

**ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE: MINUTES**

**Date:** Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> March 2018

**Time:** 10.00 a.m. to 11.16 a.m.

**Present:** Councillors: D Ambrose-Smith, I Bates (Chairman), D Connor, L Harford (substituting for Cllr Fuller), D Jenkins (substituting for Cllr Adey), N Kavanagh, J Williams and T Wotherspoon (Vice Chairman).

**Apologies:** D Adey, R Fuller and S Tierney

**93. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

**94. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2018 were agreed as a correct record.

**95. MINUTE ACTION LOG**

The appendix to the Minute Action Log was tabled and had been added before-hand to the electronic record. The following updates since the agenda publication were reported:

**Minute 16 - Bikeability Cycle Training** local sponsorship – as an oral update details were provided of an update response sent to the Committee in an e-mail the day before the Committee. This highlighted that unsuccessful approaches for sponsorship had been made to local companies. From feedback received it was clear that potential sponsorship relationships required a considerable staff time, thus cost commitment. Given that staff time was rechargeable back to projects, and any time spent seeking sponsorship had to be weighed up against what appeared to be a low likelihood of finding a sponsor, a better approach for Cambridgeshire would be that nationally the funding shortfall was addressed either by:

- the availability of more funding;
- the introduction of a management model that uses a charity rather than a consultancy; or,
- the identification of a national sponsor.

In the meantime, shortfalls for Cambridgeshire were being addressed by reducing the amount of training delivered to match the Department for Transport (DfT) funding provided.

In discussion on the above update, the Committee was concerned regarding any actions that would result in a reduction to the Programme. This was seen as a potential contradiction, especially as at the same time:

- Highways and Community Infrastructure Committee were looking at safety and ways to reduce the number of cyclist casualties which had been increasing.
- The Council continued to promote a substantial cycle way building programme and sought to encourage the modal shift away from cars to other forms of transport with bikes being a key component.

The argument in support of the scheme was that it did not make sense to cut cycling training to young cyclists aimed at helping teach them the appropriate skills to keep them safe and to encourage the right behaviours to make them responsible, model cyclists of the future.

In response, the Executive Director undertook to prepare a report for a future meeting which would detail what the shortfall would be going forward, stating that current funding would be available until the end of the summer term. Members highlighted that if sponsorship was still considered impracticable or alternative funding not forthcoming from Government / other sources, the report should also seek to identify possible alternative sources of funding within the Place and Economy budget to enable the Committee to consider whether a political decision should be pursued to fund it from other budget areas.

### **22nd September Committee Minute 40 land North of Cherry Hinton –request for a New Developments seminar**

A seminar on new developments would be scheduled later in the year. The officer suggestion that outstanding seminars should be progressed as topic slots on the monthly member seminar programme was supported.

It was resolved:

- a) To note the Minutes action Log including the oral updates provided,
- b) that officers would prepare a report to a future meeting following further investigations regarding the likely level of funding shortfall for the Bikeability Scheme to also include alternative funding options.

## **96. PETITIONS AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

No petitions or public questions were received.

## **97. WINTRINGHAM PARK PLANNING APPLICATION – OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION**

This report was presented for the Committee to consider and endorse or make suggested changes to the officer's response set out in Appendix 1 to the report on the Wintringham Park Outline Planning Application. This had been submitted in October 2017 and comprised the outline planning permission for development of a mixed use urban extension to include:

- Up to 2,800 dwellings;

- Up to 63,500 square metres of employment development (B1-B8);
- District Centre including shops, services, community and health uses;
- Local Centre;
- Temporary Primary School, Two permanent Primary Schools;
- Open Space;
- Play Areas;
- Recreation facilities and landscaping;
- Strategic access improvements including new access points from Cambridge Road & 428;
- Associated ground works and infrastructure.

An application for full planning permission had also been made for:

- Construction of new roads;
- Hard and soft landscaping;
- Creation of sustainable drainage system (SUDs) and all associated engineering works including creation of haul routes.

