

ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE: MINUTES

Date: Thursday, 24th May 2018

Time: 10.00a.m. to 10.55a.m.

Present: Councillors: H Batchelor, I Bates (Chairman), D Connor, R Fuller, L Harford (substituting for Cllr Ambrose Smith), L Jones (substituting for N Kavanagh), S Tierney, J Williams and T Wotherspoon (Vice Chairman).

Apologies: D Ambrose-Smith and N Kavanagh

111. NOTIFICATION OF APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN

It was noted that at the Annual Council meeting on 15th May, Councillor Bates and Councillor Wotherspoon had been re-appointed respectively as the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Economy and Environment Committee for the Municipal Year 2018-19.

112. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

113. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on April 2018 were agreed as a correct record.

114. MINUTE ACTION LOG

The following oral updates were provided on the Log since the agenda publication:

Minute 16- Bikeability Cycle Training sponsorship

With reference to the above, for which a report on funding options was due to come back to either the June or July meeting, depending on the decision to be made in a later report, Councillor Linda Jones reported that she had made contact with 'Cambridge Assessment's Group Director and the new Head of Health, Safety and Wellbeing and was arranging for herself, Councillor Kavanagh and Mike Davies Team Leader - Cycling Projects Major Infrastructure Delivery to visit them, the likely date being on 4th June, to discuss possible funding opportunities.

The Minute action log with the above updates was noted.

115. PETITIONS AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No public question were received. One e-petition was received by the deadline with 98 on-line signatures titled 'Save the 46 Bus route' with the following text:

“The County Council is asked to work with Norfolk County Council to ensure bus operator Stagecoach reconsider their proposal to withdraw from the number 46 bus route between March, Wisbech and Kings Lynn from 28th April 2018. We believe that the 46 bus route provides an essential public service to many local residents especially those living in the villages along the route. If a through service between March and Kings Lynn ceases, considerable inconvenience and even hardship will be caused to the many residents who rely on this service to access schools, work and hospitals.

Should Stagecoach fail to reconsider their operation of this route we further ask the Council to work with Norfolk County Council to ensure that another provider is found to operate the complete route”.

The Chairman invited Kathy Dougall the petition organiser to present the petition, the text of which is included as Appendix 1 to these minutes. Following this, the Chairman invited the Committee to ask any questions of clarification. One Member asked whether the same petition had been presented to Stagecoach who were responsible for the Service, for which the response was no. It was suggested that it would be appropriate to do so and it was agreed that officers would help in obtaining a further copy of the petition and help the petition organiser undertake this action. **Action Paul Nelson**

Another Member asked whether the growth plans for the area would impact on the sustainability of the service. The petition organiser replied that with more growth in the towns and villages and the fact that the roads in Fenland were not of sufficient capacity unless the bus service was preserved, more people would be forced into cars, adding to congestion. In addition, as the area had a large older population and many youngsters, they were already restricted in their mobility, as many could not afford to run a car.

As there was no appropriate report on the agenda, the Chairman informed the lead petitioner that she would receive a formal written response within 10 working days from the date of the meeting. **Action Paul Nelson / Chairman**

116. CAMBRIDGESHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES FRAMEWORK

This report updated members on the need for the re-procurement of the current Archaeological Services Framework which was shortly due to expire, to enable the provision of archaeological work to support new developments in Cambridgeshire.

Cambridgeshire County Council as a major landowner and developer has to abide by the National Planning Policy Framework and associated guidance, and undertake archaeological work in advance of or as part of the development process. Paragraph 1.3 of the report set out the current services delivered under the current framework with paragraph 2.2 setting out the proposed procurement timetable. It was proposed that the Archaeological Services framework would be made available for other public sector bodies to utilise and by introducing a rebate, this might provide an income opportunity for the Council.

Questions / issues raised included:

- There was a query regarding the likely costs, as the report did not provide any information on whether the new framework contract was likely to incur greater or

lesser costs than the current framework. In response it was surmised that the likelihood was that the pre-negotiated day rates would be slightly higher, reflecting the fact that the economy was no longer in recession. Each development would be scrutinised and the work negotiated separately.

- Another Member asked what percentage of the level of activity currently undertaken was statutorily required. In reply it was indicated that the team negotiated with colleagues on a level of work required through the interpretation of the regulations and what was considered reasonable. In Cambridgeshire there was a culture of seeking to involve the public and this extended to schools and children being involved, in order to seek to obtain added value. Nothing in the fieldwork undertaken added any additional requirements on a developer.
- In reply to another question on whether there were any additional costs not provided in the report, the response was no and as another Member highlighted, paragraph 4.2 indicated that while the current contract value was likely to increase owing to the anticipated new projects in the pipeline, this was covered by project budgets, so there were no revenue costs to the Council.
- One Member queried the need for the report to come to the Committee as there appeared to be no Member involvement in scrutinising the detail of the framework contract. It was explained that as the value of the contract was over £500k this constituted a key decision requiring a Committee decision. The report sought agreement for officers to be able to go out to the market and invite bids and was the only requirement under contract standing orders.

