

ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE: MINUTES

Date: Thursday, 15th November 2018

Time: 10.00a.m. to 10.58a.m.

Present: Councillors: D Ambrose-Smith, H Batchelor I Bates (Chairman), D Connor, R Fuller, D Giles, N Kavanagh, S Tierney and T Wotherspoon (Vice-Chairman)

Apologies: Councillors J Williams

171. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

172. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th October 2018 were agreed as a correct record.

173. MINUTE ACTION LOG

The Minutes Action Log was noted.

Matters arising:

Minute 164 Approach to the agreement and distribution of Community Infrastructure levy (CIL) and Section 106 Funding

The action to this report was that it should be sent to all Members and a workshop organised to explain it in more detail. After consultation with Democratic Services, the suggestion was that as there was already a Member seminar scheduled for 7th December that included a topic on the limitations on Section 106 payments for the County Council, the timeslot should be expanded to include more detail on the above, rather than seeking a further date in the new year.

The Committee agreed to the proposal.

With reference to page 25, the Chairman of Planning wished to place on record his appreciation of the hard work of the Council's Planning Team in achieving a 100% response rate in respect of statutory deadlines.

174. PETITIONS AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS / REQUESTS TO SPEAK

a) Petition

One petition with over 2000 electronic signatures had been received to reinstate a bus

service from Cambridge to Papworth. Although a proportion were not from residents in the County (as a worldwide petition site had been used) there was still considerable support from local residents in support of the views of the petition.

Grace Fisher a seventeen year old college student who had organised the petition spoke in person in support of the petition and her speech has been included as Appendix 1 to these minutes.

The Chairman in thanking Grace explained that he knew Papworth well and the issues around the withdrawal of commercially provided rural bus services. He welcomed the fact that the Combined Authority had provided funding to continue the bus service in the short term. For the longer term, the Combined Authority would be responsible for reviewing and making decisions on supporting local bus services where the bus operators had withdrawn them on commercial grounds. Councillor Howell the local Member for Cambourne who was also present to support the petition, indicated that he did not need to add anything, as Grace had already eloquently stated everything that needed to be said.

The Committee was invited to ask any questions of clarification from the presentation. A question was raised regarding the sources of information quoted regarding the point made that every £1 invested in local bus infrastructure brought in over £8 in wider economic benefits. As these had been provided in the submission, Democratic Services undertook to email the links to the Committee following the meeting and include them in the minutes. **Action** (Note they are also included as footnotes to the speech at Appendix 1).

b) Speaker in opposition to the report recommendations – Item 5 - St Neots Northern Foot and Cycle Bridge – Selection of Preferred Design Option

A request had also been received from Mr Douglas Bridge in opposition of the proposals in Item 5 regarding taking forward proposals for a St Neots Northern Foot and Cycle Bridge. In addition, shortly before the meeting, he passed to Democratic Services a copy of the printed paper petition which included over 180 signatures reading:

“This demand is to Cambridgeshire County Council and St Neots Council asking you to reconsider your plans and call a halt to the project. The location of this bridge would prove detrimental to the local beauty of Regatta Meadow, the clean view down the river from the town bridge and is situated in such a location to cause adverse impacts on town events, water sports regattas and local residents.”

A link was also provided to an electronic petition on the same subject with over 390 signatures but as this was from a general petition website, the signatures were likely to include a proportion of people in support who did not live or work in the County and could not be further verified / investigated at such short notice. Democratic Services undertook to provide the link to the Committee following the meeting. **Action**

The main points of Mr Bridge’s submission are set out at Appendix 2 to these minutes.

The Committee was invited to ask any questions of clarification from the presentation. A question was asked regarding what was meant by 300 movements. In reply Mr Bridge explained that this referred to 340 single uses of the bridge taken from a 2011 census on the basis that there were no developments planned in this part of St Neots and Eaton Socon. As a follow up, the same local Member asked whether he had seen the amount of school children who travelled across the river each day, which he estimated to be in the hundreds and would benefit from a dedicated river crossing where there was no cars.

Another Member queried his statement regarding the deficiencies in the consultation exercise carried out by the officers, asking him to clarify this further. In reply he suggested what was presented in the report was a top level review and the table under paragraph 4.3 on page 33 did not provide a further breakdown to show the proportion who strongly supported or supported the bridge options and the same again between those who strongly objected or just objected to the design of each bridge. The same was also the case regarding the 18% of respondents who had responded, objecting to all three design options. He stated that 40,000 people lived in St Neots and therefore the proportion of replies received (1,454 responses) was not a good representation of local support for the project.

