

ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE: MINUTES

Date: Thursday, 16th January 2020

Time: 10.00 a.m. to 11.10 a.m.

Present: Councillors: D Ambrose Smith, I Bates (Chairman), D Connor, R Fuller, L Harford, D Jenkins, N Kavanagh, T Sanderson and J Williams

Apologies: Councillors: H Batchelor (Substitute Councillor D Jenkins) T Wotherspoon (Vice-Chairman) (Substitute L Harford)

296. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

297. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 5th December 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

298. MINUTE ACTION LOG

The Minutes Action Log was noted.

In reviewing the response provided on the breakdown of the Community Transport underspend and particularly the additional information included in the appendix on bus contracts that had ceased, in respect of Contract 28 Councillor Williams raised on behalf of Councillor Kindersley, concerns that the former had not been notified in advance as the relevant local Councillor.

In a subsequent discussion Councillor Williams also indicated that he had not received details of any bus route cessations in his division since September. He therefore challenged whether, as a matter of course, local Members were still being notified when a local bus route ceased to operate in their electoral division. He also asked whether local members were consulted before the decision was made. A number of other members on the Committee indicated that they still received regular updates.

It was agreed that officers should prepare a note on the procedure undertaken regarding notifying local members of bus route closures that could be circulated to the whole Committee and to also investigate and respond directly to Councillor Kindersley regarding whether he had been notified on this particular route closure, and if not, any reasons why. **Action: Andy Preston/ Paul Nelson**

299. PETITIONS AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No petitions were received by the deadline. One request to speak had been received from Matthew Danish from Camcycle in respect of the A14 Huntingdon report and it was agreed that it would be taken with that item.

CHANGE IN THE ORDER OF AGENDA

As there were two requests to speak, with the Committee's consent, the Chairman agreed to revise the running order of the agenda and take the A14 Huntingdon Report as the next item of business.

300. A14 HUNTINGDON

It was explained that the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon scheme was now at an advanced stage of construction with completion expected by December 2020. The report informed the Committee of the proposals for works in Huntingdon resulting from the A14 improvements scheme and outlining the issues for the County Council.

With reference to the removal of the A14 Huntingdon Railway Viaduct, it was highlighted that the viaduct itself was in poor condition, despite a considerable amount of structural repair work having been undertaken. It was currently owned and managed by Highways England, but once the existing A14 had been de-trunked, it would have no reason to manage or maintain the viaduct. The condition of the viaduct was such that it could not be repaired economically, with the works carried out to date only being to prevent issues in the short term. The cost of maintaining the structure would in the future fall on the County Council. It was highlighted that the removal of the viaduct allowed for the creation of new access roads into the town centre, improving accessibility for all modes and allowing the existing A14 alignment to serve as a high quality local road. This in turn was expected to ease pressure on the Spital's interchange, the A141 bypass and the main thoroughfares in Godmanchester. The view of the County Council following meetings between David Bray, Highways England, the Chairman, local councillors and officers was that, on balance, the removal of the viaduct and creation of a junction would be beneficial to Huntingdon.

It was explained that areas of Huntingdon were currently classed as an 'Air Quality Management Area'. The reduction in traffic through the realignment of the A14 was expected to see pollution reduce to the extent that Huntingdon would no longer be designated as an Air Quality Management Area.

The report highlighted that at the Development Consent Order (DCO) Examination Stage, the County Council had raised concerns over the traffic modelling work carried out by Highways England. As a result, the DCO carried a Requirement (planning condition) providing for traffic monitoring before and one year after construction completion with an obligation on Highways England to address variations in actual traffic from that predicted, as well as the need to demonstrate acceptable performance of the proposed junctions. Highways England would need to agree mitigation with the County Council if the monitoring highlighted that traffic due to the A14 works was in excess of that predicted. Further to this, Baseline surveys were carried out in 2016 before construction started, with the requirement that following completion, further surveys would be undertaken and compared to the baseline and forecasts.

On information provided by Highways England, Officers were satisfied that the predicted traffic impacts of the works in Huntingdon were net beneficial to Huntingdon and Godmanchester, with the predicted performance in 2035 being no worse than existing traffic. During the design development process Highways England had made

various changes to the proposals in the Development Consent Order as listed in paragraph 2.5 of the report.

Matthew Danish from Camcycle presented a request for more separate cycleways as opposed to shared pedestrian paths along stretches of the new A14, as well as highlighting the need to improve the maintenance of the existing paths which were currently in a poor state of repair. (His presentation and maps which were shown at the meeting as power-point slides are included as appendices 1 to 3 of the minutes).

