

HIGHWAYS AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE: MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 17th March 2015

Time: 10:00am-1:00pm

Present: Councillors Ashwood, Bates (substituting for Cllr Butcher), Bullen (substituting for Cllr Reeve) Connor, Criswell, Gillick, Hickford (Chairman), Hipkin (substituting for Cllr Mason), Hunt, Kavanagh, Palmer, Rouse, Taylor, Tew and van de Ven

In attendance: Councillor Harty

Apologies: Councillors Butcher (Cllr Bates substituting), Frost, Mason (Cllr Hipkin substituting), Reeve (Cllr Bullen substituting) and Walsh;

85. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

86. MINUTES – 10th FEBRUARY 2015

The minutes of the meeting held on 10th February 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

87. PETITIONS

Little Paxton Parish Councillor Stan Codling presented a petition with over 2000 signatures to the Committee requesting improvements to Mill Lane Road, Little Paxton, to prevent closure due to flooding. A printed presentation summarizing the main concerns, plus photographs and written comments from petitioners, were circulated to the Committee Members.

In addressing the Committee, Councillor Codling gave the history of the flooding issues, and explained that the Parish Council had started a petition to gauge the strength of feelings of residents in Little Paxton and the surrounding areas: the numbers that had signed the petition showed how strongly residents felt. Due to the rapid development of St Neots and neighbouring villages, and the associated increase in traffic volumes, the problems caused by the closure of this road were having an increasing effect, especially on Eaton Socon and Little Paxton itself. This included disruption to emergency vehicles, bus services and health care workers. The gates which had been constructed caused problems, especially as they often remained closed when flood water had gone down.

Members asked Councillor Codling the following questions:

- noting that one of the photos showed flooding in 2012, asked on how many occasions the road had subsequently been closed due to flooding. The

Committee was advised that it had been closed around six times, with each closure lasting at least 3-4 days;

- a Member observed that these problems were experienced at other locations around the County, notably at Earith, and asked how deep the water was across the road at Little Paxton when flooding occurred. Councillor Codling advised that the water was often 4-5 feet deep, but it had been much higher;
- noted that the gates had been erected by the County Council;
- explained that the flooding usually occurred when the flood gates were opened at Bedford Level, as the porthole at Little Paxton effectively caused a bottle neck, so flood water backed up;
- noted that the problem was wider than the village of Little Paxton, impacting on St Neots, the A1, etc;
- noted the high costs of possible flood prevention measures.

Councillor Harty, speaking as Local Member, agreed that a resolution to the problems experienced was urgently required. The flood water built up very quickly, and problems were often caused by drivers trying to go through the flood water and being unaware how deep the water was.

A Member suggested that as this was a growth area, it could be included in the '123' list for CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy). It was confirmed that it was not currently included, and the Local Member Councillor Harty agreed to look into this.

The Chairman thanked the petitioner for his presentation, and advised that he would receive a full written response within ten working days of the meeting.

88. (i) TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER OBJECTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH LISLE LANE, LISLE CLOSE AND WILLOW WALK – PROHIBITION OF WAITING

The Committee received a report on proposals to introduce prohibition of waiting on Lisle Lane, Lisle Close and Willow Walk, Ely. The background to the proposed scheme, and the outcome of the statutory consultation process were noted. The scheme had the support of the Local Members for Ely, Councillor Rouse and Bailey. It was noted that two objections and two comments of support had been received, and that one of the supporting comments included a further seven statements of support.

Members noted that the location where the yellow lines were proposed was mainly a commercial area, and the intention was to improve visibility and reduce congestion. The scheme was part of a Section 106 scheme, and therefore there were no cost implications for the County Council.

Councillor Rouse spoke as Local Member, and explained that the main problem was caused by inappropriate parking on Lisle Lane, usually all day, which made it particularly difficult for larger vehicles delivering to and collecting from commercial

premises. Lisle Lane was an important link road and also a bus route, and there were plans to improve the cycle routes in this area to access the station.

Councillor Hunt spoke, indicating strong support for the scheme. He explained that he was not a Local Member but he lived in Ely. He advised that there was a large development planned for North Ely, and this link road would become even more important for people living there.

A Member raised the issue of carers being unable to park outside the properties of elderly clients in Lisle Close, which was referred to in Appendix 3 to the report. Officers confirmed that there was no designated parking for carers, and one of the effects of the parking restrictions would be to displace parking from Lisle Close. Residents' parking was not an option in this instance and carers do not have any type of parking permit. It was confirmed that Ely was, in common with most areas of the county, still subject to criminal (Police) enforcement of parking restrictions.