The Chairman thanked Mr Bridges for his contribution and invited him to stay to hear the debate on the next report, as this was the report he was objecting to.

175 ST NEOTS NORTHERN FOOT AND CYCLE BRIDGE – SELECTION OF PREFERRED DESIGN OPTION

The report was seeking determination of the preferred design for a new foot and cycle bridge, following public consultation.

As the Chairman had already allowed the local resident objecting to the report to speak, he now allowed asked Councillor Wells the local member for St Neots Priory Park and Little Paxton and the Chairman of the Master Plan Steering Group who had also requested to speak in advance of the meeting, the same opportunity.

Councillor Wells explained that the Master Plan had been developed to encourage a balance between growth and improving the quality of life for local residents. The River Ouse ran through the centre of St Neots and as the town continued to grow, active measures were required to manage the growth in traffic. The footbridge in Phase 1 was one of the measures to help alleviate the current congestion issues. He thanked the officers for their analysis of the need for a bridge. He drew attention to paragraph 4.10 of the report which highlighted that the Steering Group strongly supported the provision of a new foot and cycle bridge having been mindful of the Public Consultation results and the views of Historic England. They had highlighted that careful consideration needed to be given to minimise the impact of the bridge on the Regatta Meadow and how it connected to existing footpaths in terms of both its visual appearance and in terms of sporting events. This had been taken on board to a degree in respect of the way the pathway from the bridge curved away. The Steering Group therefore supported the option of a suspension bridge. Councillor Wells did however also express concern at the increased estimated costs of the scheme as currently detailed in the report.

The Committee was invited to ask any questions of clarification from the presentation.

- One Member asked the Councillor's opinion on the level of local opposition to the idea of a bridge. In reply he stated that overall there was support for a bridge, but accepted that there was always concerns on any proposals and that some people would believe that the money would be better spent elsewhere, as well as those that felt that the view of the Regatta would be affected.
- Whether, without approval to the bridge, would the Master Plan still be able to go ahead. It was explained that the bridge was one of the key elements and without it, the ambitions of the Plan would considerably constrained.
- In answer to whether when the original Willow Bridge was proposed, it had also engendered a similar level of local opposition, he confirmed that at the time there had been considerable vocal minority opposition.

The report highlighted that:

- In 2008 a Market Town Transport Strategy for St Neots was approved to secure and spend S106 developer funding for transport projects in the town.
- This Committee in November 2016 agreed that resources should be directed to developing a business case for a northern foot and cycle bridge with the outline business case set out in Appendix 1 to the report.
- Proceeding to a public consultation on a new bridge had been supported by the Town Council and County Councillors representing St Neots.
- A consultation was undertaken in the summer of 2017 to determine the preferred location option, as well as to gauge the level of support for a new bridge. 1,079 responses were received. There was strong support in principle for the bridge project with 77.7% of respondents expressing support. The main reasons cited were: improved safety, encouraging walking and cycling, and reducing congestion.
- Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) felt that the concept of a bridge to the north of the Town Bridge was important, and in keeping with the thrust of the Market Town Transport Strategy. St Neots Town Council had also debated their preferred choice.
- The results of the consultation together with option appraisal commentary and a recommendation were presented to the Economy and Environment Committee on 7th December 2017. The current report set out the factors taken into account in considering the preferred option, setting out details of the appraisal undertaken on each of the original four options.
- A site analysis and options study report was commissioned to inform possible bridge options for the consultation, and to consider the impact a bridge would have on the local setting and environment with the detail of the three designs chosen undertaken in consultation with the Masterplan Steering Group set out in the report.