It was resolved unanimously to:

support the re-procurement of the Archaeological Services Framework for a period of four years to 2022.

117. WISBECH ACCESS STRATEGY

The Wisbech Access Strategy is a package of highway schemes to improve accessibility, and address congestion in and around the town of Wisbech and address the current problems on the transport network, to support and enable future housing and job growth as set out in the Fenland Local Plan.

This report set out details of the work of the Wisbech Access Strategy and the results of the public consultation on the preferred package of measures, recommending the short term package of measures for approval to the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) / Business Board / Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA). It was highlighted that £1m of Growth Deal funding has been allocated from Government to the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough LEP. The Government would provide up to a further £10.5m for scheme delivery, on the condition that scheme development work resulted in an acceptable and deliverable package of transport measures.

The report summarised the development of the Wisbech Access Strategy, providing information on the phasing of options, including the impact of the wider transport network including the A47 jointly developed by Cambridgeshire County Council and

Fenland District Council, with input from the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk, Norfolk County Council.

The Wisbech Access Strategy was made up of the following individual schemes,

- Freedom Bridge Roundabout
- Wisbech Bus Station
- Operation of Cromwell Road including A47 roundabout
- Operation of Elm High Road including A47 roundabout
- Weasenham Lane and Ramnoth Road junction
- New River Crossing
- Western link Road
- Southern Access Road
- A47 Broad End Road Junction

The schemes had been grouped into phases – short, medium and long term to reflect developments and timescales in the Fenland Local Plan and the availability of funding for delivery. The report focused only on the recommended preferred short term package of measures. One scheme the A47/Elm High Road Larger Roundabout scheme EH3b was being brought forward from the medium term to shorter term, due to additional funding expected to be made available from the CPCA.

The results of the consultation as detailed in paragraph 2.9 and appendix 2 of the report showed good levels of support for all the Wisbech Access Strategy draft preferred package schemes except for the Southern Access Road scheme, due to the implications for the Wisbech railway line project. The evidence base for the Fenland Local Plan and the Cambridgeshire Long Term Transport Strategy stated that additional east – west road network connectivity was required in Wisbech to support the additional jobs and housing growth, and to reduce congestion on the existing road network. Both Member engagement and the public consultation results provided clear support for protecting the railway corridor and the view that the Wisbech Rail Study needed to conclude without being impacted on by the Wisbech Access Strategy. To take account of the railway line and ensure that no decision were taken that would preclude any future delivery of a rail project, it was proposed to proceed with a phased approach regarding the Southern Access Road.

The preferred proposed package schemes developed allowed for

- The Wisbech Access Strategy to progress within the required Growth Deal timescales
- The Wisbech Rail study to conclude the station location without any impact from the Wisbech Access Strategy
- Access to be provided to the South Wisbech Development Site.

It was suggested that if the study work concluded that the best location for a station would be north of New Bridge Lane, the new roundabout on the A47 would be constructed to provide access to the Wisbech South Development site. If the best station location was determined to be south of New Bridge Lane, New Bridge Lane would be

connected over the railway line and the roundabout would not be constructed, subject to relevant approvals.

The report detailed risks and issues associated with the proposed package listed in paragraph 2.13 of the report. Paragraph 2.14 and the subsequent table provided details of the funding of the package of the recommended schemes to be financed from the £10.5 million of funding from the Growth Deal Funding from the LEP and the additional expected £10.5m from the CPCA. Table 4 set out the timeline for the implementation of the preferred short term package.

The following two Local Member representations were received who could not attend but asked that their comments should be brought to the attention of the Committee:

- a) **From Cllr Hoy Wisbech East** supporting the recommendations stating “as they ensure we get vital investment to the town without losing the Railway options.
- b) **From Councillor Simon King** who while fully supportive of the majority of the report stating “that while this is an excellent piece of work by our officers, I remain strongly of the opinion that the possibility of severing the railway line at Newbridge Lane should be ruled out now for two reasons:
 - 1. This was the only aspect of the public consultation that was not supported;
 - 2. Even if the GRIP 3 study supports a station south of the A47, the possibility of the railway line accessing the centre of Wisbech should remain as a future aspiration.

This is all about future proofing the possibilities for growth in Wisbech and ideally I would like the report to be amended to reflect my views. Just for the record, this is what I said at the Wisbech Access meeting and I abstained from supporting that part of the report”.

