

HIGHWAYS AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE: MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 3rd June 2014

Time: 10.00 to 11.30am

Present: Councillors Ashwood, Bates (substituting for Councillor Frost), Butcher, Connor, Criswell, Gillick, Hickford (Chairman), Hunt, Kavanagh, Palmer, Reeve, Rouse, Taylor, Tew, van de Ven and Walsh

Apologies: Councillor Frost (Councillor Bates substituting)

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

The Committee noted that the Council had appointed Councillor Hickford as the Chairman and Councillor Reeve as the Vice-Chairman for the municipal year 2014-15.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. PETITIONS

The Committee received two petitions.

Request for Zebra crossing in Queens Road, Wisbech

Mrs Debbie Pike, together with Mr Andrew Drake of Larksfield, presented a paper petition with 193 signatures. The petition read:

We urgently need a zebra crossing on Queens Road, to aid the many disabled people from Larksfield to cross safely.

In addressing the Committee, Mrs Pike explained that the location in question was close to a housing estate and a disabled complex called Larksfield, and many of the vulnerable residents at Larksfield experienced real problems crossing this road. Queens Road was often used as a short cut across Wisbech, and traffic had increased significantly in recent years. Parked vehicles inhibited visibility and vehicles often travelled quickly and without due regard to those crossing, especially the more vulnerable residents.

The petitioner was asked the following questions by Committee Members:

- what type of crossing the petitioner felt would work best at this location. Mrs Pike advised that they had no firm views, other than the need for good visibility and dropped kerbs. The petitioners would appreciate any support and expertise available from County Council officers;

- whether the Town Council's support had been sought in putting a bid in for a Local Highway Improvement Initiative scheme. Mrs Pike advised that the petitioners had not made such an approach as they were unaware of this potential avenue of funding;
- if a particular location was being considered, and suggested that a possibility was near the Catholic church – the petitioners confirmed that this was an option.

The Chairman advised the petitioners that they would receive a full written response within ten working days of the meeting.

Request for pedestrian crossing near Walsoken Post Office

Wisbech Town Councillor R McLaren presented a petition with 183 signatures, together with supporting documentation and photographs, that read:

We the undersigned have signed this petition to request that the highways agency place a pedestrian crossing opposite or near the post office in Walsoken.

In addressing the Cabinet, Town Councillor McLaren outlined the dangers residents faced crossing Kirkgate Street, and the hazards caused by cars parking along the road, reducing visibility. Although there were two car parks nearby, there were not signposted and little used. He outlined the preferred location for the crossing. He confirmed that whilst there was an existing crossing outside the village hall, this was not suitable for a number of reasons, including a trip hazard on the crossing itself.

The petitioner was asked the following questions by Committee Members:

- whether the local County Councillor had been involved. Town Councillor McLaren confirmed that Councillor Clapp had been involved, and had helped with the petition. Members suggested that Local Members could be instrumental in these type of issues, providing a link between communities and officers, and it was further suggested that Councillor Clapp could help the petitioners by accessing the actual recorded statistics for accidents at the location, to support the petitioners' case;
- what particular benefits there were with the suggested location. Town Councillor McLaren explained that there were already dropped kerbs at that location, so the total costs of the scheme could be less, and it would be safer for disabled pedestrians. There was also better visibility at this point, as it was on a bend in the road;
- what other sources of funding or support had been sought for the crossing, given that the County Council accepts third party funding for such schemes. Town Councillor McLaren advised that the petitioners were pursuing all options, but that due to political issues at Town Council, the Town Council was not supportive of a bid for this scheme. The petitioners were also trying to seek the Town and District Councils' support on signage for the car park.

The Chairman advised Town Councillor McLaren that he would receive a full written response within ten working days of the meeting.

4. CLAY FARM COMMUNITY CENTRE – GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The Committee received a report about the Clay Farm Community Centre project, a civic hub for the new developments on the Southern Fringe of Cambridge, which the County Council was developing with partner organisations.

