) Note the feedback from stakeholder and public consultation on the draft Huntingdonshire Transport Strategy;
- b) Note progress to date and the next steps for the development and prioritisation of schemes contained in the Huntingdonshire Transport Strategy; and
- c) Adopt the Huntingdonshire Transport Strategy

135. Civil Parking Enforcement

The Committee received a report that provided the Committee with an update on Civil Parking Enforcement and sought authorisation for the submission of applications to the Department for Transport for the required powers.

The Committee received a public question / comment attached at Appendix A together with the response where applicable.

During discussion of the report Members:

- Noted the need for flexibility and the need for it not to be viewed as simply an income generation exercise by the Council.
- Noted that the agreement included an agency contract that could expand the Cambridge City enforcement scheme including 2 full time equivalents. There were no concerns surrounding the Council making the application and then offering agency services. The Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) was able to offer funding to Fenland and Huntingdonshire District Councils as they formed part of its wider travel to work area.
- Noted the general support of South Cambridgeshire residents for CPE as there were several hotspots in the district where problem parking was an issue.
- Commented that schemes the GCP was designing were dependent on CPE working around them such as improvements to railway stations, the benefits of which would be eroded by poor parking in the travel to work area.
- Expressed the view that the current highway maintenance budget should not be used for the upkeep of signs and lines and should be maintained through the income generated from enforcement action.
- Noted that it was anticipated that following the applications made to government, CPE would begin in May 2024 in Fenland and October 2024 in Huntingdonshire.
- Noted, charges consisted of 2 bands that were set through primary legislation and the Council had no discretion to adjust them. It was confirmed that the Council would charge the upper band and discussions were taking place with the Department for Transport regarding the inflationary pressures currently faced.

It was resolved to:

Delegate the authorisation for Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) to submit Civil Enforcement Area (CEA) or Special Enforcement Area (SEA) applications to the Department for Transport for Designation Orders for the introduction of CPE in South Cambridgeshire, Fenland, and Huntingdonshire to the Service Director Highways and Transport, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee.

136. Commuted Sums Policy for Cambridgeshire

The Committee received a report that provided a Commuted Sums Policy for approval. The Committee noted that commuted sums were monies that may be collected to help local authorities offset the future maintenance costs of new infrastructure they acquire.

The Committee received a public questions / submission on this item attached at Appendix A together with the responses where applicable

During discussion of the report Members:

- Noted that discussions were continuing with the Greater Cambridge Partnership with regard to its projects handed over to the Council.
- Welcomed the policy that was clear and easily understood and thanked officers for the work involved.
- Questioned whether the Highways Operational Standards could be updated in order that it be able to keep pace with developments in technology. Officers confirmed that the standards were reviewed annually to ensure that technological developments were accounted for.

It was resolved to:

- a) To approve the Commuted Sums Policy;
- b) To approve the Highway Estates Roads Construction Specification; and
- c) To approve the General Principles for Development

137. Highways Operating Standards

The Committee received for consideration and approval, updates to the Council's Highways Operational Standards.

During discussion of the report Members:

- Confirmed that Gaist now being used to undertake asset condition surveys and requested a Member briefing to demonstrate this. **ACTION**
- Suggested that a YouTube video and communications be produced that could be shared with Parish Councils in order they understand how the asset condition surveys were carried out. .
- Welcomed the proposed approach to roadside memorials. Attention was also drawn to the encroachment of vegetation on verges due to land / property owners not

cutting back vegetation, suggesting that placing a legal charge on a property would be an effective measure and deterrent.

- Noted that a report relating to speed strategy would be presented to the July meeting of the Committee that would address the extension of 30mph zones for parishes that border neighbouring counties.
- Questioned who would determine the targeted approach to weed control. Officers confirmed that the ambition was to reduce reliance on chemicals and there would be an extensive review undertaken together with a published and detailed process for parishes to follow and communicated to Councillors.
- Raised concern regarding the encroachment of vegetations, such as conifers, on to verges, causing obstructions. It was suggested that it be considered through next review and update of the Highway Operational Standards.

