

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

Date: Tuesday 17th May 2016

Time: 10:00am-12.15pm

Present: Councillors Ashwood, Butcher, Chapman, Criswell, Hunt, McGuire (Chairman) Reeve (Vice-Chairman), Rouse, Taylor, Walsh (substituting for Cllr Scutt) and Williams

Apologies: Councillors Connor, Gillick and Scutt (Cllr Walsh substituting)

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

It was noted that the Council had appointed Councillor Mac McGuire as the Chairman and Councillor Peter Reeve as the Vice-Chairman for the municipal year 2016-17.

Members welcomed Councillor McGuire, and passed on their thanks to Councillor Hickford, for his outstanding chairmanship of the Committee over the past two years.

190. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

191. MINUTES AND ACTION LOG

The minutes of the meeting held on 1st March 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The Action Log was noted.

192. PETITIONS

The Committee considered a 166 signature petition about the state of West End road in March.

The petitioner, Mr Horry, handed out photos illustrating the problems in the road and on the pavements in West End, March. He explained that water pipes in West End were very old and corroded, and there were frequent leaks, and he was aware of at least six leaks within 120 yards. Often no-one was aware of the leaks until the water ran off into the river, which was some distance away, so the leaks could be going on unchecked for months. The leaks created serious erosion to the subsoil, causing problems such as cracking and subsidence in the road, which were particularly dangerous for the elderly, those using mobility vehicles and young people on bicycles. Anglian Water had only undertaken temporary repairs to address these issues. The pavement had a very high footfall, being on a busy road near the town

centre, but the petitioner was aware that many elderly people used other routes because of the poor state of the pavement.

The Chairman read out comments from Local Member Councillor Clark, who advised that having walked the length of West End, he supported the petitioners, as there were several areas which needed attention.

In response to Member questions:

- it was confirmed that West End was an adopted road;
- the Committee noted that the petitioners had originally contacted both March Town Council and Anglian Water. Anglian Water had suggested that the problems resulted from bad repairs made by a telecoms company.

A number of Members expressed support for the petitioners, and also pointed out that resurfacing the road and pavement would not address the issue, but that the underlying problems with the utilities companies needed to be resolved in the first instance.

The Committee noted the petition and the Chairman advised that the petitioners would receive a full written response within ten working days of the meeting.

The Committee then considered a 57 signature petition about the state of pavements in Boyces Road, Wisbech.

The petitioner, Mr Reid, circulated photos illustrating the problems. He explained that no work had been done to the pavements in Boyces Road for 35 years, and the state of the pavements resulted in problems, especially for parents walking with children in pushchairs and elderly people on mobility scooters, and some pedestrians used the grass verge in preference to the pavement. The flooding meant that some residents had water coming up their driveways. He confirmed that his Local Member, Councillor Hoy, had visited the site some time ago when he had written to her, but she had advised that the situation was unlikely to be resolved. Councillor Lay, a County Councillor and Wisbech Town Councillor had also visited the site and raised the issue with the Town Council, but nothing had been done. Mr Reid confirmed that he had not been in touch with his MP to date.

The Chairman explained that there were set criteria for intervention levels, and that such cases were assessed and prioritised accordingly. It was noted that a Highways Engineer would normally be asked to accompany Councillors on inspection visits.

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

193. INTEGRATED TRANSPORT BLOCK FUNDING ALLOCATION PROPOSALS

Members considered a report proposing the prioritisation of proposals for Integrated Transport Block (ITB) expenditure in 2016-17. Members' views and support was sought for the proposed projects to receive ITB funding.

It was noted that one of the major changes to the proposed allocations compared to previous years was to reduce the *Major Scheme Development* budget by £200,000, as

most scheme specific development work could be funded from individual City Deal and Growth Deal budgets, and increase the Local Highway Improvements (LHI) budget by £200,000. There was also a *Delivering Transport Strategy Aims* budget, which combined two funds from previous years' capital budget categories, at Members' suggestion.

Arising from the report, Members:

