

**ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE: MINUTES**

**Date:** Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2015

**Time:** 10.00a.m. to 11.30 a.m.

**Present:** Councillors: I Bates (Chairman), J Clark, D Harty (substitute for Cllr Harford), R Henson, D Jenkins, N Kavanagh, A Lay, M McGuire, J Schumann, M Shuter, A Walsh and J Williams.

**Also present:** Councillors M Shellens.

**Apologies:** **Councillors:** E Cearns (Vice-Chairman) L Harford.

**126. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN**

It was noted that the Council meeting had re-appointed Councillor Bates as the Chairman and Councillor Cearns as the Vice Chairman for the Municipal Year 2015/16.

**127. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

**128. MINUTES AND ACTION LOG**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2015 were agreed as a correct record.

In relation to the entry on page 5 Minute 114) 'Details requested on other funding streams' this information was provided to Committee Members in an e-mail dated Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May from Democratic Services.

Councillor Lay made reference to the response in the Minute Action Log on Minute 114 C) 'Improvements to the Bus Station Wisbech' sent to him on 11<sup>th</sup> May providing more details of the upgrade to Wisbech Bus Station. He highlighted that one of the main outstanding issues involved the removal of the existing taxi rank facilities and concerns that Fenland District Council had not implemented the taxi drivers' alternative proposals. The Chairman indicated that as this was the responsibility of the district council, the Councillor should take it up directly with them.

It was unanimously resolved:

To note the updates on the Minutes Action Log.

**129. PETITIONS**

None were received.

**130. CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS  
RESPONSE TO THE A14 IMPROVEMENT SCHEME DEVELOPMENT CONSENT  
ORDER (DCO)**

The report when written had sought Member's views and approval on the following written representations from the County Council to Highways England's (HE) Development Consent Order (DCO) for the A14 improvement scheme:

- providing the County Council's response to the scheme,
- a draft Local Impact Report, and
- a Statement of Common Ground.

The above were set out as Appendices 2, 3 and 4 respectively. Due to their size, they had not been included on the agenda, but copies had been made available in advance of the meeting in the Members Lounge and Committee Group Rooms. A link to electronic copies on the Council website had also been provided in the main report. Hard copies were available for the public at the meeting.

It was explained that the County Council strongly supported the proposed improvement scheme which was seen as essential to support the on-going economic growth and prosperity of Cambridgeshire, as well as being necessary to facilitate planned major new developments such as Northstowe.

It was highlighted that further transport assessment work had been undertaken to seek to secure full agreement on the transport modelling and impacts on the local network. In relation to environmental impacts and especially in relation to ecology, officers had also been working with HE to resolve outstanding issues and to ensure that where possible, impacts could be adequately mitigated. In addition, the County Council had been discussing with HE the basis of a Statement of Common Ground included in Appendix 4 as part of the proposed submission.

It was indicated orally that since the report's publication, the Council had received the latest submission version (3a) and would be looking to comment on this version at the next meeting. The officers highlighted the position on issues since the report's publication including:

- That the County Council had not been successful in persuading the Examining Authority to accept a separate written representation on traffic. The Council would however be able to comment on further submissions relating to local traffic impacts. As a result, the intention would be to include a more robust response on traffic in the first written representations document and a revised local impact report was to be submitted in September after Highways England (HE) had completed local traffic impact testing.
- HE had agreed to a 10 year aftercare programme on some of the borrow pits.
- Further progress had been made on archaeology, and
- HE had agreed to address existing flooding in areas such as Girton, Bar Hill and Brampton, as part of the detailed design.

Mike Evans from Highways England (formerly the Highways Agency) was also in attendance to answer questions of detail regarding the scheme.

The local Member for Sawtry and Ellington Councillor Simon Bywater provided written comments which were read out indicating his support for the Project but raising concerns over the Noise Mitigation levels for the Village of Ellington on the western limits of the project and seeking reassurance that this would be addressed, given the volume of traffic increase and thus the impacts on residents.