The report highlighted the key issues raised in the Council's response under the headings:

**Education:** The County Council welcomed the new location of both primary schools, the County Council previously objected as a result of their close location to the railway line, and this has been addressed. Clarification was however required with regard to the phasing plan and its potential implications as detailed in paragraph 2.3. to ensure sufficient initial primary places were available.

**Transport:** paragraph 2.7 listed the improvements to be secured through planning conditions or section 106 monies with detail of the mitigation to the two external junctions on the local road network still to be agreed. Paragraph 2.9 listed the section 106 details still to be agreed

**Libraries and Lifelong Learning** - there was confirmation the library and lifelong learning facility would be contained in the Community Centre.

**Strengthening Communities Service, People and Communities** - The County Council were seeking from the developer more formal support for community development, especially for those more vulnerable, to ensure all people were fully integrated as detailed in paragraph 2.11.

**Health** - The Officers had concerns regarding the proposed phasing of the proposed health facility and where it would be located.

In order to meet Huntingdonshire District Council's (HDC) deadline the Officer submission had been submitted on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2017 as they were considering the planning application on 19<sup>th</sup> March. The report was not presented earlier to members as a result of the ongoing negotiations on education land provision at St Neots eastern expansion, which had now been resolved and additional education land was to be provided within the Wintringham Park development. Any amendments made to the officer response would be forwarded to HDC.

The local member for St Neots Priory Park and Paxton spoke in support of the recommendations and also provided the views of the local member for St Neots East and Gransden.

On Education he highlighted the need to learn from the experience of Loves Farm to ensure enough primary school provision was initially provided and highlighted that the multiplier used to estimate the number of school places required was out of date and did not reflect the new multiplier agreed by the Children and Young People Committee in December. He highlighted the need to err on the higher side multiplier estimates.

Regarding the multiplier, it was pointed out that the original planning application had been drawn up before the County Council decision had been made. Officers assured the Committee that they had taken on board learning points from the Loves Farm development which had been built in a recession when there had been a particular emphasis on more affordable housing density which had resulted in a higher yield of children which had not been sufficiently taken into account when planning primary school places. Developers on new growth sites were now asked to use the high point rather than the mid-point multiplier estimates and the new developer had been very co-operative in relation to expected required school place provision to take account of higher yield child levels which were also a feature of such developments as they tended to attract young couples looking to start families. The details of primary school provision set out in paragraph 2.4 including the temporary primary school was expected to meet the number of places that would be required. County Council officers were working closely with Huntingdonshire District Council as they made decisions on the allocation of section 106 funding and going forward were looking to go forward on the higher multiple estimates.

He raised a question regarding whether there was currently any spare capacity in the local secondary schools for special school places. In reply it was explained that there was limited capacity in St Neots but as this was off-site, the County Council could not seek Section 106 contributions and was therefore looking at CIL funding from Huntingdonshire and the same from St Neots to provide provision from the Alconbury site by 2020 (subject to CIL funding). To meet secondary school demand the intention was to expand the two existing secondary schools.

The local Member also highlighted the following for which responses were requested and provided by the officers as indicated:

- The need to ensure the A428 dualling improvement works between the Black Cat and Caxton Gibbet roundabouts was escalated, as if delayed and the proposed development went ahead, this would lead to gridlock. In response it was explained that the application was ahead of the work on the A428 but that transport mitigations as detailed in the report included contributions from section 106 monies. It was highlighted that there was a Government commitment to improve the A428 and M1 and while there had been no recent news, it was hoped that there would be an announcement before the summer.
- Regarding roads within the estate that again lessons needed to be learnt from earlier developments to ensure they were made wide enough to accommodate the passage of emergency and refuse vehicles.