A Member suggested changing the parking restriction e.g. so that parking was prohibited for a short period only between 08:00 and 18:00, to deter commuters. The Committee was reminded that they could only determine the objections to the Traffic Regulation Order, i.e. approve or not approve the Order as advertised, it was not within their power to change the Order itself. Furthermore, any such short period of permitted parking would require enforcement by the Police, which was unlikely to be resourced. Other Members pointed out that there were no parking charges in Ely, and there were suitable alternative places to park very near Lisle Close which carers could use. A number of Members expressed their frustration that they were unable to change the TRO.

A Member suggested that on a more general point, officers could perhaps explore whether it would be possible to have a 'carer's pass'. Officers explained that there was nothing in the relevant legislation which would enable the authority to do this, and suggested that a more pragmatic approach needed to be taken. It was suggested that this issue could be considered in the broader context of the wider review of parking which was already taking place.

It was resolved to:

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

(ii) TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER OBJECTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH KING STREET, SOMERSHAM – DISABLED BAY

The Committee received a report on proposals to introduce a disabled bay on King Street, Somersham. The background to the proposed scheme, and the outcomes of the statutory consultation process were noted. The scheme had the support of the Local Member, Councillor Criswell. Members were advised that King Street was a no through road, and the applicant actually resided on High Street, where parking restrictions were already in place. One objection had been received.

Councillor Criswell briefly outlined the issues involved, and commented that the responses to the objection, in the appendix to the report, were quite thorough and credible.

It was resolved unanimously to:

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

89. REVIEW OF SAFETY OF SPORTS GROUNDS POLICY AND ACTIVITY REPORT

The Committee received a report which proposed amendments to the Safety of Sports Grounds policy and related documents and reporting mechanisms. The report set out the statutory duties which the County Council had in respect of the safety of sports grounds, including the requirement to issue safety certificates for any 'regulated stand' which accommodated 500 or more spectators. There were currently six venues in the county which met this criterion.

Arising from the report, Members:

- noted that there were suitable numbers of competent staff currently to carry out the inspection duties, and the staffing situation would continue to be monitored through the business continuity plan;
- whilst understanding the statutory requirements, queried the need for additional 'red tape'. Officers advised that the revisions sought to clarify the existing policy and reflect more accurately in writing the statutory responsibilities placed on the authority – there was no intention to introduce unnecessary bureaucracy. There was a requirement to have and to maintain expertise in this function, and it was a fundamental duty for the authority to undertake this work;
- noted that the Newmarket racecourse site referred to was the July course, which was geographically within Cambridgeshire, but that the Rowley Mile course was in Suffolk;
- asked whether other sports grounds were required to advise the Council if they expanded i.e. if a sports ground increased in size and required inspection. Officers advised that they do monitor this situation, and there were some increasing in size which may fall within the category in future e.g. St Neots Football Club.

It was resolved unanimously to:

approve the amendments to the Safety of Sports Grounds Policy, incorporating Safety Advisory Group Terms of Reference and to take note of the proposal to introduce an annual reporting format.

90. PROTOCOL FOR ENGLAND ILLEGAL MONEY LENDING INVESTIGATIONS

The Committee received a report proposing the renewal of the protocol with Birmingham City Council to investigate and institute proceedings against illegal money lenders operating within the Cambridgeshire County Council area until 31st March 2018.

Members noted that the arrangement could bring significant benefit to the county, and at no cost. It was also noted that officers continue to work closely with partners to promote alternatives e.g. Credit Unions in areas where illegal money lenders operated.

It was resolved unanimously to:

1. to approve the delegation of the function of the enforcement of Financial Services and Markets Act 2000, as delegated through the Financial Services Act 2012 and Part III of the Consumer Credit Act 1974 within Cambridgeshire to Birmingham City Council until 31st March 2018;
2. to agree the attached Protocol for Illegal Money Lending Team Investigations and delegate authority to the Head of Supporting Businesses and Communities to enter into this agreement on behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council and approve minor alterations if required.

91. PEDAL CYCLIST AND MOTORCYCLIST CASUALTIES

The Committee received a report providing further information about motorcyclist and pedal cyclist deaths and serious injuries, as requested at the Committee meeting on 20th January 2015. In presenting the information, officers drew Members' attention to the fact that whilst there had been an increase in the number of pedal cyclist casualties from 2004/05 to 2014 (31%), there had been a greater increase in the number of pedal cyclists (48%) in the same period, so there had been an effective reduction in the number of casualties per cyclist. The increase in the level of cycling was positive, not just in terms of reducing vehicular congestion, but also the significant health benefits for those cycling.

The Chairman thanked officers for their informative report, but commented that the Committee's key focus had been on education, both of cyclists and motorists.

Evidence showed that motorcycle accidents tended to occur on rural roads. The report set out the wide range of initiatives and interventions that had been put in place or were planned for both pedal cyclists and motorcyclists.