In discussion issues / questions raised included:

- Strongly supporting the public and local member views received regarding not cutting the railway line and the compromise suggested in the report.
- As projects of this size inevitably took a long time, reassurance was requested that if there was an increase in costs due to unplanned, unforeseen circumstances that these would not be borne by the Council. In response the officers indicated that they were asking for detailed costings and permission to undertake a procurement exercise and would come back to Committee with the results.
- Another Member asked the officers how confident they were regarding the timescales for a decision on the final location of the railway station, bearing in mind that there was now talk of Cambridge South Station being delayed until 2015. It was explained that rather than wait from GRIP 3 in 18 months’ time, this report was proposing progressing schemes that did not alter where the station would be located.
- One Member highlighted the need for a project board with member involvement.

In response officers indicated that there was already a steering group with County, District and Town council representation and the proposal was to keep this going. The Member suggested that it should meet monthly.

Having considered the report,

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) endorse the short term package of schemes and recommend it to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) Business Board and CPCA Board for final approval and release of the £10.5m.
- b) endorse bringing forward the A47 Elm High Road junction medium term scheme for earlier delivery using CPCA funding and seek appropriate approval from the CPCA as required
- c) recognise that a flexible approach is required to schemes within the package and that as further design and scheme development work is carried out, the final package of schemes may change and that the final package for construction will be brought back to Committee
- d) endorse the phased approach being taken regarding the Southern Access Road Project and the railway line.
- e) authorise officers to carry out further work on the Wisbech Access Strategy and the short term package of schemes including:
 - i) Land Negotiations and Purchase Negotiation or submission of consents for the delivery of the schemes as appropriate.
 - ii) Developing a procurement strategy for the delivery of a package of transport improvements in Wisbech totalling £21m.
 - iii) Delegate authority to the Executive Director for Place and Economy in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee to commission the design and detail design stage of the schemes.

118. FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT – OUTTURN 2017-2018

The Committee received the 2017-18 Out-turn report for Place and Economy Services (P&E) in order to provide the Committee with an opportunity to comment on the actual outturn position.

The main issues highlighted were:

Revenue: Across P&E as a whole, the outturn position was a £53K overspend. The two major E&E Committee revenue variances at outturn were Highways Development Management (-£334K) and Concessionary Fares (-£491K), both of which were forecast as underspends across the financial year and were used to offset the pressure in Waste Services. The Highways Development Management underspend reflected an

over-achievement in income from Section 106 and Section 38 fees, and the Concessionary Fares underspend reflected the increased age for eligibility.

Capital: Since the last forecast financial position was reported to Committee, there had been changes in the following schemes:

- Ely Crossing 2017/2018 spend was £3.8m higher than previously forecast reflecting an accrual for land purchase.
- Guided Busway compensation payments had further slipped by an additional £468K.
- Connecting Cambridgeshire expenditure had slipped by a further £437K and although delivery was on track, the expenditure profile had been re-phased.

Performance: The year-end position (with the proviso that some of the PI's were based on estimates) was that none of them were red, five were amber and seven were green.

In discussion the following issues were raised:

- Regarding the financial support to contracted bus routes, a Member understood that money had been made available to be able extend their provision to the end of the current financial year (as the money delegated to the Combined Authority had been delegated back) and suggested that as the original decision was for the contracted bus routes to be financed until September, that this should be formalised with a report to Committee. It was confirmed that with the exception of bus route 46 which had been financed to the end of August, there was sufficient funding for the other bus routes to be supported to the end of the current financial year. The Executive Director agreed that it would be appropriate for a report to come back for decision to the next formal Committee meeting.
- Although not strictly for discussion at this Committee,(as they were mainly within the responsibility sphere of Highways and Community Services Committee) with reference to pages 98 and 99 there was discussion on the appropriateness of underspends in some areas being used to offset overspends in other areas. One Member suggested the potential a perception that some services had been reduced in order to support other areas, with particular reference being made to the savings on Concessionary Fares. The Executive Director explained that it was his responsibility to achieve a balanced budget across the entire Directorate and that it was entirely appropriate to use savings to offset unexpected overspends in other areas. The underspend on Concessionary Fares had been due to the increase in the age entitlement and from there being less bus services to spend them on. The three underspend areas referred to on pages 98 and 99 of the report were fortuitous as detailed in the text, and had not been planned, and did not involve cuts to serves or activities not having being undertaken.
- The Chairman drew attention to the good news story on page 92 under the heading 'Economic Development' and the additional jobs that had been created as detailed in the report.

Having reviewed and commented on the report it was unanimously resolved to:

note the report.

119. ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE AGENDA PLAN, TRAINING PLAN AND APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES PARTNERSHIP LIAISON AND ADVISORY BODIES

This report reviewed the Committee's agenda and training plans and appointments to outside bodies, internal advisory groups and panels. The following updates were orally reported:

Appendix 1 Agenda Plan:

The following addition to the July agenda:

Key decision report titled 'Community Transport Grant Procurement Award' - Report author Paul Nelson

Since the last meeting update, a number of reports for the June Committee had been moved to later meetings. As there was only now one substantive report on identifying additional funding for the Bikeability Scheme and bearing in mind the oral update to the Minute Action log regarding ongoing discussions on possible funding sources, this would now be more appropriate for July. For these reasons it was proposed to cancel the June meeting.

Appendix 2 - Training Plan is for information

An oral update addition to the Plan reported was that there had been an additional Ely Bypass site visit on 9th May attended by Councillors Connor and Hunt.

Appendix 3 – The Committee was asked to consider if any changes were required to the exiting appointments. With reference to the Enterprise Zone Steering Group on page 142, Councillor Fuller indicated that he had already been appointed onto this Group in his District Council cabinet responsibility role, and therefore needed to resign from being a substitute for the County Council. It was agreed his replacement would be sought via the appropriate delegation following the meeting.

It was highlighted that due to the change in the Executive Director's title following the recent service re-organisation it was necessary to revise the previous agreed delegation in order to be able to agree appointments between Committee meetings.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- i) Note the agenda plan as updated above attached at Appendix 1 to the report with the further addition of a report to the July Committee meeting to authorise extending the funding on the contracted bus services to the end of the 2019 financial year.
- ii) Agree to cancel the June Committee meeting;
- (ii) Note the training plan attached at Appendix 2 to the report as updated:

- (iii) Agree the appointments to the outside bodies, partnership liaison and advisory groups and internal advisory groups and panels as detailed in Appendix 3 with the exception of re-appointing Councillor Fuller to the Enterprise Steering Group and that this vacancy be filled using the delegation process between meetings. (included as appendix 2 to these Minutes)

120. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING 10 A.M. THURSDAY 12th JULY 2018

**Chairman:
12th July 2018**

Appendix 1

PETITION PRESENTED AT THE ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE ON THURSDAY 24TH MAY @ 10 A.M. IN THE KREIS VIERSEN ROOM (KV ROOM) ON THE FIRST FLOOR AT SHIRE HALL, CASTLE HILL, CAMBRIDGE CB3 0AP.

North East Cambridgeshire Constituency Labour Party is bringing the proposed change to the 46 bus route to the attention of the public for 3 reasons:

- 1. The needs of the community and local businesses.**
- 2. Our responsibility to protect the environment.**
- 3. The cost to the Taxpayer.**

The original 46 bus route ran hourly from March to Kings Lynn connecting several villages to each other and to the Towns of Wisbech and March and, perhaps most importantly, to Kings Lynn to access Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Fenland District Council's booklet ***Getting from A to B Hospitals*** acknowledges that ***'there is a growing difficulty for patients without a car accessing hospital appointments.'***

The route covered an area of high deprivation in which many people do not have access to a vehicle, especially the under 25s and over 60s. As some of the towns and villages covered by the original route are earmarked as growth areas, the need for good bus services will grow, not diminish.

Buses are a lifeline for the villages for social and business purposes. The loss of any bus services can mean that friends and family are no longer able to connect to each other and those residents lose their connection to social pleasures, i.e. going out to the cinema or for a meal.

Social isolation is an acknowledged problem amongst older people in particular. If our towns are less accessible, this will impact on local businesses and on the heart of our towns. A vibrant bus service would encourage all residents to visit town centres more frequently.

Many people rely on a bus service to get to work, to seek work and to get to schools and colleges. Reducing the bus service in any way has a negative impact. Young working people are often the lowest paid and more reliant on public transport to access work or the job centre.

This is the reason the Labour Party is proposing free transport for the under 25s. If these young people have restricted travel it will mean that youth unemployment will be higher and local businesses will find their choice of employees restricted.

A vibrant bus service attracts people out of cars and onto public transport, which leads to less demand for parking space in our towns, less vehicle pollution, freer flowing traffic and a reduced need for repairs to our roads.

There is an economic impact on the community of the loss of bus services that far outweighs the commercial needs of bus companies.

- Social Isolation, which has a widely acknowledged knock on effect on our local health services, social services and the services of our local charities.
- The inability of parents to access child care facilities or schools.
- Higher levels of unemployment or underemployment.
- Closing of local businesses
- Environmental costs of extra traffic - potholes etc.

In Conclusion

It make sense to work towards giving Councils the power to franchise transport services at cost, rather than for profit and to providing a more accessible bus service rather than cutting services.

We call upon the Council, as a first step, to work with Norfolk Council to reinstate the 46 bus route and to extend the route to allow single bus service which runs from March to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Kings Lynn.