

## **HIGHWAYS AND INFRASTRUCTURE POLICY AND SERVICE COMMITTEE:** **MINUTES**

Date: Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Time: 10:00am – 11:20am

Present: Councillors A Bradnam, I Gardener, M Goldsack, L Harford, B Hunt (Vice-Chairman), S King, I Manning, J Scutt, M Shuter (Chairman) and G Wilson.

Apologies: None

### **169. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no apologies for absence

There were no declarations of interest.

### **170. MINUTES – 10<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2020**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 10<sup>th</sup> March 2020 were agreed as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman when the Council returned to its offices.

### **171. HIGHWAYS AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE ACTION LOG**

The action log was noted.

Individual Members raised the following issues in relation to the action log:

- sought confirmation that a number of the outstanding actions would be carried over to the new Highways and Transport Committee. The Executive Director for Place and Economy confirmed that, subject to the approval of the establishment of the Highways and Transport Committee by Full Council on the 19<sup>th</sup> May 2020, this would be the case.
- Minute 123. – queried when an A14 update report would be presented to the Committee. The Executive Director for Place and Economy confirmed that, subject to the decision made by Full Council on the 19<sup>th</sup> May 2020, the report would be added to the Highways and Transport Committee's forward agenda plan. **(Action required)**
- Minute 123. - thanked officers for working with Highways England to change the road signage on a section of the A14 in his division. However, the Member suggested that more work needed to be done to improve road signage to ensure that vehicles leaving Alconbury Weald were not using local roads to get onto the A14.
- Minute 146 c. – suggested that it would be beneficial if there was an estimated completion date for the review of the Local Highways Initiative (LHI) process.

- Minute 160. – queried whether notes containing more information on the review of the LHI process would be circulated to the Committee. The Executive Director for Place and Economy stated that they would be.  
**(Action required)**
- thanked officers for negotiating with Highways England to alter the start time of overnight road works on the A14 to allow health care workers to travel home more conveniently after their shift.

## **172. PETITIONS AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

None received.

## **173. CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19**

The Chairman reported that officers had been asked to bring a report on the Covid-19 response to date for those services for which each Policy and Service Committee was responsible. A similar report would be brought to each future meeting until further notice.

The Executive Director for Place and Economy drew the Committees attention to the contents of the report and highlighted the actions taken by Place and Economy to respond to Covid-19.

Members of the Committee thanked all the officers who had been redeployed via the Covid-19 Coordination Hub. Members expressed their support for the flexible working arrangements currently being performed by the Council.

Individual Members raised the following issues in relation to the report:

- sought confirmation that all 9 of the Household Recycling Centers (HRCs) in Cambridgeshire were to reopen on the 11<sup>th</sup> May 2020. The Chairman confirmed that this was the case. The Executive Director for Place and Economy explained that the Council had received guidance from the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) regarding the process of reopening HRCs. The guidance had confirmed that it was lawful to reopen the sites. He stated that officers had been working on plans which would allow HRCs to reopen whilst adhering to social distancing measures, this would ensure the safety of site operatives and visitors. The guidance stated that only essential visits to the HRC should be made to dispose of waste which could not be stored safely at home, or which could not be collected by other legitimate means. He explained that traffic management measures would be in place to manage the queues for the sites. It was noted that further guidance would be released providing more detail on managing the reopening of HRCs.
- queried whether trips to an HRC to dispose of green or bulky waste would be considered essential. The Executive Director for Place and Economy stated that residents should follow the government guidance and reiterated that only essential visits to the HRC should be made to dispose of waste which could not be stored safely at home, or which could not be collected by other legitimate means. He suggested that it was residents' decision to decide whether their waste met this criteria.

- raised concerns regarding the fact that the guidance stated that trailers could not be used at HRCs. The Executive Director for Place and Economy explained the guidance would be kept under close review. He stated that HRCs were currently under significant pressure and it was important that the sites could be managed effectively.
- supported the Council's approach in writing to Telecommunications Companies and 5G operators to encourage them to perform as much work as possible in rolling out digital infrastructure while traffic levels were lower. Members agreed that investment in digital infrastructure was important to ensure that the flexible working practices currently being adopted by the Council would continue in the future. The Member requested that the Committee be provided with updates on the rollout of digital infrastructure. The Executive Director for Place and Economy informed the Committee that the Telecommunications companies had shared this approach with other Local Authorities (LAs). The Local Government Association (LGA) had also requested whether they could use this approach in their Covid-19 best practice guide.
- believed that once the lockdown measures eased, residents would want to go out shopping. The Member stated that the Council should enable residents to shop whilst adhering to social distancing measures. He suggested that this could be achieved by temporarily reallocating road space. The Service Director for Highways and Transport explained that officers had been working with colleagues from district Councils to establish how road space in city centres and towns could be managed to facilitate shopping.
- raised concerns regarding the online Highways Reporting Tool still having reports submitted in 2017. He suggested that if officers were completing the work and it wasn't showing on the system, it would appear to the public that the work was not being completed. The Service Director for Highways and Transport acknowledged this issue and confirmed that work was being undertaken to clean up the current system and to procure a new system. It was highlighted that the number of outstanding highways fault reports was reducing week by week and that the Local Highways Officers (LHOs) were actively highlighting highway faults that needed to be repaired.
- queried as to how the service was planning on bringing their redeployed staff back into their original posts once the Covid-19 situation had improved. The Executive Director for Place and Economy stated that the service was continuing to focus on their response to Covid-19, but also their recovery. He stated that this issue was being monitored and would be reflected in the Covid-19 highlight reports going forward.
- queried the progress made in regards to the 'Playing Out' petition presented to the Committee at a previous meeting. The Service Director for Highways and Transport confirmed that a response had been sent out to the petitioner and progress was being made. He noted that further work would be undertaken once the Covid-19 situation has improved.
- requested that the Committee have sight of the short term risk log for the internal management of the Council's response to Covid-19 and the longer