Arising from the report, Members:

- disputed the suggestion in the report that road accidents were "random events", especially given the consistency of accident clusters;
- expressed concern regarding the number (31%) of motorcyclist accidents not involving other vehicles, suggesting that it would be interesting to know what the

state of the adjacent section of road was e.g. if there was pothole. Officers pointed out that accidents not involving other vehicles could involve other factors such as drink driving or avoiding obstructions, and confirmed that more detailed data was available;

- observed that the increase in the numbers cycling needed to be examined in greater detail, i.e. was the increase from 'new' people or from people previously travelling by bus or car. If it was true modal shift from cars, there should be a corresponding reduction in the number of motorists;
- observed the high levels of accident sites in Cambridge, and whilst acknowledging that there was a high level of cycling in the city, pointed out that many other areas of the county enjoyed relatively high levels of cycling too, but those areas did not benefit from cycling investment. Officers commented that a lot of the funding available nationally for cycling schemes was only available for cities with an existing high level of cycling, although there were other funding avenues for other parts of the county e.g. CIL;
- stressed the importance of education, not just for children, but for adult pedal and motorcyclists, motorists and pedestrians;
- noted the impact appropriate highwayschemes could have in reducing cyclist casualties e.g. the Catholic Church junction in Cambridge previously had the highest number of cycling accidents in the county, but since the improvements to the junction, it had reduced to 41st. In response to a question, officers confirmed that in designing cycle schemes, the intention was to improve cyclist safety but not, where possible, to the detriment of motorists, and options were sometimes discounted on that basis;
- observed that many accidents occurred at roundabouts, and at many roundabouts there was too much vegetation. Another Member agreed, pointing to the potential for improvement on the Radegund Road/Perne Road and Mowbray Road/Cherry Hinton Road roundabouts. Officers acknowledged this point but advised that sometimes vegetation was put there because it was *too* easy to see across a roundabout, other times it was because the City Council planted up roundabouts as amenity space;
- advised that there were initiatives in some parts of the country where buses fitted with mirrors which enabled drivers to see cyclists more easily, and these could be fitted cheaply and easily;
- applauded Bikeability schemes for children, but stressed the importance of training for adults too. A key concern was the number of young foreign students who were allowed to hire bikes with no training. It was suggested that the Council could work with various lobby groups and clubsto look at education and training;
- noted the approximate numbers of motorists and cyclists coming into Cambridge city daily, and stressed the need for joined up schemes, so that cyclists could complete the entirety of their journeys in safety;

- noting the number of motorcycle accidents in rural areas, commented that there were a number of anomalies in speed limits e.g. on A roads segments of A roads that are 50mph, which was counterintuitive;
- asked if (i) it was legal to use a pedal cycle without a helmet, and (ii) whether cycling trailers for children and toddlers were legal: officers confirmed that both were legal, and the Member expressed strong concerns on the safety implications of not using cycle helmets and using cycle trailers. Some Members also suggested that measures should be undertaken such as obligatory registration and safety checks for bikes, and third party insurance for cyclists. A Member observed that there was considerable investment into cycle schemes, and unlike motorists, cyclists did not contribute through Fuel Duty, but it was cyclists' responsibility to cycle safely and responsibly and ensure that they were appropriately skilled. Officers noted these concerns but commented that these issues needed to be picked up nationally. It was also confirmed that cyclists did not have to comply with 20mph limits, as there was no way of accurately calibrating their speed, but they could be prosecuted for driving dangerously or without due care or attention;

Councillor Criswell advised that he sat on the Road Safety Partnership on behalf of the Committee, and that Partnership was focusing on casualty reduction, particularly at hotspots. Whilst it was disappointing that the number of casualties had increased, it was significant that the number of cyclists had increased even more. In terms of education, the key was educating the right people, and he commented that he would be happy to be part of small working group to examine in detail which groups of people were represented in the accident figures and were most vulnerable.

It was resolved unanimously to:

1. to note the initiatives being taken in respect of both infrastructure and road user education and training to reduce the risks to cyclists and motorcyclists;
2. to establish a small working group comprising Councillors Criswell, Kavanagh, Taylor and van de Ven to look at all aspects of cycle safety including education, to involve external cycling lobbying groups and clubs.

92. FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Committee received a report setting out financial and performance information for Economy, Transport and Environment as at the end of January 2015. It was noted that the year end position was anticipating (i) a total revenue underspend of £836,000 for ETE, with cost centres under the stewardship of the Highways & Community Infrastructure Committee comprising £648,000 of this total; (ii) a capital underspend of £32.262M.

It was resolved to:

review and comment upon the report.

