

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

Date: Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2017

Time: 10:05am – 11:20am

Present: Councillors H Batchelor, I Gardener, M Howell, B Hunt (Vice-Chairman), S King, P Raynes, T Sanderson, J Scutt, M Shuter (Chairman) and A Taylor

Apologies: None

### **23. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **24. MINUTES AND ACTION LOG**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th September 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The Action Log was noted.

### **25. PETITIONS**

The Committee considered a petition with 374 signatures collected from local residents asking the Committee to consider. The petitioner was not present and the Democratic Services Officer presented the petition in his absence. The petition had been instigated by Mepal Neighbourhood watch for a roundabout to be constructed on the A142 leading into and from Mepal village. The petition stated that, due to the road layout and 60mph speed limit enforced on the road, the junction was hazardous and many accidents occurred.

Members noted the comments in support of the petition from local Members, Councillors Dupre and Gowing.

The Chairman advised the petitioners that a written response to the petition would be sent to them within ten working days. **Action required**

### **26. SERVICE COMMITTEE REVIEW OF THE DRAFT REVENUE BUSINESS PLANNING PROPOSALS FOR 2018-19 TO 2022-23**

The Committee received a report setting out an overview of the draft Revenue Business Planning Proposals for 2018-19 to 2022-23. This was the first report on the emerging business plan for 2018/19 to be presented to Committee and would be

presented again at subsequent meetings prior to its presentation to Full Council in February 2018.

Members noted that the business plan did not yet present a balanced budget and there was a significant £30m+ saving to be found. Measures had been identified to fill most of this and further measures would be brought forward at later meetings of the Committee.

Attention was drawn to table 3 contained within section 4-b of the report and Members noted that the shaded areas and non-shaded areas that related to the two Committees served by Economy Transport and Environment Directorate.

In the course of discussion, Members

- Expressed concern regarding the management of demand for services, the provision of certain services that were required by statute, and that it was an unrealistic expectation that demand could be managed to such an extent as to deliver the required savings.
- Expressed concern regarding the ability of the Council to mitigate the impact of the cuts being undertaken, that the same level of service could not be sustained and that provision was inadequate in previous years.
- Queried the inflation figures contained within paragraph 2.4 of the officer report. It was explained that inflation would vary depending on the type of expenditure and procurement carried out by the directorate and that, whilst the figures for inflation on ETE services was lower than for other services, they still represented year on year increases. These figures will continue to be refined in future years.
- Welcomed the introduction of LED street lighting that would provide operational savings and was popular with residents, and the approach that had been adopted regarding the winter gritting of routes.
- Expressed concern regarding the levels of funding provided to family mediation services and the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) as the roll out of Universal Credit would likely place additional demand on those services.

Noted the intention to focus on income generation for library services which would consist of £230k additional income being generated so that reinvestment could be made back into the book fund.

- Highlighted that the business planning proposals assumed there would be no increase in Council Tax and questioned what services additional revenue generated by a 2% increase in Council Tax would preserve. While ultimately a Member decision, Officers drew attention to the current funding gap of more than £5m of residual savings still to be found across the draft Business Plan that any additional Council Tax revenue would bridge. Members confirmed that the funding gap exceeded revenue that would be generated by a 2% increase in Council Tax.
- Clarified the reasons for the fluctuations in waste disposal costs identified within table 3 of section 4-b of the officer report. Members were informed that the cost of waste disposal was currently lower than expected as a result of higher rates of recycling. An increasing population in Cambridgeshire would result in greater

amounts of waste requiring disposal, however, every additional person was producing less waste. The performance of the Mechanical Biological Treatment (MBT) also varied resulting in additional waste for disposal when not operating at capacity and the budget had been overly optimistic regarding the operating efficiency of the MBT.