It was resolved to:

Approve updates to 9 sections of the Highways Operational Standards

138. Highways Maintenance Capital Programme

The Committee received the Highways Capital Maintenance Programme. The report sought the approval of the Council's forward programme of highways capital schemes and provide clarity and visibility of forthcoming maintenance schemes.

During discussion of the report Members:

- Noted that an update on remedial and urgent safety work on soil affected roads would be circulated to Councillors in early April. **ACTION**
- Commented that repairing 20-30 metres of carriageway could be cheaper and easier than repairing multiple potholes along the same stretch.
- Noted that the assessment of soil base roads was continuing. In some cases, the Council did not possess the technology to add significant longevity to the affected routes. Discussions were therefore taking place with the Department for Transport relating to funding for a long-term solution and technical advice.
- Questioned how often the same pothole had to be repaired. Officers explained that the Cambridgeshire Highways KPIs established a tolerance level of failed repairs at 2%. The current reporting system did not provide the granularity of detail needed to identify geographical areas of concern; this would be addressed through the new Asset Management System. It was noted by the Committee that there were occasions where potholes were filled temporarily for public safety before a more long-term repair was undertaken.

It was resolved to:

- a) To approve the 2 year forward programme of highway maintenance capital schemes 2023-2025;
- b) To agree that the Service Director, Highways and Transport, in consultation with the Chair/Vice Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee, can make minor amendments to the programme of highway maintenance capital schemes, in accordance with the Authority's approved asset management policies;
- c) Agrees that the Service Director, Highways and Transport, in consultation with the Chair/Vice Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee, can commission the delivery of the highways maintenance capital programme, via existing contracts that have been formally procured; and
- d) To note the indicative highway maintenance capital programme for the following 3 to 5 years 2025-2028.

139. Integrated Transport Block Funding

The Committee received a report that presented the proposed allocation of the £3.215m Integrated Transport Block (ITB) funding for 2023-24. As Local Transport Authority the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) received Local Transport Plan grants from the Department for Transport that included the ITB grant. The grant was then passed to the Council to prioritise and spend

The Committee received comments from Councillor Edna Murphy and Councillor Clare Daunton, attached at Appendix A to these minutes.

During the course of discussion, Members:

- Confirmed that the LHI process remained the same as previously agreed and was not adversely affected by the additional funding provided by the Combined Authority. The Transforming Cities Fund to investment in 20mph schemes, primarily around market towns, provided an additional funding stream.
- Noted that if a village submitted an application for a 20mph scheme but was unsuccessful the intention was that the application would be carried forward, unless they scored so low that they would require further development or removal from the list.
- Commented that although £3.2m appeared to be a significant sum of money, it was relatively modest.

- Commented that there may have to be some rationalisation and prioritisation of schemes, recognising their relative importance, but also recognising the funding limitations.

It was resolved to:

- a) approve the proposed allocation of the Integrated Transport Block funding for 2023-24 subject to the funding being passed to the County Council by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority;
- b) note the different approaches being taken to the development and delivery of 20mph zones from the Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) and the Integrated Transport Block due to the constraints of time for spend from the TCF; and
- c) delegate to the Chair and Vice Chair in consultation with Democratic Services and the Director of Highways and Transport the nomination of County Council representatives for Member Steering Groups for the review of:
 - i. the Transport Strategy for East Cambridgeshire and
 - ii. the Transport Strategy for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire

140. Roundabout and Highways Asset Sponsorship Reprourement

Members received a report that sought approval for the procurement of a new provider for the management of advertising on roundabouts and highways assets including associated maintenance.

