

Highways and Transport Committee: Minutes

Date: 3 December 2024

Time: 10.00 a.m. to 12:55 p.m.

Venue: Red Kite Room, New Shire Hall

Present: Councillors Alex Beckett (Chair), Neil Shailer (Vice-Chair), Piers Coutts, Claire Daunton, Lorna Dupré, Ian Gardener, Neil Gough, Anne Hay, Bill Hunt, Peter McDonald, Tom Sanderson, and Alan Sharp

243. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Gerri Bird, Jan French and Simon King.

Councillors Gardener and Sanderson declared a non-statutory disclosable interest in Agenda Item 4 (Procurement of Replacement of Guided Busway and Babraham Park & Ride Site CCTV), as elected members of Huntingdonshire District Council.

244. Minutes – 1 October 2024 and 4 October 2024

While discussing Minute 237 (St Ives and Fulbourn 20mph Zone and Speed Limit Schemes) of the minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2024, it was agreed that the support of the local Member for Fulbourn for the speed limit schemes in Fulbourn be recorded in the same way as that of the opposition of the local Member for the St Ives South and Needingworth for the 20mph zone in St Ives, by inserting the following additional bullet point to the discussion on that item (addition in bold):

- **Noted that the local Member for Fulbourn, Councillor Daunton, supported the proposed speed limit schemes in Fulbourn.**

It was also noted that Appendix 1 to the minutes had not originally been attached, and it was confirmed that the appendix had now been attached and that the minutes had been subsequently republished.

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2024 were agreed as a correct record, subject to the above amendments, and signed by the Chair.

The committee was informed that the Members that had attended the special meeting on 4 October 2024 had been contacted separately to seek any concerns about their accuracy, of which none had been raised. The minutes of the special meeting held on 4 October 2024 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

While reviewing the Minutes Action Log, Members:

- Clarified that the update to the first action related to Minute 239 (Highways and Transport Committee Agenda Plan and Appointments to Outside Bodies), referred to the A1421, rather than the A141.
- Confirmed that the first action related to Minute 229 (Highways and Transport Committee Agenda Plan, Appointments to Outside Bodies and Internal Advisory Groups and Panels, and the Appointment of Member Champions) would be completed at the committee's first meeting after the Council's election in May 2025, noting that the next round of applications to the Local Highway Initiative scheme would not take place before then.

The Committee noted the Minutes Action Log.

245. Petitions and Public Questions

The Committee was informed that three public questions had been accepted and that the questions would be taken at the start of the relevant agenda items. It was noted that one question related to agenda item 5 (Active Travel Hierarchy Consultation and Development), one question related to agenda item 6 (Vision Zero and the Council's Management of its Duties in Relation to Road Safety), and one question related to agenda item 7 (Procurement of Civil Parking Enforcement Services).

The Committee was informed that the Council had received a petition with 115 signatures requesting repairs to the roads in Coton, attached at Appendix 1 of the minutes, and the petitioner, Mr Allan Treacy, was invited to address the committee.

Arguing that the Council failed to comply with its own rules on repairing roads, Mr Treacy drew attention to potholes on roads in Coton that had been identified by the Council as in need of repair, but which had not been repaired within 21 days of indicative yellow paint being applied. He informed Members that vehicles had been significantly damaged by the potholes and argued that failing to repair them undermined the Council's encouragement of active travel, as cyclists were unwilling to use the roads. Mr Treacy was informed that the Council would investigate the issues that had been raised in the petition, and it was suggested that the increased level of investment that had been made towards highways maintenance would help reduce such situations reoccurring in the future. It was confirmed that a response to the petition would be sent from the Chair to the petitioner within ten working days.

246. Procurement of Replacement of Guided Busway and Babraham Park & Ride Site CCTV

The Committee received a report proposing a procurement for the replacement of CCTV equipment and CCTV maintenance for the Guided Busway and the Babraham Park and Ride site. Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) would undertake the procurement of a five year contract on behalf of the County Council. Members were informed that there were no climate change or environmental implications related to the proposals, and that Section 6.5 of the report should therefore be disregarded, as it had been erroneously included.