term risk log for the strategic management of the delivery of the Council's objectives arising from Covid-19. The Executive Director for Place and Economy stated that he would take this away. **(Action required)**

- queried whether Members could have site meetings with their LHOs. The Executive Director for Place and Economy suggested that the social distancing guidance from Government and Public Health still needed to be adhered to. Therefore, if the site visit could not achieve social distancing measures, then it should not take place.
- thanked Highways officers for the work they had performed in their division and congratulated Huntingdonshire District Council for maintaining their fortnightly green bin collection. The Member believed that this would relieve some pressure on the HRCs.
- queried as to whether the Council were asking Highways England to repair local roads damaged by the work on the A14 as the roads were quieter. The Service Director for Highways and Transport explained that officers were working with Highways England to address this issue. He stated that he would circulate an updated list of the roads needing to be repaired to the Committee. The Chairman suggested that officers could also offer this update to all Members whose local roads had been affected by the work on the A14. **(Action required)**
- suggested that once lockdown measures had eased, individuals may still be apprehensive to use public transport. The Member queried whether the Council could encourage residents to use public transport, rather than their car to commute to work. They suggested that this would improve air quality and relieve some of the car parking pressures in Cambridge City. The Service Director for Highways and Transport explained that officers were working with bus companies to identify whether the appropriate social distancing measures could be achieved on buses, to ensure the safety of all bus users.
- suggested that the Council should encourage bus companies to have an effective advertising campaign to ensure that residents are comfortable using public transport once the lockdown measures ease.
- queried that as bus lanes were currently quieter, whether they could be used as cycle lanes. The Chairman confirmed that this was being investigated by officers.
- welcomed the fact that the operatives at the HRCs would be provided with personal protective equipment (PPE). The Member queried whether Highways workers were provided with the same equipment. The Service Director for Highways and Transport explained that the majority of highways workers were employed by Skanska. He confirmed that Skanska had high PPE requirements and that all of their employees and the Council's employees were provided with the appropriate level of PPE at all times. The Executive Director for Place and Economy confirmed that employees would not be working if they did not have the appropriate level of PPE.
- sought more information regarding parking enforcement officers. The Service Director for Highways and Transport explained that the parking

enforcement service currently consisted of 4 officers who were only responding to emergencies, as routine parking enforcement had been suspended. He confirmed that officers were planning on this service returning.

- suggested that work be undertaken to ensure that social distancing measures could be adhered to whilst walking around Cambridge. The Chairman clarified that this issue was being investigated.
- queried whether it was possible to relax the intervention level requirements for adjacent pothole repair. The Service Director for Highways and Transport explained the process of adjacent pothole repair. He suggested that once lockdown measures eased, the Council would receive an influx of pothole reports. He commented that officers would take a pragmatic approach to this but no changes to the intervention standards would be made at this time.
- queried whether LHOs were being redeployed, and if so, were Members being informed. The Service Director for Highways and Transport confirmed that in some instances LHOs had been redeployed if they had a certain skill set which was needed by the Covid-19 Coordination Hub. He assured Members that this would not diminish the highways service provided locally. Going forward, Members would be provided with an alternative contact if their LHO was redeployed.
- raised concerns regarding a pothole which had been poorly repaired in their division. The Executive Director for Place and Economy explained that Skanska had given their supply of FFP3 masks to the NHS. As a consequence, FFP3 masks were not available to be used for repairing potholes in the usual way. He stated that this pothole would be repaired again once the appropriate PPE equipment was available to use by highways workers.
- sought more information regarding officers reopening public rights of way closed by landowners. The Member also asked whether any public rights of way were not currently open. The Executive Director for Place and Economy stated that he would take this away. **(Action required)**

It was resolved unanimously to:

note and comment on the progress made to date in responding to the impact of the Coronavirus.

**174. HIGHWAYS AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE AGENDA PLAN, TRAINING PLAN AND APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES.**

It was unanimously resolved to:

Note the Committee Agenda Plan

Chairman