Councillor Shellens one of the Local Members for Godmanchester and Huntingdon East had requested to speak as a local member and as the Vice-Chairman of Brampton Parish Council and raised the following issues, while making clear that although the views on the project relating to Brampton were agreed by a majority on the Parish Council, it had not been unanimous. In his presentation he:

- highlighted while that the parish council broadly accepted the national need for the road, recognising that there were benefits and that areas of Brampton would have cleaner air and that the removal of the viaduct was supported, he also drew attention to concerns about the effects of 140,000 extra vehicles running close to some areas of housing and a local school.
- There was concern that the parish might be given the borrow pits after the 10 year maintenance period was exhausted which was not a responsibility they wished to take on, in view of the potential safety / liability issues and wished to receive assurance that they would not be forced to take on the commitment. In reply officers indicated that they would press for appropriate management and safety measures to be put in place. Officers also clarified that they did not believe that the pits were proposed to be passed on to the Parish Council and it was understood that the Parish could not be compelled to take on such responsibilities. It was indicated that HE policy would be to eventually dispose of sites not operationally required to any interested parties, and that this would be a responsibility for the HE to arrange.
- There was a need for a footbridge at the station to take pedestrians across the East Coast Main Line (ECML), thus freeing up road width for what was seen as a critical need to widen the road and create an additional lane for vehicles going into town.
- Raised the concern of residents in Mill Common, Castle Hill and Waters Meet regarding the extended route they would need to take from the east to now be able to access their roads.
- Highlighted that Highways England had claimed that by using the borrow pits they could not only control run-off from the new road, but also reduce the pre-existing risk of flooding in the village. He stressed that most of the village flooding during his time originated from back flow from a raised Great Ouse river, and he did not see how this could be avoided, as the pits were the wrong side of the housing to absorb high water. Also at times of high flows, the pits, would be receiving sideways water from the river. The officers thanked the Member for drawing this to their attention.

- Indicated that forecasts of 60% reduction in traffic flows along Thrapston Road were not considered realistic by the village who feared that local drivers would utilise the shortest route from the station to Brampton Hut by coming along this road. As this had been discussed at great length in the past without positive resolution, he asked whether it would be possible to have a contingency budget item within the scheme to fund remedial measures should traffic levels reach an agreed trigger point. In response the officers indicated that they were still working with Highways England on the traffic model and would consider the request when the process was completed.
- Asked whether it was possible to have some trees planted around the school to reduce and impede the access of particulates. The officers undertook to look at this request.

The Local Member was thanked for his contribution with the Chairman indicating that the officers were aware of the issues he had raised which would be looked into further, and a fuller response would be provided outside of the meeting. **Action.**

The Chairman invited the Committee to comment on the contents of the cover report page by page. In discussion Members raised issues / received replies including:

- On a question on which developments apart from Northstowe had been taken into account in relation to the key assumptions made in the improvement scheme, it was explained that all known developments had been included with the exception of:
  - a) RAF Wyton, as this was at too early a stage in the Local Plan process to be included for traffic forecasts, but that the development had been included in the overall growth update forecast and
  - b) the A428 proposed improvement scheme, which was to be dealt with through sensitivity testing.

the same Member highlighted the recent announcement on developments including Waterbeach which was to result in an increase in the number of dwellings to over 30,000 to accommodate the prediction of 44,000 new jobs being created by 2031 and asked whether these latest forecasts had been included, as he had concerns on whether the new scheme would be able to cope with these increased numbers. In response it was explained that Northstowe Phases 1 and 2 had been included, but that completion of Phase 3 was beyond 2035. Modelling however had been undertaken on the full scale of the development, which included redesigning the Bar Hill junction, bridge widening to accommodate carriage widening. These had shown that the measures would be able to cope with the estimated increase in traffic from Northstowe Phase 3. The increase in housing at Waterbeach would have implications, which required further modelling work.

- paragraph 17 - Replying to a query on what consultation had been undertaken with reference to the removal of existing safety cameras on the de-trunked section of the A14 and whether the police had been consulted, it was explained that this had been reviewed by the Road Safety Group who were content there was not a safety need for cameras following de-trunking with the point also made that the cameras would in any case be obsolete / life expired.

- Paragraph 5.18 - removal of the Huntingdon Railway Viaduct - the Council Cycle Champion suggested that the pavement on Brampton Road should be widened to create a segregated cycle path to safeguard pedestrians and children going to school. The current information provided by HE suggested that the pavement would be wide enough to incorporate a mixed use cycle lane which was not the standard the Council was seeking to provide in areas such as Cambridge due to the potential pedestrian / cyclist conflict.
- With reference to paragraph 5.20 and the text indicating that there was likely to be some deterioration in air quality around Cambridge, it was clarified that this linked to paragraph 21 stating that this was on the assumption that general traffic levels continued to increase into Cambridge. However this did not take into account potential changes as part of the City Deal aimed at increasing sustainable alternative means of travel and reducing the level of traffic coming into the city as well as recent European legislation which over time would help remove higher polluting vehicles from the road.
- It was clarified in answer to related questions that currently it was not possible to say that there would be an increase in congestion in Cambridge as a result of the reassignment of the A14 and this would be the task of local impact assessments to model, but the expectation was that the increase would be south of the A14 around the outskirts of the City. Currently it was not possible to identify if this would be as a result of the A14 or from new developments. Members requested that the Committee should see the data on pollution / congestion levels once finalised.
- Noise reduction measures was another area highlighted as an issue from several local members and there was a request that HE should keep their promise on undertaking such measures including the use the most up to date technology and not just walls.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note the report;
- b) approve the draft Written Representation in Appendix 2;
- c) approve the draft Local Impact Report in Appendix 3;
- d) approve the draft Statement of Common Ground in Appendix 4 and delegate authority to the Executive Director for ETE in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Committee to amend the items in Appendix 3 and 4 as necessary to inform the County Council's input to the Examination.