While discussing the report, individual Members:

- Noted that a procurement for similar upgrades to other Park and Ride sites had been carried out in 2022 and queried why all the sites were not included in one contract. Members were informed that the Babraham site was not included in the 2022 procurement because it had been undergoing major works on solar panels at the time. Notwithstanding, when the other contract expired in approximately two years, it was intended to seek to incorporate all the sites under one contract.
- Drew attention to anti-social behaviour, such as joyriding, which occurred at some of the Park and Ride sites and queried how it could be detected or deterred by the CCTV system. Members were informed that the control centre managed by HDC monitored the sites 24/7, whereas the current arrangements only operated until 6:30 p.m. The system would also provide a more efficient process for collecting and sharing CCTV footage, which would be of a similar quality to Automatic Number Plate Recognition technology.
- Established that the proposals would include the installation of additional cameras along the Guided Busway in sections that were currently not covered.
- Queried whether the proposals were compliant with Health and Safety Executive (HSE) regulations, and it was confirmed that a full review of the safety management regime and the risk assessment regime around the wider operation of the busway, including the CCTV, had ensured it was compliant with the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. The revised safety management arrangement involved weekly reviews and the committee was reassured that there was regular engagement between the Council and HSE.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Authorise the procurement for replacement of CCTV; monitoring; response to incidents; data handling requests, and provision of transmission network linkage, for a term of five years; and
- b) Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Place and Sustainability, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee, to award and execute a contract for the provision of CCTV as above starting in 2025.

247. Active Travel Hierarchy Consultation and Development

The Committee received an update report on the consultation and development of the Council's draft Active Travel Hierarchy, which comprised the Walking and Wheeling Hierarchy, the Cycling Hierarchy and the Public Rights of Way (PROW) hierarchy.

Nick Kent was invited to address the committee. Drawing attention to the proposals set out in the non-statutory consultation recently issued by East West Rail (EWR), Mr Kent expressed concern about the number of proposed permanent and temporary road diversions, and argued that there was a lack of information related to the proposed new station in Cambourne and potential road improvements or new roads resulting from the scheme. He queried how the EWR proposals would affect the development of the Active Travel Hierarchy and the wider prioritisation of the Highways Capital Programme, and suggested construction vehicles could cause significant damage to rural roads across the county. It was emphasised that although the Oxford to Bedford section of the proposed route was scheduled to open in 2030, EWR had not yet applied for a development consent order for the Cambridgeshire section, and therefore it was not anticipated that the EWR proposals would impact either the development of the Active Travel Hierarchy proposals or the proposed new process for prioritising capital maintenance projects, both of which were proposed to be operational in 2025. Members were assured that the Council would work closely with EWR as it developed its proposals for the route, and would continue to review the impact these would have on the local highway network, ensuring that mitigations were agreed and put in place prior to any construction activities commencing.

While discussing the report, individual Members:

- Welcomed the new approach that was being developed, highlighting that it aimed to support and encourage people to choose active travel by emphasising that roads were not just used by motor vehicles. Members noted that there were a lot of missing links across the county's active travel network and emphasised the importance of ensuring the hierarchy was adaptable in the future. It was suggested that the hierarchy would allow the Council to differentiate how much it spent on the maintenance of carriageways and the accompanying active travel infrastructure, which it had previously not been able to do.
- Sought clarification on how the ongoing development of the Active Travel Hierarchy aligned with the prioritisation of the Highways Capital Programme. Members were informed that if the committee approved the Walking and Wheeling Hierarchy and the Cycling Hierarchy upon their completion, a ranking would be assigned to each highway within the hierarchy. Those scores would then be inserted into the capital maintenance prioritisation and taken into account during the ranking exercise for the prioritisation of schemes.
- Noted that that feedback from the planned public consultation would be used to help inform the development of criteria for a potential PROW Hierarchy, and expressed concern that the evidence could vary across the county. Members were informed that the Council would engage with the local access forum and other PROW stakeholders across the county to establish what different areas would like to

prioritise and to identify key routes that were most valued. It was intended to present the results of the consultation and a proposed PROW Hierarchy to the committee in July 2025 or October 2025, and it was confirmed that information on the maintenance of PROWs would be published following the consultations.