It was resolved to:

Approve the procurement of a new provider for the management of advertising on roundabouts and highways assets including associated maintenance.
Currently known as Highways Roundabout Sponsorship

141. Highways and Transport Corporate Performance Report

Members received a report that presented the performance data and metrics relevant to the Committee for the period of quarter 3 up to the end of December 2022.

During discussion, Members raised the following points:

- Drew attention to the Killed and Seriously Injured indicator that was an area for concern.
- Concern was expressed that almost 10% of A roads were categorised as red. Officers advised that highways scanning should provide opportunity to address it.

- Noted the improvements on road safety, however, commented that the gradual decline was not good enough.
- Noted that the report would be presented again at Committee in July 2023, that would include a fuller set of indicators, however, may not include the full set as a number of new indicators were under development.
- Emphasised the importance of driver education in successfully reducing accidents and fatalities.
- Drew attention to the multi-factorial issue of road safety and the number of killed and seriously injured statistics. There was a correlation between the reduction in Police traffic officers and increased speeding, availability of ambulances and issues facing accident and emergency departments all impacted on death rates.

It was resolved to note the performance information and suggest any action as necessary.

142. Finance Monitoring Report

The Committee received the Finance Monitoring Report. Members noted the overall revenue forecast overspend for Place and Sustainability of £214k and the factors driving it. The main capital variances were also highlighted. The report also sought a recommendation to the Strategy and Resources Committee that a £2.8m scheme to widen the guided busway was added to the Council's Business Plan 2023-24.

During the course of discussion, a member sought greater clarity regarding the variance of £720k related to Carriageway and Footway Maintenance and requested the original breakdown of the budget. **ACTION**

It was resolved to:

- a) Review, note and comment on the report;
- b) Recommend to the Strategy and Resources Committee to approve an updated capital budget profile for the A14 contributions whereby £2.08m of budget is transferred from 2022/23 to Years 24 and 25 of the payment profile; and
- c) Recommend to the Strategy & Resources Committee that a scheme to widen the guided busway (southern section), budgeted to cost £2.89m, is added to the Council's business plan 2023-24, for the reasons set out in the confidential appendix.

143. Highways and Transport Resource Update

The Committee received an update regarding the resourcing position for the Highways and Transport Directorate following the comprehensive resource review and update that was presented to the Committee at its March 2022 meeting.

During discussion, members:

- Commented that it was essential that employment offers were competitive to attract the right people and encourage people to stay.
- Commented that vacancy figures appeared to be broadly static and that it would be the default position for the Council and therefore would need to be budgeted for. Officers advised that the need for interim staff would always exist, particularly in order to cope with the ebb and flow of the capital and maintenance programmes.
- Noted that the active highway maintenance restructure included Local Highway Officers. Officers informed the Committee that the restructure sought to change the shape of the team in order that they were supported more effectively.
- Sought an update on how vacancies were being filled within the rights of way team. Officers advised that they fell within the highway maintenance restructure and once concluded recruitment to those roles would progress.

It was resolved to:

- a) Note the ongoing pressures and challenges: and
- b) Note progress since this was report to Committee in March 2022.

144. Highways and Transport Committee Agenda Plan and Training Plan and Appointments to Outside Bodies and Internal Advisory Groups and Panels

The Committee noted its Agenda Plan, Training Plan and appointments to Outside Bodies and Internal Advisory Groups.

Chair

Agenda item 4- Mill Road Traffic Regulation Order

Conservative Amendment (additions in **bold** deletions in strikethrough)

- ~~a) Determine the formal objections without holding a public enquiry;~~
- ~~b) Approve the proposed modal filter on Mill Road bridge, as advertised; and~~
- ~~c) Inform the objectors accordingly~~

- a) **Defer the decision on Mill Road bridge pending the receipt of traffic modelling showing the effect that the closure will have on other Eastern Access routes into the city**
- b) **Undertake a study of the traffic and pollution effects on the side roads off Mill Road**
- c) **Determine the matter of the potential closure by the holding of a public enquiry.**