- The consultation took place through the Summer of 2018 with 1,454 responses received and a summary of the results was provided in Appendix 2 and within the main report detailing the preferred options.
- The main positive comments received included:
 - It would encourage much more cycling,
 - It would provide a safer route across the river with a safer route to school for children;
 - It would enhance the town and the river, and would signal a general improvement in infrastructure for St Neots.
- There was opposition to the bridge being built, with 18% of respondents recording an objection to all three design options.
- Appendix 2 also contained a map showing where people not supporting any of the three bridge options lived. This highlighted that people living closest to the bridge were largely supportive as they could see its benefits, with residents more inclined to oppose the scheme/all options living further away from the bridge, within the south of the town. It was explained that Officers had written specifically to the most affected residents with a group of properties near where the proposed best option bridge landed, not providing sought after feedback.
- St Neots Town Council supported to Option Three – Suspension Bridge, whilst expressing similar concerns to those of The Steering Group regarding paths on Regatta Meadow.
- Historic England were supportive of the aims of the Masterplan and agreed that the proposed bridge would provide a link to the historic centre of the town, and could potentially increase activity in the area, but expressed the view that a bridge could have a negative impact on the Conservation Area.
- The Environment Agency stated that any bridge design chosen should not negatively impact on the free flood flow or the navigation of the river.
- In partnership with the County Council's Bridge Maintenance Team and consultants Skanska, a technical appraisal of the bridge options had been undertaken, which fed into a detailed options appraisal table, set out in Appendix 3 of the report taking account of the factors listed in paragraph 5.1 of the report. From this assessment, Option Three (Suspension Bridge) scored the highest, closely followed by Option Two (Cable Stayed). Option One (Arch Bridge) scored lowest which was the same as a 'Do Nothing' option.
- Taking all of these factors into consideration the officer recommended proceeding with Option Three – Suspension Bridge - which fulfilled the wishes of the Town Council for a 'statement' type bridge, whilst being sympathetic to the local environment and opinions.

- Section 6 of the report set out the programme funding and key risks which if all went to timetable as set out, would see a report to the May 2020 Committee seeking the Committee's approval to agreeing the construction contract.
- The full funding as identified in the detail of the report amounted to £4.5million. To date £469,000 has been spent on the project, which covered feasibility work, ecology surveys, stakeholder engagement and consultations, ground investigation, bridge location studies, land searches and option design development. It was estimated that the actual budget required would be in the range of £5.5-£6.5million.

In discussion:

- It was highlighted by another local member that St Neots town centre was highly polluted in the summer months and so there was a need to get car traffic away and encourage more walking and cycling. He highlighted that Willow Bridge had proven to be a considerable success.
- Regarding the implications to Regatta Meadow, the curvature of the path from the bridge would to some extent help minimise the impact. In respect of the impact on future events, the layout of the bridge had been shared with the Rowing Club and a bridge in the location proposed was seen as helping people to access such events.
- With reference to the open ditch shown on the Map on page 29 a local Member asked whether, as there was never a large body of water in it, it could be piped and filled in, which would help with regatta events. Officers indicated that they could look into this, but highlighted that the Environment Agency were not keen on piping ditches.
- One Member while aware that the level of local support had been the subject of potential misrepresentation in some previous reports, was swayed in this case by the fact that there was cross party support and local member support with members elected to represent the views of their residents. The Chairman who owned a boat was also aware of the local area and the issues that had been raised.
- There was concerns regarding in the current financial climate where the projected £1-£2 million current shortfall would be funded from. In terms of risk the estimate was currently the worst case scenario, with the scheme currently being at a very early stage, but the officer aspiration being to ensure that the costs were kept within budget. The risks were not as high as with other projects, as there were no landowner or Network Rail issues as had been the case with other projects which had exceeded original budget estimates. A more accurate estimate of the costs would only be known at the design development stage.
- On the subject of criticism expressed earlier that only 1400 responses had been received, Officers highlighted that this was a better response rate to similar exercises carried out in Cambridge which was three times larger. Leafleting had

involved schools, health centres, libraries as well as the events set out in the report.

On being put to the vote it was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note scheme progress to date;
- b) Note the public consultation results;
- c) Support the proposal to further develop a bridge design based on Option 3, a suspension bridge;
- d) Procure contracts for planning, bridge design and Early Contractor Involvement; and,
- e) Support the submission of a planning application and a bridge navigation order.

176. FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT – SEPTEMBER 2018

As this report had not been available at the time of the original agenda despatch, the Chairman using his Local Government Act 1972 discretionary powers had agreed to take it as a late item.

Reasons for Lateness - Officers were waiting confirmation for some of the figures within the report,

Reasons for Urgency - it is a standard requirement to provide a F&PR to every Committee.

The Committee received the report in order to comment on the projected financial and performance outturn position as at the end of September 2018. It was explained that there had been little change since the previous month's report as there were still the same pressures previously reported.