- welcomed the additional funding for the LHI budget, and noted that LHI accessibility works (e.g. disabled parking bays, Rights of Way improvement) was included in the £682,000 total, and was not topsliced;
- noted that Appendix 1 to the report provided the short list i.e. proposed projects for 2016-17, whilst Appendix 2 gave the long list i.e. all projects that had been considered;
- commented that it would be useful to see a breakdown of the total £601,000 LHI funding by District/City authority **ACTION: Elsa Evans to circulate information to Committee Members;**
- pointed out that when the A14 works commenced, a lot of traffic would divert on to the A1123, and those villages would suffer as a result. The Member highlighted particular issues, such as 'Top Corner' (the dog leg junction) in Haddenham, which should be investigated. A number of Members indicated their support for such an investigation, especially given the ongoing growth in housing development in Ely, and the corresponding increase in traffic volumes. The Member also highlighted the importance of connecting up existing cycleway schemes along eastern half of the A1123 and A142 with Ely. Officers commented that when the A14 works commenced, there would be discussions about construction traffic routes, but the wider public would be free to choose which routes they took. With regard to cycleways, there was only limited funding, but the cycling team was good at identifying and addressing missing links in the county's cycling network;
- Councillor Chapman commented that the LHI process was still flawed in that large market towns such as St Neots could only make one bid, the same as small parishes with a population of only a few hundred – the process needed to be more equitable. In response, the Vice-Chairman advised that this had been discussed at Spokes, and pointed out that whilst individual organisations could only make one bid i.e. Parish/Town Councils, other sponsors e.g. Local Members, schools, could also make bids for their communities. It was noted that the one St Neots bid on the 'long list' was not selected as funding was available from Section 106, specifically the S106 Transport Plan funding. Councillor Chapman expressed strong concerns that out of the total £1.346M fund, there was no funding for any scheme in St Neots;
- A Member queried if there were sufficient officer resources to support the increase in the number of schemes facilitated by the additional £200,000. Officers acknowledged that there was additional pressure on officer resources but explained how this was being dealt with, including simplifying the LHI processes.

Members discussed funding for capital projects more widely, noting the LHI initiative was continuing to be reviewed, and that there were also opportunities through third party funding, and communities paying the County Council to undertake schemes where there were no budgets available.

It was resolved, by a majority, to:

- a) support the allocation to of the Integrated Transport Block (ITB) budget;
- b) support the proposed projects in Appendix 1 for allocation of ITB funding in 2016/17, and for proposed inclusion in the Transport Delivery Plan.

194. PROPOSED 2016-17 TARGETS FOR HIGHWAYS & COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Committee considered a report on the targets for key performance indicators to be included in the Economy, Transport and Environment Finance and Performance reports for 2016/17. Members were reminded that at the March 2016 Committee meeting, they had approved the indicators, and suggested targets had now been developed for those Indicators. The rationale for each target was set out in the appendix to the report.

In terms of the targets for road and footway maintenance, it was confirmed that currently 6% of the network is in a condition where maintenance should be considered, and the target was that this should not increase above 8%. It was also noted that there were a small number of indicators where there were no formal targets, but they were regularly reported to Committee in the Finance & Performance reports, so that Members could track the direction of travel e.g. the indicator on Unclassified Roads.

A Member commented that whilst welcoming the increase in digital access to archives documents, he was concerned that the new archives facility would only be open to the public three days per week, as access to physical documents and being able to browse what was available were key parts of the archives experience, especially for young people and visitors/tourists. It was confirmed that there had been no formal discussions with Ely City Council, but there had been discussions with both Ely Cathedral and the University of Cambridge.

Members discussed the maintenance Unclassified roads, noting there was a difference between e.g. no-through Unclassified roads in sparsely populated areas or estate roads, and heavily used Unclassified roads connecting communities – the indicators did not reflect this distinction. Officers agreed, commenting that the Asset Management Strategy focused on those roads with the highest usage, so that the diminishing resources available could be prioritised and used most effectively. It was agreed that it would be helpful to have a seminar on the Asset Management Strategy later in the year, so that all Members were aware of the strategy now being followed.
ACTION: Dawn Cave to add to Member Seminar schedule.

Members noted the Indicator for Road and Footway maintenance of *“narrowing the gap between Fenland and other areas of the County”*, and observed that fenland roads were not just in Fenland District, but also in parts of Huntingdonshire and East Cambridgeshire.

A Member queried the focus on the Community Hubs strategy, and the impact on visitor numbers in terms of reduced hours and stock in libraries. Officers confirmed that the 2015/16 target was 2.5 million visitors, and outlined the initiatives and

mitigating measures being put in place e.g. the “Open Plus” (unstaffed access) trial in St Ives, and the recent experience of Chatteris Library. With regard to Library Access Points (LAPs), it was confirmed that LAP visits are included in the statistics and that these may be collected by LAPS through a sample of visitor numbers and extrapolated. A member commented that library visitors was a very useful indicator to monitor, and both staff and volunteers were very conscious of these figures. He stressed that libraries were not just about books, but also community use, and thanked the Service Director and library service for their open and proactive approach to developing the library service.

It was resolved unanimously to:

Comment and approve the proposed 2016/17 targets for Highways and Community Infrastructure key performance indicators as set out in Appendix A to the report.

195. HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE MEMBER WORKING GROUP

The Committee considered a report on the Highway Maintenance Member working group’s work and suggestions for carrying out highway maintenance going forward.