The County Council's main interests within this civic hub included a library and touchdown facilities for staff. The proposed operating model of a Joint Management Company between City and County Councils, which provided more flexibility for partners than a traditional lease, had been supported in principle by Cabinet, subject to the detail being presented at a later date. The proposed governance and funding were outlined, and it was noted that a more detailed report on those elements would be presented to the August Committee meeting.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:

- asked where the idea for the hub had come from. Officers and the Local Member, Councillor Ashwood, advised that this was being built to serve a new development of around 3000 homes. However, the hub would also serve the needs of many existing residents in Trumpington, who had been actively involved in the process, who lacked access to such facilities, and were very supportive of the proposals, especially as they only had access to an occasional mobile library;
- asked what the funding arrangements were, and whether it could not be administered under traditional lease arrangements. Officers explained that in order to provide the planned flexibility of access to facilities, Property colleagues had advised that traditional lease arrangements were not feasible. The capital cost of the building would be met largely from Section 106 developer contributions, together with capital income from the relevant social landlord, and revenue income from the GP surgery. The County Council had allocated a £250K contribution, required due to a capital shortfall agreed in the Section 106 agreement, which was included in the capital programme;
- noting the provision of a GP surgery within the hub, asked if there was any intention to provide an NHS dental practice, as such facilities were lacking in many communities across the county. Officers explained that the provision of dental practices could not be covered by a Section 106 agreement, as this was a commercial decision, but there were mixed retail units within the development which could be used for this purpose;
- whilst supporting the provision of these facilities in principle, requested clarification about what the County Council was receiving in exchange for its contribution, and what liabilities may be incurred. Officers reiterated that the Section 106 agreement for the library, was a decision that had already been made by Cabinet in previous years. The County Council would own part of the

asset in a joint management arrangement. More detail would be provided in the report to be presented to the Committee in August.

The following additional recommendation to those set out in the report was proposed by Councillor Palmer and seconded by Councillor Hunt:

To receive a review of the finance figures for the project at a future meeting.

On being put to the vote, the amendment was carried.

It was resolved to:

- a) note the information contained in the report;
- b) confirm the Council's intention to enter into a Joint Management Company with the City Council for the purposes of managing and operating the new Clay Farm Community Centre;
- c) endorse the approach to negotiating with the City Council as set out in section 3.2 of the report;
- d) receive a review of financial figures for the project being brought to Committee at a future meeting.

5. BUSINESS PLAN BUDGET FOR 2014/15

The Committee was asked to review and comment on the Economy, Transport & Environment budgets that it would be monitoring during 2014/15.

In discussion, Members made the following comments:

- queried the performance target for invoices paid on time: it was confirmed that this referred to the County Council's target to pay invoices within 30 days;
- noted that the target to respond to complaints within ten days did not represent an undertaking to provide a full response within ten days;
- queried whether the budget of £914K for Coroners' Services was appropriate given the major changes anticipated in that Service over the coming year. Officers advised that this figure was in the Business Plan and that discussions would take place with officers from the Coroners' Service before the May report was produced, to determine if a revised forecast should be included in subsequent reports;
- queried the figures for street lighting energy usage. Officers advised that work was still ongoing in this area, looking at proposals such as dimming or switching off street lights from midnight to 5am. It was further confirmed that the percentage of street lights working (99.3%) related to all street lights, not just the newly replaced ones;

- noted that performance against the street light replacement programme was being reprofiled because of contractual changes agreed some time ago, meaning that the programme was currently several months behind the original schedule;
- some Members commented favourably on their experiences of the street lighting programme. It was noted that different subcontractors took away the old street lights, which was why there was sometimes a delay.

It was resolved to note the report.

6. FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT – MARCH 2014

The Committee received a report detailing the financial position for Economy, Transport & Environment as at the end of March 2014. Members noted that this was the month-end report, not the final outturn report, which would be presented to the Committee's next meeting on 15th July 2014. Members also noted that not all of the budgets contained within the report were the responsibility of this Committee, as responsibility for the Service's functions was split between the Economy & Environment and Highways & Community Infrastructure Committees. Officers commented that it was important to consider the ETE budget as a whole, to allow a degree of cross referencing, whilst focusing on the key areas for Highways & Community Infrastructure.