## **131. SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

This report updated Members of the Committee on the new roles, responsibilities, risks and challenges under new planning duties for Cambridgeshire County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) and the ongoing work already in progress, including discussions with the district councils on the use of Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs).

It was explained that as a statutory consultee the Council was from April 2015 responsible to provide technical advice in relation to surface water and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) previously undertaken by the Environment Agency (EA).

The duty related to all major developments as detailed in the report and as a statutory consultee, with the exception of pre application discussions, the County Council was not able to charge for the advice it provided. In addition a March 2015 update to National Planning Practice Guidance recommended that local planning authorities (LPAs) should also seek advice from the LLFA for other smaller development proposals where there were known flood risk issues.

The report highlighted that the resources provided would not be sufficient to finance the staffing levels for the role previously undertaken by the EA and as the County Council could only fund one additional full-time post for three years, the Council would not be able to review and advise on all applications. It was therefore proposed that the Council undertook a risk based approach based on the available resources with the detail and risks set out in the report. Officers also proposed to seek support from the City and District Councils in undertaking the new requirements.

Officers sought advice on whether a workshop for Members should be set up to provide more detail on the new requirements (and as a response to an earlier question) would also include an update on the progress on the discussions being undertaken with the District councils. This approach was supported.

The Committee's views were sought on the above proposals.

In discussion issues raised by Members included;

- Members expressed the view that the legislation was a retrograde step as the County Council was being required to take on additional responsibilities without the necessary resources to properly carry out the job required.
- A concern expressed regarding the potential liability to the County Council on applications where an opinion was given on likely flooding without a full survey being undertaken and where future flooding then occurred. In response it was indicated that no liability would fall on the County Council as it was only providing advice. Where this advice was not taken by the LPA and as a consequence the development caused flooding, the liability for inappropriate surface water consideration would fall to the LPA.
- Seeking clarification of the future role of the Environmental Agency (EA) it was clarified that the Agency was still responsible for assessing flood risk in flood zones and related to main river flooding. The County Council's role in relation to planning is was limited to advising on surface water flooding in larger new developments.
- A Member asked what could be done to stop residents paving over grass which was known to increase the risk of surface water flooding. In reply it was indicated that under current legislation if residents wished to pave over their front gardens and were considering laying traditional, impermeable drivewaysthat depending on the

size of the area there was a requirement to apply to the LPA .

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) note the change in approach by Central Government and the resulting increased risks and responsibilities for the Council;
- b) approve exploring possible opportunities which would enable the City and District Councils to support the County Council in its new role to provide technical advice on surface water and sustainable drainage proposals for new developments;
- c) approve the allocation of existing grants to fund one additional post for three years as set out in paragraphs 2.4 to 2.6 of the report; and
- d) support the ongoing work of the Local Government Association to lobby Government to ensure this important work is properly resourced.

### **132. PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO TWO KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT**

Following suggestions by Heads of Service, this report proposed amendments to the definitions and targets for two of the previously agreed performance indicators as follows:

#### **a) County Matter Planning Applications**

The current indicator was the percentage of applications determined within 13 weeks, with an agreed target of 50% for 2015/16. In order to align with statutory requirements, the proposal was that it was changed to the following: *“The percentage of applications determined within 13 weeks or within a longer time period if agreed with the applicant”*. *The proposed target suggested being 100%*. The report provided examples of where a longer time period may need to be agreed.

#### **b) Number of adult learners completing courses to improve their chances of employment or progression in work**

The agreed target for 2015/16 was currently 20,000. In order for the indicator to align with the targeting of harder to reach groups, the proposal was to change the definition to the following:

“The number of people in the most deprived wards completing courses to improve their chances of employment or progression in work.” The most deprived wards being defined as the 10% of wards with the highest index of multiple deprivation as listed in Appendix A to the report and linked to the Council’s commitment to tackling deprivation and narrowing the deprivation gap.