Councillor Criswell, the Chairman of the Working Group, gave the background to the group and the issues they had been looking at. He explained that one of the aspirations of the Working Group was to improve the network to ‘Band 3’ level, which would enable the Council to secure further DfT funding.

It had been proposed by the Working Group that to get things moving in terms of ease of community involvement, minimal risk and sustainability, there were four types of work that volunteers could carry out:

- Siding footways and cycleways;
- Cutting back overhanging vegetation;
- Cleaning signs;
- Litter picking.

It was clarified that these four areas were very much regarded as a starting point, and it was anticipated that these areas could be expanded in future.

An Information Pack had been produced and circulated to Committee Members. Members suggested a number of changes that could be made to that document, and officers agreed to review the document in the light of these suggestions **ACTION:**
Richard Lumley.

A Member praised the work undertaken by the group, and the Information Pack, but observed that most references were to “parishes”, and suggested that the wording and approach needed to be adapted to embrace Cambridge City and other urban areas where there were no Parish Councils.

In response to Member questions, officers:

- Confirmed that equipment would be provided, although volunteers were free to use their own equipment;
- Commented that the best route for volunteers to get involved was probably through their local County Councillor, and agreed that information needed to be disseminated to all County Councillors so that they were aware of the initiative and could signpost appropriately;

A Member suggested that (i) minor planting schemes to unloved areas (ii) weed-killing e.g. to be timed with “In Bloom” competitions, and (iii) verge maintenance e.g. seeding to repair minor damage could be explored as future areas. Members discussed wider issues regarding verge maintenance and Parish and County grass cutting regimens. It was also agreed that any bureaucracy needed to be minimised, and District and City Councils needed to be aware of the initiative, so that there was no conflict or confusion.

It was noted that the Member Working Group would reconvene after twelve months to review progress. It was agreed that the membership of the Member Working group would be circulated to the Committee **ACTION: Richard Lumley.**

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) note the content of the report.
- b) endorse the rollout of volunteer packs to Parishes and communities.

196. FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT – MARCH 2016

The Committee received a report setting out financial and performance information for Economy, Transport and Environment (ETE) as at the end of March 2016.

Members noted the likely underspend for year end, and the anticipated year-end slippage for capital budgets. The Committee was reminded that the Scheme of Financial Management permitted Service Management Teams to propose “carry forwards” from year-end underspends which could be held in reserve for specific earmarked purposes. These plans would need to be endorsed by the General Purposes Committee in July. The Committee was asked to review these proposals and endorse the list for consideration by General Purposes Committee for final approval.

There was a discussion on the overspend on network management, and it was noted that the additional funding from government was a one-off opportunity to enable more potholes to be filled in 2016-17. In response to question on the average cost of pothole repairs in the county, officers agreed to provide this information to Members. **ACTION: Richard Lumley.**

In response to Member questions:

- In relation to the new Archives facility, officers advised that realistically, this was likely to open late in 2017;

- It was confirmed that the “Lane rental implementation costs” referred to in Appendix 2 the report related to permitting;
- It was confirmed that when the PFI Street Lighting contract was originally agreed, it was not cost effective to make LED replacements. Discussions were ongoing with Balfour Beatty on the potential to make changes to the contract to use LED lights. Any such proposal to change the contract would come through Spokes and this Committee, and the General Purposes Committee.

It was resolved to:

1. Review, note and comment on the report;
2. Endorse the proposed use of service underspends and refer them to General Purposes Committee for approval.

197. APPOINTMENTS TO INTERNAL ADVISORY GROUPS AND PANELS, PARTNERSHIP LIAISON AND ADVISORY GROUPS

The Committee considered appointments to internal advisory groups and panels, and partnership liaison and advisory groups. Members were advised that since the agenda had been published, changes had been made to the membership of the Committee at full Council, including the Chairman, and therefore it was proposed to change the following appointments from Councillor Hickford to Councillor McGuire, in his capacity as Chairman of the Committee:

- Cambridgeshire Waste PFI Member Steering Group
- RECAP Board
- Traffic Penalty Tribunal

In addition, Members agreed to appoint Councillors McGuire and reeve to the Highways Transformation board, in their capacities as Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

Members agreed to appoint Councillor Dupre to the vacancy on the East Cambridgeshire Local Highway Improvement (LHI) Panel. It was also agreed to create an additional place on the Huntingdonshire LHI Panel, and to appoint Councillor Wilson to that place. The Clerk confirmed that whilst the LHI Panels did not have to follow political proportionality, attempts had always made to ensure that where possible, they were approximately political proportionate to the County Council proportionality for the relevant District authority.

It was resolved unanimously to:

note the agenda plan and appointments to outside bodies, including the updates reported orally at the meeting.

198. COMMITTEE AGENDA PLAN AND TRAINING PLAN

Members noted the Agenda Plan and Training Plan.