- Confirmed that the number of libraries would increase with 4 opening in new communities in future years.
- Confirmed that the removal of charges at the Park and Ride site would commence from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 if approved by Full Council in February 2018.
- Sought reassurance regarding bus lane enforcement cameras and parking enforcement that they were not simply a revenue generation scheme for the Council. Officers explained that the purpose of the schemes was to ensure that bus lanes remained clear in order to reduce congestion and to protect car parking for residents. Footage from the bus lane enforcement cameras would be reviewed by an officer and where cars were forced to enter the bus lane for example to allow emergency vehicles to pass there would be no action taken.
- Confirmed that the summary of the draft revenue budget at paragraph 3.1 of the officer report related to the Council as a whole and that the required savings decreased over the 5 years for a variety of reasons and that it was difficult to forecast that far in advance.
- Expressed concern that inefficiency in the operation of the MBT plant should be accommodated within the Council's budget. Officers explained that there were a number of variables which could lead to the plant not operating at full capacity. With all contracts there was negotiation that took place that determined where risk resided. If all the risk was placed with the contractor then it was more expensive than if all the risk remained with the Council. Attention was drawn to the re-negotiation of the Waste Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contract that had identified significant savings that could be achieved as a result.
- Noted the work of the previous Libraries Income Generation Working Group in promoting efficiency and income generation as a means of improving the libraries service.
- Noted that the majority of fees and charges across ETE were statutory and inflation could not be applied. Reassurance was provided by officers that fees and charges were reviewed regularly to ensure their appropriateness.
- Clarified that the savings of £98k associated with street lighting occurred from 'synergies' arising from joint drafting of the PFI contract with Northants County Council which provided a rebate and would not result in a reduction in provision.
- Expressed concern regarding the construction of 4 additional new libraries as they would place additional pressure on the revenue budget. Officers explained that work had been undertaken to ensure as far as possible cost neutrality and highlighted the work of the Libraries Member Steering Group that was addressing the financial sustainability of libraries.

- Noted that the Highways Service Transformation project anticipated savings of £500k that were in addition to an £800k saving already agreed in the current financial year. In terms of penalties within the contract, if Key Performance Indicators were not met then there were mechanisms through which the contract could be shortened which provided significant incentive for the contractor to provide a good service. For individual pieces of work there were variations in pricing and each one contained different incentives that were industry standard.
- Questioned whether it was correct that there were no constraints facing the Highways Service Transformation as stated in the business case for that savings proposal. Officers explained that as the process had been agreed with the contractor there was confidence that the objectives would be achieved, however, the constraints would be reviewed prior to presentation to Full Council.
- Confirmed that the financial element of the business case regarding the bus lane enforcement would be included in future iterations of the business planning report. Any surplus revenue would be re-invested into Economy Transport and Environment services. It was noted that the £400k revenue generated by the scheme was net of enforcement costs.

It was resolved unanimously to

- a) Note the overview and context provided for the 2018-19 to 2022-23 Business Plan revenue proposals for the Service;
- b) Comment on the draft revenue proposals that are within the remit of the Highways and Community Infrastructure Committee for 2018/19 to 2022/23.

## **27. RELOCATION OF ELY REGISTRATION OFFICE TO CAMBRIDGESHIRE ARCHIVES**

The Committee received a report on plans to relocate the registration service currently provided at Ely Registration Office to the new Cambridgeshire Archives property in Ely.

Attention was drawn to the comments of Local Members, Councillors Anna Bailey and Liz Every which, while accepting of the necessary reasons for the re-location, expressed concern regarding the attractiveness of the venue and requested that monitoring of the first years operation be undertaken and reported back to Committee in order that pertinent information be captured for any possible future re-locations.

Officers informed Members that sponsorship was being sought to provide an attractive 'garden' area at the office for photographs.

During discussion of the report Members welcomed the assurance that there would be a garden feature for photographs to be taken and requested that a monitoring report of the first years' operation be presented to Committee that included qualitative data regarding user experience. **ACTION**

It was resolved unanimously to:

Endorse the additional use of the Cambridgeshire Archives scheme and agree to the relocation of Ely Registration Office.

## **28. FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT – AUGUST 2017**

The Committee received a report presenting financial and performance information for Economy, Transport and Environment (ETE) for August 2017. The revenue position was highlighted to Members together with the re-profiling of the forecast for the Cambridgeshire Archives across the current financial year and the next which had created a variance of -£703k which would be required in the next financial year instead of the current year, to complete the scheme.

Discussing the report, Members drew attention to paragraph 4.2 of the report and questioned whether the increase in the number of Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI) in road traffic accidents was entirely attributable to the introduction of a new national Collision Recording and Sharing System (CRASH). Officers explained that it was probably a combination of an increase in incidents and the result of this new method of recording data. Work was being undertaken through the Road Safety Partnership that would investigate the reasons thoroughly.

It was resolved to:

review, note and comment on the report.

## **29. HIGHWAYS AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE AGENDA PLAN, TRAINING PLAN AND APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

The Committee considered its agenda plan and training plan.

No appointments to outside bodies were required to be made.

It was resolved to:

1. Note the agenda plan, training plan and appointments to outside bodies, including the updates provided orally at the meeting.

**Chairman**