As a clarification, one member of the Committee asked if he could recall whether Highways England had undertaken to improve the pathways / cycleways when the scheme was reviewed at the Public Inquiry. Mr Danish indicated that he had not been present at the Inquiry, but was speaking on behalf of Mr Goodings, who had spent time at the inspection. Officers later in the meeting explained that the major constraints regarding providing separate cycling lanes along Brampton Road were in relation to the railway bridge and the limited width available. Some work had been undertaken to improve the alignment. On the issue of the provision of a footbridge, this had been discussed with Highways England who did not support it and as it was their project, the County Council was not in a position to compel them. Officers had made a note of the specific cycling issues raised.

The local Member for Brampton and Buckden spoke next, highlighting that he was not opposed to the A14 improvements, believing them to be beneficial to Huntingdon as they would improve air quality and reduce heavy good vehicles in the near vicinity. His reason for speaking was in relation to what he believed were two significant missed opportunities, which were also referenced in the report.

Local Members had raised concerns over the existing “dead end” status of Hinchingsbrooke Park Road with a single exit onto Brampton Road. Councillor Downes highlighted that this exit served 1200 homes, the largest school in the vicinity (with 1800 pupils) and a hospital. This resulted in huge delays along both Hinchingsbrooke Park Road and Brampton Road during the rush hour and when the school closed in the afternoon.

The report explained that the new Views Common link provided a second means of exit and entry to Hinchingsbrooke Park Road. Local Members had suggested relocation of the Views Common link to a position west of the hospital. This, the report explained, had the following issues:

- Parkway was a residential area – this definition was disputed by Councillor Downes in his presentation as, in his opinion, Parkway was not a residential area as there were only a few houses along the road.
- A link road, as proposed, would bring traffic into Hinchingsbrooke in the vicinity of a primary school. Councillor Downes suggested that the school in question was well protected as it was totally fenced in.
- A reason for the link being close to the Police Headquarters was the slip roads at Spittalls Interchange.

In addition, the officers’ report highlighted that to facilitate the suggestion would require

a change to the A14 Development Consent Order (DCO) which would also need a new planning application. It was considered very unlikely that planning consent would be obtained, as through the DCO, it had already been granted for the Views Common link, to which the County Council had made no objection. Officers had been working closely with Highways England in developing detailed designs and examination of traffic modelling and operational assessments. As Highways England already had a DCO for its works, it had no interest in making a change that was not necessary for delivery of the A14 scheme. In addition, the County Council was not in a position to oppose or reject proposals that were not unreasonable.

The other suggestion, also raised by Councillor Downes, was to open the existing emergency services link at Parkway (Kingfisher Way) into the Hinchingsbrooke Business Park. On the conclusion of his presentation he requested that the Committee reject recommendation 2 of the report and renegotiate re-opening Kingfisher Way as an adopted road.

Questions of clarification included asking whether other exits could be opened up from the estate and whether he believed the measures proposed would help with issues at the bottom end of Hinchingsbrooke estate. In answer to the latter, Councillor Downes believed it would. Officers and the Chairman explained that the roads in the Business Park were not adopted public highway, being private roads and therefore not in the ownership or control of the County Council. Opening the link to traffic other than “blue light” vehicles would bring traffic, including heavy vehicles along a residential road. Another local Member on the Committee indicated that he had recently spoken to the agents regarding Kingfisher Way and was told that they would consider speaking to the County Council. As a response, officers highlighted that any proposed changes would require a public consultation and the consent of the current industrial estate agents. As a further update, officers had that week received a letter from the landowners clarifying that they were not prepared to engage further on the question of making Kingfisher Way a public, adopted road.

Other points made by Committee members / raised in discussion included:

- The Committee member for Huntingdon West also raised concerns regarding the current access from the estate, highlighting that traffic lights on the new link road had not worked for a week exacerbating the issues already referenced earlier in Councillor Downes presentation. He indicated that he had not been kept informed by the County Council regarding the reason for the delays, with the District Council keeping him better informed. In response officers apologised for any failure to keep the local member informed, as while it was Highways England operating manual traffic lights for which there had been problems, it was under Council Street Works supervision. Officers would investigate why the local councillor had not been kept informed and write to him outside the meeting.
Action: Andy Preston
- The same member also highlighted that following a recent incident when a gas main had been struck, adding the irony being in the context of the current discussion, that the diversion had utilised Kingfisher Way. He made the point that a link from Hinchingsbrooke Hospital to the New Road needed to be considered. On the issue of a public transport interchange he commented that there was already one, but it was not used.

