

HIGHWAYS AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE: MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 10th February 2015

Time: 10:00am-10:45am

Present: Councillors P Brown (substituting for Cllr Hunt), Butcher, Cearn (substituting for Cllr Ashwood), Connor, Criswell, Gillick, Henson (substituting for Cllr Tew) Hickford (Chairman), Kavanagh, McGuire (substituting for Cllr Frost), Palmer, Reeve (Vice-Chairman), Rouse, Taylor, van de Ven and Walsh

Apologies: Councillors Ashwood (Cllr Cearn substituting), Frost (Cllr McGuire substituting), Hunt (Cllr P Brown substituting), Mason and Tew (Cllr Henson substituting)

79. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

80. MINUTES – 20th JANUARY 2015

The minutes of the meeting held on 20th January 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

81. PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

82. TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER OBJECTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE CAMBRIDGESHIRE GUIDED BUSWAY PARK & RIDE SITES

The Committee received a report on proposals to introduce parking charges at Guided Busway Park & Ride sites in Longstanton and St Ives. Members were reminded that in September 2013, Cabinet agreed to introduce parking charges at the five Park & Ride sites in Cambridge. In November 2014, the Economy & Environment Committee also agreed the introduction of parking charges at the Guided Busway Park & Ride sites in Longstanton and St Ives with effect from April 2015. As part of the process the Traffic Regulation Order had been advertised, and five objections had been received, mainly in relation to increased charges to users of the sites.

Arising from the report, Members:

- noted that the original estimate was that the parking charges would generate over £200,000 per annum, but the report gave a more modest estimate of £120,000. This estimate was gross i.e. inclusive of VAT;
- noted that Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) would be used to enforce the parking charges, and that there would be no barriers at the sites. Users could pay online in advance, or pay on site by cash or credit/debit card;
- asked what analysis had been carried out to see if parking would be displaced by people avoiding the charge. Members were advised that this analysis was included as part of the report that was considered by the Economy & Environment Committee in November 2014. The package of measures being introduced included double yellow lines on the roads immediately adjacent to the St Ives and Longstanton sites. The situation would be subject to ongoing monitoring, especially in St Ives;
- asked what lessons had been learned from the implementation of the parking charges at the Cambridge Park & Ride sites, particularly the issue of those with blue badges having to pay because they were private car parks. Officers advised that the machines at Longstanton and St Ives were for parking only, with bus tickets being purchased from the existing machine: ticket machines which issued both parking and bus tickets had been one of the issues at the Cambridge Park & Ride sites. Officers had also reviewed other feedback and made the whole process slightly simpler, and were encouraging users to register on line for their parking;
- noted that whilst part of the access charge paid by operators paid for the day to day operation of the Park & Ride sites i.e. staffing, lighting, maintenance, etc,
- challenged the assertion that the parking charge *“may slightly reduce the number of people travelling for a period of time”*, pointing to the experience of the Cambridge Park & Ride sites, where charging for parking had reduced patronage significantly. Officers advised that this issue had also been dealt with by the Economy & Environment Committee in November, and Members had been satisfied that any reduction in patronage would be less for Longstanton and St Ives;
- discussed the capacity of the Guided Busway to meet the huge demand – buses at rush hour were often full. Officers advised that they were working with both operators to address the capacity issues. Stagecoach had increased the number of buses from St Ives at peak hours, and other improvements were planned. It was also confirmed that operators were very aware of the demands that Northstowe would place on the Busway;
- noted that Section 106 funding from new developments had been allocated to the Busway as part of planning permissions. Whilst the Busway was operated on a commercial basis by the two operators, there were good reasons to ensure travel demand was adequately provided for in new developments from the outset, and the Section 106 funding helped to build that early capacity. It was confirmed that the funding was ringfenced and could not be used elsewhere in the county;

Members noted a written submission made by Councillor Mason, who was unable to attend the meeting. Responding to the point that the report should have been identified a Key Decision, officers clarified that this was not a Key Decision as it was to determine a Traffic Regulation Order, and was not a departure from established policy. The decision to approve the introduction of parking charges had been made at the Economy & Environment Committee in November 2014.

Whilst it was not within the remit of the Highways & Community Infrastructure Committee, Members briefly discussed the facilities at the Longstanton and St Ives Park & Ride sites, raised by Councillor Mason. Officers confirmed that there had been long term staffing issues at these sites, but that they were usually open from 7.30am to 6.00pm so that the public could wait, use toilets, etc. Very occasionally these facilities may be closed due to extenuating circumstances, and officers were kept aware of any such issues. A Member challenged the view that closure of facilities was infrequent, suggesting that anecdotal evidence suggested otherwise. It was suggested that the facts on closures needed to be established, which would help the Economy & Environment Committee decide if any action or further monitoring was necessary. Officers noted the Committee's concerns and agreed to bring these to the attention of the Economy & Environment Committee.

It was resolved to*:

- a) approve and make the Order as advertised
- b) inform the objectors accordingly

*the majority of Members voted in favour of the recommendations: Councillor Reeve voted against the recommendations, and asked for his vote to be recorded.

83. LOCAL HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

The Committee considered a report on establishing a working group to review the Local Highway Improvement Scheme. The Service Director explained that to date, over 200 local improvement schemes had been implemented across the county through this programme, and it had been particularly successful in engaging people and communities. Members noted the draft Terms of Reference for the Working Group, appended to the report.

Arising from the report:

- Members welcomed the establishment of the group, but commented that the process was more difficult in Cambridge, where there was not a Parish Council structure to develop bids. A Member also commented that the Working Group needed to be non-political, suggesting that this had not been the experience in Cambridge, to the detriment of residents. Other Members commented that their experience of the scheme in other areas of the county was that it was non-political;
- Councillor Taylor, speaking as chairwoman of the Cambridge Joint Area Committee, advised that the Committee had received over 40 applications in

2014/15. She suggested that City and District Councillors should be involved in the Working Group. Members agreed that membership should be cross-party, with at least one County Councillor representing each District/City authority, and there would be an option for the Working Group to invite others to be involved e.g. District/City Councillors as they saw fit;

- a number of Members spoke very positively of their own experiences of the Local Highways Improvement Scheme;
- a Member suggested that the guidance provided to Parish Councils needed to be clearer, to stress what was within the remit of the schemes, and also promote third party funding i.e. the ability for Parishes to entirely self-fund schemes;
- a Member suggested that from a Parish Council perspective, the process needed to be simplified, expedited and incentivised, with total funding increased.

It was resolved to:

- a) agree to establishing a working group with terms of reference as set out in Appendix 1 of the report;
- b) agree to appoint Councillors Butcher, Connor, Criswell, Hickford, Kavanagh, Palmer, Reeve, Rouse, Taylor, van de Ven and Walsh on to the Working Group.

84. SERVICE COMMITTEE AGENDA PLAN AND APPOINTMENTS

The Committee was asked to review its agenda plan. The Committee noted that the following items had been added to the March agenda:

- ETE Risk Register
- Procurement of Eastern highways Alliance Framework 2

The following item had moved from the March to the April agenda:

- Highway Services Post 2016 Review

A Member queried progress with the Cromwell Museum. The Service Director agreed to respond directly to the Member. **ACTION: Service Director to respond to Councillor P Brown.**

It was resolved unanimously to note the agenda plan, including the updates reported orally at the meeting.

Chairman
17th March 2015