In the 2013/14 academic year (the latest available figure), the number of learners in this category completing courses was 1,763. A target of 2,000 was therefore proposed for the 2015/16 academic year.

It was resolved unanimously:

to approve the proposed changes above and in Section 2 of the report.

### **133. FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT – MARCH 2015**

This report provided the Committee with an opportunity to comment on the projected financial and performance outturn position as at the end of March 2015.

It was highlighted that at the end of March ETE was forecasting a year end underspend on revenue of £980,000. The cost centres under the stewardship of the E&E Committee were forecasting a year end underspend of £144,000.

In relation to the budgets under the stewardship of the Committee three significant forecast variances were reported in respect of:

- An overspend of £265,000 was forecast on Park and Ride, where usage of the sites had been lower than the anticipated level since the introduction of the parking fee.
- Concessionary fares £100,000 where increased passenger numbers were resulting in higher costs and
- Passenger transport other; an underspend of £311,000, where the decision to roll forward funding for community transport to future years, to support the existing schemes for a longer period, would result in a technical underspend at year end.

The other main updates highlighted included:

- At the end of November, ETE was forecasting a year end underspend on capital of £39.65 million.
- There were six significant areas of forecast underspend for which this Committee had responsibility namely in relation to the Science Park Station, the Connecting Cambridgeshire project, the Guided Busway, the Huntingdon West of Town link road, cycling schemes and Chesterton Busway Scheme.
- Of the eleven performance indicators for the Committee two were currently red, three amber and six green.
- The two indicators that currently had a status of red were County matter planning applications determined within thirteen weeks and local bus passenger journeys originating in the authority area. At year end the current forecast was for County matter planning applications determined within thirteen weeks and the percentage of complaints responded to within ten days to be red.

Arising from the report:

- In relation to appendix 2 and the information on concessionary fares being over-budget (due to increased ridership) One Member queried how this shortfall would be funded. In response it was indicated even though the Council had no control over the number of users it was required to find the money either from other underspends or from reserves.
- On appendix 7 page 19 with reference to the performance indicator resulting to the number of people starting as apprentices, there was a request for more information



on the outcomes for the 2,000 plus apprentices, in terms of numbers passing their apprenticeship and whether there was any data available on the numbers that had gone on to full time jobs or further training. Officers agreed to look into this further and write to the Members outside of the meeting. **Action**

- Page 21 performance indicator regarding the percentage of invoices paid on time – one Member suggested that officers should consider rewording the prompt payment target to change it to read “not more than 3%” rather than “97%”. In reply it was indicated that this would be the last month that the target would be recorded as it was due to be dropped as a key performance indicator on the basis that the target had consistently been reached / surpassed over five or six years.

It was unanimously resolved to note the report.

#### **134. LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN (LTP) REFRESH**

This report highlighted that in line with legislation, the Council Constitution reserved adoption of the final version of the LTP for full Council. The intention was therefore that the LTP should go on to the Council meeting in July for final approval with the current report informing Members of the minor refresh changes made to the Strategy since it was originally agreed by the Committee as set out in Appendix A to the report.

Officers proposed a change to the recommendation so that the Plan was being recommended to Council rather than referred to Council, which was agreed without debate.

It was unanimously resolved to:

Recommend the refreshed LTP: Policies and Strategy and the new LTP: Long Term Transport Strategy to Council for adoption as core documents of the Third Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan, replacing the original document that was adopted in March 2011.

#### **135. SERVICE COMMITTEE AGENDA PLAN**

This report sought approval to cancel the 11<sup>th</sup> August public Economy and Environment Committee meeting and for the session to be turned into a private workshop session for members to discuss business planning for 2015/16. In addition, the Committee had been informed in advance of the following changes to the Agenda Plan made since publication of the Plan on the current agenda:

The report on the ‘Draft Infrastructure Investment Plan’ had been moved from the 14<sup>th</sup> July to the 17<sup>th</sup> November meeting.

##### **Additional Report added to the 6<sup>th</sup> October:**

Section 106 Recommended Allocations – Report Author Dearbhla Lawson – this will be a key decision

##### **Outside appointments / partnership bodies**

These would be sent to Spokes shortly. **Action**

It was unanimously resolved to:

- a) to note the Forward Agenda Plan at Appendix 1 and to agree to the cancellation of the 11<sup>th</sup> August 2015 Committee meeting so that this can become a business planning workshop. note the Agenda Plan as amended.
- b) To note that a review of outside appointments would be considered at the July Committee meeting.

**136. DATE OF NEXT MEETING 10AM 14<sup>th</sup> JULY2015**

Noted.

Chairman  
14<sup>TH</sup> July 2015