- With reference to paragraph 2.5 of the report and the new temporary primary school as triggers had not yet been agreed.
- The need for additional special school provision was detailed in paragraphs 1.36 to 1.40 of the response.
- With reference to paragraph 2.9 and the list of section 106 details not yet agreed, this required more consultation work from the officers.
- In respect of a community facility it was good that the offer had been made, but highlighted the need to ensure that a building was provided as opposed to a funding contribution as the Loves Farm experience had shown that monetary contributions were insufficient and would then require the council to make good the shortfall.
- In respect of health facilities there was the need for a new General Practitioner (GP) surgery as currently there was a half an hour walk to the nearest surgery. Another member on this point queried whether there was also a need for a dental surgery. In terms of a GP surgery there was currently no conclusion as the NHS had not said whether they wanted a facility on-site. Urban and Civic the developers were working closely with the Health Trust to co-ordinate health related activities with schools and the community centre with County Council officers encouraging that the larger primary school site should also include community use provision. The County Council were also requesting that there should be a library as part of such co-ordinated provision and that it should be delivered early as a physical building, rather than a monetary contribution.
- What provision was to be made on site for Post 16 Education provision? In response it was highlighted that young people liked to go to a town centre for such provision, with education officers currently stating that there was sufficient capacity in the post 16 sector, but further expansion would again be dependent on CIL funding, as it was offsite.

Questions / issues raised by Members included:

- The need to work closely with Huntingdonshire District Council to ensure provision reflected the requirements of the local community.
- It would have been helpful to have been provided with a more detailed map showing the proposed location of the new primary schools as one Member had concerns if it was placed too near to roads and sources of noise and air pollution. It was explained in response that the location of the schools had taken into account environmental and physical conditions, analysing likely noise and pollution levels. As the current application was only in outline, the officers did not at this stage have the details of the proposed road layout.
- While welcoming the change of location for the primary schools as no longer being located next to a railway line, as it was proposed that children would have to travel three miles to access secondary school provision the Council Cycling Champion asked whether there were proposals for walking and safe, segregated cycle routes? In reply it was explained the secondary schools were less than three mile radius, as the three miles reference was by using a car taking a longer road route. It was explained that developer agreement had been reached to secure pedestrian / cycling infrastructure improvements including improved pedestrian / cycling provision on the two existing underpasses at the rail station

to access St Neots. It was explained that there were two routes through to St Neots which would be enhanced for pedestrians / cyclists to be secured by a public transport contribution.

- One Member commented that schools should be located in the centre of a community and not placed at the edges of a new settlement.
- The same Member highlighted that looking at the maps the railway line appeared to separate the new developments, commenting that there was a need for communities to look west and not just east, and would require a bigger St Neots.
- On whether there was a fall-back position in terms of temporary solutions should Highways England delay the A428 improvements, it was explained that officers were looking at temporary solutions to mitigate the impact of the development and that there was an alternative scheme to get traffic away.
- On the above, the point was made strongly that infrastructure should always be provided before urban expansion and there was pessimism on whether the A428 improvement scheme would be achieved before the development. Another Member suggested that this required Combined Authority involvement / funding to ensure it happened.
- On a question on what public transport provision had been secured for Loves Farm Phase 1 the Member who made the point that what continued to happen in such developments was that as soon as the public transport contribution ended, the bus provider ceased the provision. What was therefore required was public transport provision in the form of a long term public transport plan.
- The need to recognise the desire for residents to own cars and have sufficient space to park them off road to avoid overspill onto roads. This was acknowledged by the officers as one of the learning points from earlier developments.
- One Member highlighted that the section on strengthening community facilities contained no proposals for youth provision and whether in the community building being proposed, there would be a separate space for youth activities. Following this point using the example of community colleges in Cambridge, another Member suggested the provision should be a shared community education centre. He also asked about whether the ambition could be extended to include a swimming pool and landscaped green areas. It was explained that there was already a good sized swimming pool in St Neots.
- It was suggested that as a new development needed to be looking to the future, all new developments should look to having electric charging points and solar panels as standard fittings as well as being water efficient. The point was made that in terms of economies of scale, it made sense to fit solar panels at the beginning of a development to all appropriate buildings rather than retrospectively fitting them in a piece meal fashion. It was explained that some money was available for renewable energy works and to build to the Bream sustainable building standards. The current developer was being co-operative as

they wished the development to be a legacy development. It was also highlighted that the temporary primary school on the Roundhouse site would be an eco-building. The officers would go back to the developers and discuss further renewable energy possibilities.