- Requested further information on how PROWs would be inspected and maintained, noting the high number of complaints received due to issues such as a lack of cutting, blockages and damaged stiles, and argued that the hierarchy would only be effective if it was accompanied by an appropriate maintenance budget. Members were informed that the cutting back of vegetation had been prioritised in the development of the PROW Hierarchy and it was agreed to provide the committee with additional information on their inspection and maintenance. **Action required**
- Highlighted the importance of working with partners on the development of the PROW hierarchy, and queried how other stakeholders and interested parties had been consulted. It was acknowledged that private landowners were a stakeholder, as many PROWs crossed private land, and it was agreed to provide Members with an update on the involvement of such partnerships in the development of the hierarchy. **Action required**
- Suggested that grass verges on rural roads should be cut to provide pedestrians with an alternative to walking on the road, noting that potholes developed out of the verges as a result of vehicles passing each other on narrow roads, although it was acknowledged that the development of the Active Travel Hierarchy would help to identify and address such issues where it affected active travel. Another Member emphasised the importance of clearing vegetation on such roads in order to expose the potholes, and also clearing grips to avoid vegetation growing in the first place.

It was resolved unanimously to:

Note progress to date regarding creation of the Active Travel Hierarchy.

248. Prioritisation of the Highways Capital Programme

The Committee received a report which set out the proposed processes by which planned maintenance schemes would be prioritised for inclusion and delivery in the Council's capital programme from the 2025/26 municipal year onwards.

Adam Bostanci was invited to address the committee on behalf of Meldreth Parish Council. Arguing that highways maintenance and pothole repair undertaken by the Council had become too reactive in nature, Mr Bostanci drew attention to issues that had previously been addressed in a cyclical way, but which had now fallen into abeyance, requiring continuous chasing by parish councils and other local people. He sought clarification on what cyclical maintenance was undertaken by the Council, and what steps could be taken to establish a more effective rolling programme of inspection, maintenance, repair and renewal of highways and footways. It was clarified that the Council had increased its investment in the structural and non-structural repair of active travel routes from £5.3m to £7.8m in the 2024/25 financial year, with a further planned increase to £9.3m in 2025/26. The proposed new prioritisation process would provide

local communities with greater visibility of the Council's forward work programmes, while its multi-year format would enable the development of rolling maintenance programmes, again providing local communities and stakeholders with greater visibility of where planned works would take place. It was also noted that the Council's Highways Operational Standards provided further information on what could be expected.

While discussing the report, individual Members:

- Welcomed the proposed prioritisation process, highlighting how it would support and maximise the impact of additional funding that had been allocated for highways maintenance in the 2024/25 financial year. It was argued that the process would enable a data-driven, holistic approach to allocating resources objectively, rather than an approach that rewarded those that applied the greatest pressure, although some Members expressed concern that it could be difficult for local communities and members of the public to understand the reasoning behind the scoring of individual roads.
- Expressed concern that the proposed scoring process could result in a reduction of highways maintenance in rural areas due to lower traffic volumes compared to urban roads, and argued that it should only be considered as an additional tool, rather than the exclusive mechanism, as it would not take into account additional local factors, such as the noise of pothole impacts on nearby residents. However, it was emphasised that the prioritisation process would include a range of criteria, and that it would be reviewed and changed in the future, if appropriate, to ensure it was fair and effective. Members were assured that they would be presented with the draft prioritisation proposal before it was presented for approval to ensure they could contribute additional local knowledge, and it was confirmed that any known safety concerns or an increased level of heavy goods vehicle (HGV) use of any particular road would also be considered during the scoring process. It was also noted that there was an additional, separate budget for the maintenance of more rural, unclassified roads which were scored individually.
- Queried whether the existence of a bus service route when scoring a road in the prioritisation process included only commercial services or whether it also included school buses, noting that school buses were much more prevalent than commercial buses in rural areas. Members were informed that the process currently only included commercial bus services because school services were not mapped in an automatic way that enabled them to be included in the scoring process, although the Education Transport team was being consulted on whether such additional data could be provided in order to incorporate such routes into the process.
- Highlighted the importance of clearly explaining the different treatments that were available, when they might be used, and the criteria for assessing when they might be used. It was clarified that reactive maintenance was day-to-day work carried out in response to issues that had been reported by members of the public or picked up by safety inspections, whereas proactive maintenance was planned work with capital funding. Members noted that carrying out repairs before damage reached a higher category was preferable, and that the prioritisation process would help in the