93. SERVICE COMMITTEE AGENDA PLAN AND APPOINTMENTS

The Committee was asked to review its agenda plan. The Committee noted that the following item had been moved from the April meeting to the 2nd June meeting:

- Highway Services Post 2016 Review

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

94. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was resolved unanimously that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of part of the following report on the grounds that it is likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information under paragraph 3 of Part 1 Schedule 12 A of the Local Government Act 1972 and that it would not be in the public interest for the information to be disclosed (information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)).

(The meeting went back into public session)

95. CAMBRIDGE LIBRARY ENTERPRISE CENTRE

The Committee considered a report on a proposal to create an enterprise and innovation centre in Cambridge Central Library. Officers explained that this was in line with the draft Strategy for the Future of Library Services, and it would bring a substantial new income to the library service, as well as bringing opportunities for jobseekers, learners and entrepreneurs, including meeting rooms. The report also set out the cost of in-house options for similar services.

The Chairman drew Members' attention to comments in relation to the proposals that had been emailed by Councillor Scutt, and circulated to the Committee, for noting.

A number of Members commented that there was a lack of information on the organisation that would be running the Enterprise Centre, Kora, and requested more detail. It was further suggested that it would have been helpful for a representative from Kora to attend the meeting to respond to Member questions. They also queried why there had been no public consultation. Officers gave more information on Kora, explaining that it was part of the well-established Regus Group, and outlined the benefits the arrangement could bring. It was confirmed that a short period of public consultation was planned.

Debating the report, individual Members:

- welcomed the proposal, pointing out that there were valuable opportunities for synergies with the City Deal with no sacrifice for existing library services;

- expressed surprise that the Community Café was losing money and that the Committee was being asked to close it without alternatives being explored e.g. re-examining the Café's business plan. Officers explained that they had always been constrained by what they could offer, as it was in the terms of the agreement that the café provision had to be on the third floor. The current facility was well used and well loved, but not sustainable financially;
- supported the proposals on the basis of the benefits for skills, employment and supporting individuals and businesses in the county, especially the opportunities for young people, and the importance of competing not just nationally but internationally;
- suggested that there were a number of facilities in Cambridge city centre offering very similar facilities e.g. the Graduate Centre and the Pitt Building, plus a whole range of start-up/entrepreneur units. This point was acknowledged, but officers explained that the difference would be the context in which the Enterprise Centre operated, with a wide range of users, not just focused on traditional academic or business sectors;
- asked what would happen to the existing BFI (British Film Institute) facility. Officers explained that the contract with BFI had expired, and that the dedicated facility had been under utilised but they were working with BFI on a new model for the service which would see it more integrated into the general library offer;
- noted that the authority's lawyers had scrutinised the agreement and Regus was a well know company with a good track record, and that there were more detailed figures available on projected occupancy rates, etc. It was further noted that there would be a profit share arrangement with Kora, so it would be in the interests of all parties for the venture to turn a good profit.

In response to a number of points raised, specifically that the information on this proposal was only available when the Committee agenda was published, the Chairman reminded Members that in common with most reports coming to Committee, this report had been discussed at an early stage at a Spokes' meeting. He stressed the responsibility of Spokes to share items with their respective groups and also highlighted that it was Members' responsibility to research issues, and if necessary, follow up queries with officers prior to Committee meetings.

The following amendment was proposed by Councillor van de Ven and seconded by Councillor Taylor:

to defer the decision to develop and Enterprise Centre in Cambridge Central Library, pending receipt of further detailed information on the proposals, including the opportunity to question Kora, and the opportunity for a robust consultation exercise.

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

Officers explained that they had been working with Kora for 18 months, but had been unable to share that work widely due to the commercial sensitivity. Whilst they felt that Kora would welcome the opportunity to present to Members, they suggested that the delay in timescales could be detrimental, especially as the savings and income for the proposal had already been included in the Council's business plan for 2015/16.

A Member commented that the risk of delaying this proposal could involve financial and reputational risk to the authority, and there was also an opportunity cost of not using that third floor of the central library productively. Another Member pointed out that there was a five year break clause, which should give comfort to those Members concerned about possible risks. Officers commented that whilst there would always be an element of risk and uncertainty in proceeding with any new scheme, they had worked very closely with Kora, and the Section 151 Officer and legal colleagues were satisfied with the proposed agreement.

It was resolved to:

- a) approve the development of an enterprise centre within Cambridge Central Library;
- b) enter into an agreement with Kora (part of the Regus Group) to create and run the Cambridge Library Enterprise Centre (CLEC); and
- c) delegate to the Executive - Director of Economy, Transport and Environment in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Highways & Community Infrastructure Committee authority to approve the final negotiations required to complete this project.

Chairman
28th April 2015