The main issues highlighted were:

Revenue: The Service has started the financial year with two significant pressures for Coroners Services and Waste (both which came under Highways & Community Infrastructure Committee). The P&E service was showing that it will make £370K savings by year-end to bring the budget back into balance, and this would either be through new underspends and additional income, or planned reductions in service if required at the later stages of the year.

Performance: Of the twelve performance indicators, one was currently red, four were amber, and seven were green. The indicator currently showing as red was 'The average journey time per mile during the morning peak on the most congested routes' At year-end, the current forecast was that the above performance indicator would remain as red, five would be amber and six green.

Issues raised included:

- On page 16 on the reserves schedule referencing the line titled 'Proceeds of Crime' Councillor Giles asked for more detail on what it was and whether Highways and Community Infrastructure Committee, the relevant Committee budget holder, could spend it on services. The Finance Officer undertook to investigate further and write to him outside of the meeting. **Action: Sarah Heywood/ Quinton Carroll / Peter Gell**
- Page 26 – Key indicator on Growth in Cycling - from a 2004/05 average base line - The Vice Chairman commented that as the figures shown were only percentages in terms of both the base line and the other columns e.g. previous period, target and actual, there was no feel for the real numbers involved. There was a request for the figures to be provided which had been used to calculate the percentage figures shown. **Action: Sarah Heywood / Mike Soper / Louisa Gostling**

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

note the report.

177. APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES – PROPOSED COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON GREENSAND COUNTRY LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP AND TO GROWING FENLAND PROJECT DELIVERY STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

The report explained that Councillor Kindersley has been asked to join the Greensand Country Landscape Partnership Board and represent Cambridgeshire County Council as the local member. In addition, the County Council had been asked to ratify the nominations from the Leader of the Council to appoint one local County Council Member to represent it on each of the Combined Authority's four new proposed Growing Fenland Stakeholder Groups.

It was resolved unanimously:

- a) To approve Cllr Kindersley's representation on the Greensand Country Landscape Partnership
- b) To approve the following appointments to the Growing Fenland Project Delivery Stakeholder Groups:
 - Chatteris - Cllr Anne Hay
 - March - Cllr Jan French
 - Whittlesey - Cllr Chris Boden
 - Wisbech – Steve Tierney

178. ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE TRAINING PLAN

The report invited the Committee to review its training plan. There had been one update since the last meeting in relation to the proposal agreed under the Minute Log Action update earlier in the meeting (Minute 173) that the workshop on the approach to the

agreement and distribution of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) And Section 106 Funding requested at the last meeting would be combined with the Section 106 Funding item already included on the Member seminar for 7th December.

The Training Plan was noted.

179. ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE AGENDA PLAN

The Committee noted the following changes to the Agenda Plan since the agenda was published.

Moving the following reports from the January to the February Committee meeting

- Royal London Waterbeach Planning Application
- Bourne Airfield Outline Planning Application

180. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING 10 A.M. THURSDAY 6th DECEMBER 2018

**Chairman:
6th December 2018**

Appendix 1

PRESENTATION FROM GRACE FISHER IN SUPPORT OF THE PETITION TO REINSTATE BUS SERVICE PAPWORTH

Thank you Chairman for allowing me to speak. As you are aware, in the past 8 years, there has been a 41% decrease [1] in funding for public transport in Cambridgeshire. Nationwide, there has been a reduction of over £172 million [2] in local bus funding. These cuts have left many communities without any form of public transport. We must reinforce the notion that public transport is not a luxury but a necessity.

Many of you may have been following the updates regarding the cancellation of the X3 bus service from Papworth to Cambridge. This route is my sole way of getting to and from college, a common aspect which is shared with countless other members of my community for purposes ranging from commuting to education and shopping purposes. College students, including myself, especially those from areas within Papworth classed as 'deprived' through ACORN systems will not be able to get into college at all. Those who work in Cambridge trying to earn a living for themselves and their families will be faced with a potentially insurmountable barrier between themselves and an income and education. Similarly, many disabled or infirm members of our unique community will not be able to reach fantastic

services offered in Cambridge that enable them to maintain access to a network of support systems which many rely on to sustain a sense of stability in their lives.