- Regarding the requirement for further traffic modelling after the scheme had been completed, the question was raised of what mitigation would be needed and how would it be undertaken if traffic levels were higher than the modelling had predicted. This would involve Highways England engaging with County Council officers and undertaking what-ever mitigation was required to rectify any identified problems.
- One Member suggested the two well-presented questions required responses in writing that Members should further consider before making any final decision and therefore no decisions should be made at the present meeting.
- A question was raised on when, as a result of the reduction in traffic in Huntingdon was it expected that the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) would be de-classified? In reply there was no fixed timescale. *(Post meeting Note: It would be for Huntingdonshire District Council to review post completion if the AQMA was still required. If measurements post completion indicated that Nitrogen Dioxide had fallen below threshold limits, then HDC could apply to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to revoke it).* The same member made the point that other ways to reduce congestion and pollution in urban areas would be through more resident parking schemes and road closures.
- Another Member reiterated that as the A14 project was Highways England, it was not in the gift of the County Council and that the ultimate arbiter to make changes was the Secretary of State. She also expressed her sorrow that it was only at this late stage that many local people had become aware of the potential implications that could arise. She suggested that the County Council needed to lobby and hold Central Government to account for any identified failures.

It was resolved:

- 1) To note the further development of the proposed works following the development consent order process.
- 2) To agree that the proposed works in Huntingdon were acceptable based on Highways England having demonstrated satisfactory performance of the proposed junctions.

301. TRANSPORT INVESTMENT PLAN SCHEME LIST

The Transport Investment Plan (TIP) for Cambridgeshire details the transport infrastructure, services and initiatives required to support the growth of Cambridgeshire. Appendix 1 to the report provided the detail of the TIP Scheme List at September 2019, having last been reported to the Committee in October 2018. It was highlighted that the schemes were not in priority order and not all had committed funding.

The list presented by city/district was updated throughout the year managed by the TIP Officers Group, led by the Council's Transport Strategy and Funding Team, taking account of any changes in policy, legislation, funding, development proposals and scheme delivery. Schemes were identified through development Transport Assessment processes and as a result of the adoption of new transport strategies. A comprehensive review of the TIP schemes was undertaken annually in the spring, involving a series of area-based workshops with internal project managers and city/district council officers.

New schemes could also be proposed from discussions between local Members and the Officers Group. The Group also reviewed any schemes proposed for removal from the TIP, resulting from any duplication, or where they were identified as not being feasible to deliver, the latter following consultation with local Members. Appendix 2 to the report provided the TIP Policy document, which was updated and republished annually to reflect changes in strategies, policies and legislation.

The following issues were raised as part of the discussion:

- The risk of reputational damage to the County Council when schemes secured funding but later could not then be progressed as a result of increased costs (often the result of land acquisition issues) and a lack of contingency funding. It was indicated that work was underway on how the County Council assessed risk in respect of projects included on the list to ensure appropriate contingencies were in place.
- Related to the above, a question was raised regarding the County Council's policy on Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO's) when there were problems with land acquisition. In reply it was explained that national policy had changed and that currently it was necessary to undertake protracted negotiations with landowners as this was cheaper and more timely than the CPO process (the latter also required a Committee decision). However if a CPO was required, the necessary process would be invoked.
- As part of the presentation, reference had been made to scheme location information being available with a hyperlink to the map on the 'My Cambridgeshire' website. **The Chairman requested that the link details should be provided not only to all County Councillors but also to District, Parish and Town Councils. Action: Cat Rutangye**
- Linked to the above **there was also a request for officer contact details to be provided for each of the districts as part of the document. Action: Cat Rutangye**
- Councillor Kavanagh highlighted that some of the schemes he had suggested did not appear to be included on the current list. Officers would take this up with him outside of the meeting. **Action: Cat Rutangye / Elsa Evans**

It was resolved unanimously:

To note for information the Transport Investment Plan 2019.

302. REVIEW OF THE RISK REGISTER

The Committee received the latest quarterly update of the Place and Economy (P&E) Risk Register (set out in Appendix 1 to the report). It was highlighted that further to discussions during the last Committee cycle, a full review of all appropriate P&E risks was currently being undertaken and the next version of the register in April would reflect any updates.

Having made no comments, It was resolved unanimously:

To note the Risk Register.

303. APPOINTMENT TO EXTERNAL BOARDS - GREAT OUSE REGIONAL FLOOD COASTAL COMMITTEE (RFCC)

This report sought to appoint a third member and deputies to the Great Ouse Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (previously known as the Anglian Great Ouse Central Regional Flood and Coastal Committee).