During discussion, members:

- commented on the importance of co-operation between the two ETE Committee, especially in Business Plan discussions and development;
- with regard to Winter Maintenance, noted that the budgeted figure was a rolling average of the previous five years: therefore an underspend/overspend would be reflected in an adjusted figure for the subsequent year, with any in-year difference being added to/ taken from Corporate Reserves. It was confirmed that all salt stocks were kept in appropriate stores, to avoid degradation;
- urged caution against Section 106 funding allocated to cycling schemes being withdrawn if schemes could not be implemented within the required timescales. Officers confirmed that such Section 106 funding was indeed time limited, but that they were very conscious of this point, and did everything possible to ensure Section 106 funding was spent within the requisite timescales;
- discussed the implication of the delay of implementation of the charging at Park & Ride sites. It was noted that the original intention was to introduce charges for parking for up to 12 hours. Following public consultation, this had increased to 18 hours, which required technical changes to the machine, which had slowed down the proposed timescale for implementation. Regarding an issue on mitigating yellow lines, officers advised that this was an issue for the Economy &

Environment Committee, and agreed to send the Councillor an individual response;

- queried why green waste processed by Amey Cespa had to be landfilled in some instances. Officers advised that green waste varied in quality, often due to weather conditions, and sometimes it was not possible for it to be composted. However, whilst this was a variation within the limits of the terms of the contract, it would be closely monitored, and the Council continued to work both with Amey Cespa and District and City partners within the RECAP partnership.

It was resolved to note the report.

7. APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES, INTERNAL ADVISORY GROUPS AND PANELS, AND PARTNERSHIP LIAISON AND ADVISORY GROUPS

The Committee was asked to review and consider appointments to outside bodies, internal advisory groups and panels, and partnership liaison and advisory groups.

It was resolved to:

1. review and agree the appointments to the internal advisory groups and panels as highlighted in green in Appendix 2 of the report to General Purposes Committee, agreeing that Councillors P Brown, Downes and Wisson should continue as the representatives on the Cromwell Museum Management Committee;
2. review the appointments to the partnership liaison and advisory groups as highlighted in green in Appendix 3 of the report to General Purposes Committee (pages 27-43 of the report) and agreeing the names of the representatives on each organisation as shown in the report, as follows:
 - to reappoint Councillor Kenney to Cambridge Car Club Steering Group;
 - to reappoint Councillor Harty and appoint Councillor Rouse to the Cambridgeshire Museums Advisory Partnership;
 - to reappoint Councillors Ashcroft, Ashwood, P Brown and Mason to the County Advisory Group on Archives and Local Studies;
 - to appoint Councillor Hickford to the RECAP Board;
 - to appoint Councillor Criswell to the Road Safety Partnership Strategic Management Board;
 - to appoint Councillor Hickford to the Traffic Penalty Tribunal;
 - to not appoint to the Cambridgeshire Highways Supervisory Board, Cambridgeshire Waste PFI Project Delivery Board and the Street Lighting PFI Network Board.
3. review the additional appointments as set out in Annex 2 (page 44), which had been identified since the General Purposes Committee report was published, to the Highways Improvement Member Advisory Panels, and appoint the following representatives:

- Huntingdonshire Rural Panel: Councillors P Brown, Bullen, Criswell, Giles, McGuire and Reeve;
- East Cambridgeshire Rural Panel: Councillors Hunt, Palmer, Rouse and Schumann;
- South Cambridgeshire Rural Panel: Councillors Frost, Hickford, Jenkins, Kindersley, Orgee and Smith;
- Fenland Rural Panel: Councillor Butcher, Connor, Count, Lay and Rylance.

[Note: the final list of appointments will be published on the Council's website at <http://tinyurl.com/p66f4jn>]

8. SERVICE COMMITTEE AGENDA PLAN

The Committee was asked to review its agenda plan, consider suggestions from the outgoing Overview and Scrutiny Committees, consider a request from the Audit and Accounts Committee and discuss its working arrangements going forward.

It was resolved to:

- a) note the agenda plan, including the updates reported orally at the meeting, and agree the addition of a further report on Clay Farm Community Centre to the August meeting;
- b) note the requests from the outgoing Overview & Scrutiny Committees, and that these would be covered by items at future Committee meetings;
- c) refer the request from the Audit and Accounts Committee back to the Committee as it was within its own remit to action.

Chairman