However the cancellations not only affect us in a social light, but also in environmental and economic terms. Since 2000, certain emissions released from cars have dropped by over a quarter [3] - if we continue to withdraw bus services from areas like Papworth, progress into lowering emissions could potentially be stalled. From an economic standpoint, the fact that every £1 spent on local bus infrastructure brings in over £8 [4] in wider economic benefits, means that reducing the number of bus services available to the public could have a strong impact on county finances.

The petition I created was intended to draw attention to the devastating effects that a public transport vacuum can have on a community. I urge you to read the heartfelt comments left by signatories describing this proposal as “a step back” and raising the question from one parent as to “how am I meant to get my kids to college?” It is crucial that we spread the underlying message that has emerged from this situation –that cancelled buses isolate villages.

I hope I have been able to give you an insight into the importance of maintaining our bus service. So far, a joint grant from the combined authority, Mayor James Palmer, and the South Cambs District Council has been allocated to maintain the X3 service until March 2019 of which we are extremely grateful for. Before the grant comes to a halt, I ask that with the combined efforts of the Mayor, councilors and the community of Papworth, we find and implement a reliable bus service for Papworth that runs to Cambridge throughout the day with a special focus on peak times between 6am and 8am and 3pm and 5pm, when the X3 service comes to a halt. For this to work, all parties involved must remain transparent, informing others involved of any developments when they materialize such as key decisions that need to be made or actions that are planned to be taken. We must work together on this issue, and communication will be an integral part of providing a solution for Papworth. The jobs, support networks and education of residents is at stake, and we must find a resolution for the benefit of my village, our local economy and the environment. Act before it is too late.

I would like to thank you Chairman and the members for allowing me to speak and for receiving my petition.

[1] https://bettertransport.org.uk/sites/default/files/research-files/Buses-in-Crisis-2018_0.pdf

[2] https://bettertransport.org.uk/sites/default/files/research-files/Buses-in-Crisis-2018_0.pdf

[3] <https://www.carbonbrief.org/analysis-uk-carbon-emissions-in-2017-fell-to-levels-last-seen-in-1890>

[4]Original source <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/jul/02/bus-services-in-crisis-as-councils-cut-funding-campaigners-warn>, researchers <https://greenerjourneys.com/>

**TEXT FOR DOUGLAS BRIDGE SPEAKING IN OPPOSITION TO ITEM 5 ST NEOTS
NORTHERN FOOT AND CYCLE BRIDGE - SELECTION OF PREFERRED DESIGN
OPTION**

I am speaking today as a St Neots resident who will be adversely affected by the proposed St Neots Foot and Cycle Bridge.

As is noted in today's agenda the proposed bridge will have a negative impact on the outstanding beauty of the area, local events, local residents, historic buildings and the conservation area. The east landing of the bridge will discharge pedestrians and cyclists onto a narrow road, without footpaths, that is in constant use and already suffers from existing vehicle traffic issues.

I am sure that as almost all members of this committee do not live in St Neots that you will already have taken the opportunity to visit the site so as to fully understand the impact created by the proposed scheme. If you have not as yet then I would please urge you to do so.

I would also ask you to consider whether the people of St Neots want this bridge to be built, and I am presenting a petition to that effect.

There is widespread local opposition to the bridge and I feel people have not been given the opportunity to share that specifically in the consultations to date.

However today, rather than trying to speak in detail about the many negative impacts of the proposed bridge I will instead focus on one single area, the cost of the project.

As you will no doubt be aware the proposed foot bridge had originally been estimated to cost up to £4.5 million pounds.

The current revised estimate is that the bridge could cost as much as £6.5 million pounds to build.

That is £6.5 million pounds for a bridge, that according to the original Skanska report, would have 314 uses per day.

314 uses per day and yes, I'm sure that would grow over time, but by how much?

So, what does that mean in cash terms. What is a relatable way of talking about such a huge sum of money?

Well let's look at it like this.... If the £6.5 million capital cost of the bridge was depreciated over 60 years the cost per each single use would be 95 pence.

Yes, that's correct almost £1 per single use of the bridge over the next 60 years.

That seems very expensive to me?

And as a tax payer it seems like an extraordinary amount of money.

I am therefore asking the Economy and Environment Committee of Cambridgeshire County Council to consider today if the proposed bridge represents value for money?

Is this a good return on investment?

Does the business case hold up to scrutiny?

If you have any doubt in your mind then please use your powers to help put a halt to this project.