From the discussion, the Chairman proposed and the Vice Chairman seconded that Officers' should draft a letter to Highways England to reflect the concern of the Committee to ensure that there was no delay to the improvement proposals for the A428 and its contents should reflect the discussion to bring forward the required improvements infrastructure as detailed in the report. This was unanimously supported.

In discussion it was agreed that the delegation as set out in the report would be sufficient for the Chairman and Vice- Chairman to agree changes to a final response to emphasise points made at the meeting, including the requirement to use the newer multiplier.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Endorse the response as set out in Appendix 1 of the officer's report; and
- b) Delegate to the Executive Director (Place and Economy) in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Committee the authority to make minor changes to the response taking on board specific issues raised at the meeting.
- c) Request that officers write to Highways England to highlight the need for the A428 upgrade to be expedited in advance of the development being built.

## 98. FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT – JANUARY 2018

The Committee received the latest Finance and Performance Report for the period to the end of January 2018 to enable it to comment on the projected financial and performance outturn position.

The main issues highlighted were:

**Revenue:** there had been no material changes since the previous month relating to Economy and Environment Committee budgets, with the forecast bottom line overspend position across the Economy, Transport and Environment (ETE) budget now having reduced to underspend of £112k from the overspend figure of £143k reported in the December report.

**Capital;** Since last month, the forecast spend on Ely Crossing has reduced by £3.8m, Scheme Development for Highways Initiatives by £1.0m, and Soham Station by £0.3m. Overall across the Place & Economy Services capital programme there has been £5.2m of slippage which means that the Capital Programmes Variations estimate is now exceeded.

**Performance: on the twelve performance indicators:** one was currently showing as red (the average journey time per mile during the morning peak on the most congested routes) four were showing as amber (three in the previous report), and seven green

(eight in the previous report). At year-end the current forecast was that no performance indicators would be red, five would be amber and seven green.

One Member highlighted that the Ely Southern Bypass represented a significant risk as the outturn costs of the scheme had significantly increased but there were no detailed figures provided in the current report. In response it was explained that a full separate report on Ely Bypass was included in the forward agenda plan and would be coming forward to the next Committee meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> April at which time up to date figures would be provided.

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

## **99. ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE AGENDA PLAN, TRAINING PLAN AND APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

Having received the forward agenda plan as set out in the agenda:

It was resolved:

To note the agenda plan with the following additions / changes since the version published on the agenda:

Add to 14<sup>th</sup> June 2018 the following key decision report:

- Highways Response to West Cambridge Master Planning Report

Add to 12<sup>th</sup> July 2018 meeting the following key decision report:

- Waterbeach New Town Planning Application Response

Add to 13<sup>th</sup> September 2018 the following key decision report:

- Kings Dyke Contract Award Approval

The Training Plan was noted with it being highlighted that on page 100 Item 12, the A14 Site Visit this had been confirmed for the afternoon of 10<sup>th</sup> April. Expressions of interest had so far been received from the following Councillors:

Harford  
Jenkins  
Bates  
Hunt  
Wotherspoon  
Scutt  
Dupre

As there are only 12 sets of safety equipment this left five places and the Committee was asked if any other members present wished to be included. As no other expressions of interest were received was agreed that the invitation should be extended

to the rest of the Council on a first come, first serve basis. **Action: Democratic Services**

For the other outstanding seminars (Bus Bill Section 106, New Developments) as proposed and agreed earlier in the meeting these would be via utilising the existing monthly Member Seminar Programme with the proviso that as the next few seminars were already fully allocated, they were not likely to be before the Autumn.

The Committee therefore resolved:

- a) To note the Training Plan and that regarding the two training proposals for which a date had not yet been identified, slots would be sought as topics on future Member seminars.
- b) To open up the invite for the A14 site visit to all Councillors in order to seek to fill the 12 places available.

**100. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING 10 A.M. THURSDAY 12<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2018**

**Chairman:  
12th April 2018**