identification and prioritisation of such cases, although it was emphasised that budgetary constraints would limit the level of maintenance that could be carried out.

- Confirmed that condition surveys were also carried out on pavements and footways, with the data subsequently used in the same way as carriageway data, enabling the identification of footways in need of repair.
- Clarified that ‘e.g.’ should have been used instead of ‘i.e.’ throughout the draft prioritisation criteria, attached at Appendix 2 of the report, to indicate a selection of examples rather than an exclusive list.

It was resolved to:

- a) Approve the processes and scoring systems for the prioritisation of planned capital maintenance schemes from the 2025/26 financial year onwards, as set out in the report and Appendices 1 to 4 of the report;
- b) Note that the established politically proportional member engagement group will suggest and advise on changes to the scoring criteria and prioritisation process as required, and review the prioritised capital maintenance programme prior to it being presented to the Committee for approval; and
- c) Delegate Authority to the Executive Director of Place and Sustainability, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee, to make any changes to the scoring criteria as set out in the appendices to this report, taking account of the advice from the member engagement group.

249. Vision Zero and the Council’s Management of its Duties in Relation to Road Safety

The Committee received a report on the Council’s activities in relation to its road safety statutory duties, as well as the wider road safety agenda addressed by the Vision Zero Partnership.

Roxanne de Beaux was invited to address the committee on behalf of Camcycle. Highlighting Camcycle’s support for the Vision Zero objectives, Ms de Beaux argued that there would be fewer injuries and deaths if road safety was treated as seriously as rail safety or workplace health and safety. Expressing concern that interventions were often only put in place after high profile accidents had occurred, she suggested that the Council should be more proactive in prioritising and ensuring the safety of cyclists and argued that safety should always be the highest priority when designing road space, rather than traffic flow. She also drew attention to the difference between legal pedal-assisted bicycles and illegally modified bicycles, both of which were often referred to together as e-bikes. It was acknowledged that the Council was still addressing the challenge of how to integrate these kinds of new and innovative forms of transport to the existing network in a safe way, although Members were assured that the Council prioritised the safety of active travel users and all other users of the local transport network in its management of the network and its infrastructure design.

While discussing the report, individual Members:

- Welcomed the Vision Zero Partnership's progress in reducing the number of road deaths, particularly in addressing safety at accident sites, and suggested it would be beneficial for Members to receive more frequent updates. Members also requested that future reports contain additional data on the likely impacts of the available options to help inform the committee's decision-making. It was also acknowledged that the response to such issues was restrained by the level of available financial resources.
- Noted there was a relatively low number of speed cameras in the county compared to neighbouring counties, and queried whether there were plans to install more. Members were informed that speed cameras were expensive to operate, while a lack of available court appointments to address infractions meant that effective enforcement would be difficult to sustain. It was also argued that while speed cameras generally had a positive impact in the surrounding area, they often displaced speeding issues to other areas, and it was suggested that average speed cameras were more effective in encouraging behavioural change.
- Expressed concern about the behaviour of drivers of large agricultural vehicles, such as mobile phone use while driving, and suggested there could be greater encouragement for such vehicles to occasionally pull aside to let other vehicles pass, reducing the level of dangerous overtaking that occurred. Members were informed that the Council had raised such concerns with the police and that it was currently assessing how to encourage such behaviour. Notwithstanding it was also acknowledged that passing places were not always available and noted that the drivers of agricultural vehicles were often badly treated by other drivers.
- Observed that cluster site analysis identified sites with either three collisions resulting in serious injury or fatalities, or six collisions resulting in injury, and suggested that it would be preferable to identify such hotspots sooner, querying whether additional engagement on dangerous junctions between the Council, local Members and local communities could support a more proactive approach rather than a reactive one. Members were informed that the current process was based on the available levels of data and funding, with the sites where accidents were most likely or frequent prioritised for work, although it was suggested that the future collection of a wider range of vehicle data, such as sudden braking or steering trends, could support a more proactive approach.
- Suggested that wider use of white road markings could help reduce the number of collisions on rural roads. Attention was also drawn to damage to vehicles resulting from faded markings on road humps and speed cushions. It was clarified that the addition of white line markings was considered alongside other potential improvements as part of any investigation following a fatal road traffic collision. Members were also informed that the Council maintained a white road marking programme which prioritised sites with safety concerns, although it was noted that the winter climate prevented such work.

- Emphasised the importance of motor vehicles being driven responsibly, including treating a speed limit as a limit rather than a target, and following road markings rather than sat navs. Members also highlighted the importance of cyclists using appropriate equipment, such as lights and helmets, and following the Highway Code correctly, and suggested that regulations were necessary to better manage the use of e-scooters and e-bikes.
- Paid tribute to work carried out to support road safety by the Council's Junior Travel Ambassadors, Road Victims Trust and local communities that carried out informal speed checks and educated local drivers.
- Drew attention to junctions where local roads included crossing points in the middle of major A roads and queried how the Council could support alternative designs to increase safety. Members were informed that such road designs were out-dated and no longer constructed. National Highways also carried out its own cluster site analysis, but due to financial constraints was unable to construct bridges or underpasses at such junctions.

It was resolved unanimously to:

Review and scrutinise the work of the Council's Road Safety Team, in addressing both the Council's specific statutory duties in regard to road safety, and the wider road safety agenda addressed by the Vision Zero Partnership.

250. Finance Monitoring Report – October 2024

The Committee received the Finance Monitoring Report to the end of October 2024 for the services within its remit, which reported a forecast revenue overspend of £1.9m, and a £5m slippage compared to the budgeted capital programme variation.

While discussing the report, individual Members:

- Requested further information on the £917k underspend on carriageway and footway maintenance. Members were informed that the underspend related to specific schemes that had to be reprofiled because they were linked to other schemes, such as those managed by the Greater Cambridge Partnership.
- Expressed concern that only £2m had been spent of the £20m allocated to Further Highways Prioritisation. It was clarified that the wider Highways Maintenance budget exceeded £45m and it was confirmed that the whole budget had been allocated and programmed for delivery, although it was acknowledged that bad weather could cause some work to roll over into the following financial year. It was noted that changes to how the Council profiled risk had resulted in a higher level of expenditure than in previous years.

It was resolved unanimously to:

Review and comment on the report.

251. Highways and Transport Committee Agenda Plan and Appointments to Outside Bodies

The committee noted the agenda plan.

Chair
21 January 2025

Petition requesting repairs to Coton's road

We the undersigned petition the council to deal with the uneven road surface resulting from severe subsidence and properly repair the potholes in Brook Lane and Grantchester Road from The Plough in Coton to the Barton Road roundabout.

The potholes are causing severe damage to cyclists' tyres, car tyres and suspension. They are also a real danger as drivers swerve to avoid the worst of the potholes. A bad accident is almost inevitable.

We are dismayed that some previous requests for remedial work have been ignored by your department. Marking of the worst potholes with yellow paint has been your only recent response and you have not met your own timetable for completing repairs. This is unacceptable.

Please treat this matter as urgent.

[115 signatures]