In the summer, a consultation proposed changes to the constitution of the Anglian Great Ouse RFCC to better align the number of members to the amount of levy paid by each council with the details having been presented to this Committee's September meeting. The preferred option from the consultation was approved by the RFCC and the new constitution as detailed in the report was to go live from April 2020. The result for Cambridgeshire was that the number of members the Council was entitled to appoint to the RFCC had increased from two to three. The Committee was therefore asked to propose and choose a third member to sit on the Anglian Great Ouse RFCC to commence from the meeting on 23rd April 2020. The County Council had previously appointed Councillors Tim Wotherspoon and Mandy Smith as its two Anglian Central RFCC voting members. In addition, as there were currently no formal deputies and as it was particularly important at the annual local levy vote (usually October) for the Council to be able to present a full suite of elected members, the Committee was also asked to appoint three deputies.

Issues raised included:

- Asking whether districts were represented. The answer was no, as representation was by upper tier councils. However district councils were able to apply for the levied funding held centrally for use as a discretionary contribution towards capital projects, revenue studies or for additional local maintenance.
- A question was raised regarding whether other parties had been canvassed for nominations. The Chairman responded that he had left seeking nominations to the Vice Chairman and in his absence, was not able to confirm how nominations had been sought.

Having considered nominations proposed by the Chairman, It was resolved:

to appoint Councillors Tim Wotherspoon, Mandy Smith and Matthew Shuter as the three Council representatives on the Great Ouse Regional Flood and Coastal Committee and Councillors David Ambrose Smith, Lynda Harford and Mark Goldsack as substitutes / deputies.

304. FINANCE MONITORING REPORT – NOVEMBER 2019

The Committee received a report outlining the Finance Monitoring Report (FMR) for Place & Economy Services as at the end of November 2019. The Strategic Finance Manager informed the Committee that a bottom line underspend of £2.7m was

forecasted, £0.2m down from the previous report. The main areas of overspend / underspend were:-

- Bus Lane Enforcement and Parking Enforcement: forecasting a £788K underspend
- Winter Maintenance: a projected overspend of £463K
- Community Transport & Concessionary Fares: Across the two headings the underspend had reduced from £164K to £61K.
- Waste Management: The forecast underspend was now £1.9m a reduction of 186K since the previous month due to legal costs on the changes to the contract.

The revised capital budget for 2019/20 reflected the carry-forwards of funding from 2018/19 and the agreed re-phasing of schemes. There had been no significant changes to any capital schemes since the previous report. The Vacancy, Tree and Local Highway Initiative (LHI) activity data was detailed in the appendix to the report.

In discussion, the following issues were raised by the Council's Cycling Champion in respect of page 142 – regarding expenditure for a number of cycling schemes:

- Fenstanton to the Busway - requesting more detail to be provided on what a Creation Order was.
- Referencing the text on the Rampton and Willingham scheme stating that it was not able to delivered, as more than a £100k was required, it was requested that more detail should be provided on the status of the scheme.

Officers agreed to take the above two issues raised away and provide a written answer outside of the meeting. Action: Andy Preston

It was resolved unanimously to:

note the report.

305. AGENDA PLAN AND APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

It was resolved to note:

- a) That there were no additional outside body appointments to be made.
- b) A change of status to the February report titled 'Highways Response to West Cambridge Master Planning Report' which had been re-designated a non key decision report.

306. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING THURSDAY 6TH FEBRUARY 2020

Post meeting note: this meeting was subsequently cancelled and items rescheduled for the March meeting.

**Chairman:
6TH February 2020**

Mathew Danish Camcycle

In this case, I am delivering these comments on behalf of Rupert Goodings for CTC Cambridge, which is part of Cycling UK. These comments pick up an issue from a submission that Mr Goodings made to the DCO process.

The overall plans for cycling in Huntingdon are unambitious and disappointing compared to what could have been achieved here for access to the station, National Cycle Routes 12 and 51, and a school route. There is excessive application of shared-use pavements in places where separate cycleways would have been more appropriate and too many multi-stage crossings that will endlessly frustrate people walking and cycling here.

In addition, Highways England seem to be doing the least possible amount of work to improve existing shared-use paths.

It is a terrible shame to do so much road works and not to make any improvements to these paths. Both sections are currently in very poor condition -- narrow and rough. If nothing else can be done about the aforementioned design problems, at least there should be some simple improvements: widen and resurface the existing paths.

Section 1: Brampton Rd - path on the north west side of Brampton Rd. Improve the narrow section all the way from the Common Link Rd to the Edison Bell Way junction (the big new crossroad junction). Total about 0.5 miles. [See attached map - section 1. Appendix 2 of the Minutes]

Section 2: Huntingdon Ring Road - path on the south side. Improve the narrow section from the new Pathfinder Link Road to the old river bridge (the road to Godmanchester). Total about 0.3 miles. [See attached map - section 2. Appendix 3 of the Minutes]