

HIGHWAYS AND INFRASTRUCTURE POLICY AND SERVICE COMMITTEE: MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 9th July 2019

Time: 10:00am - 11:15am

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

Apologies: None

120. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were noted as recorded above. There were no declarations of interest.

121. MINUTES AND ACTION LOG

The minutes of the meeting held on the 21st May 2019 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

Councillor Gardener confirmed that he had been in attendance at the meeting on the 21st May 2019 and had not been substituted by Councillor Howell.

122. PETITIONS AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No petitions or public questions were received.

123. FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT – May 2019

The Committee considered the May 2019 Finance and Performance Report (F&PR) for Place & Economy Services. The Strategic Finance Manager informed Members that they were forecasting a total underspend of £1.3m. This was mainly due to Bus Lane Enforcement and Highways Development Management which had generated additional income last year, it was also forecast that there would be an over-achievement of income again in these areas this financial year. There was an underspend on Concessionary fares which had offset the Community Transport pressure. Both of these budgets were managed on behalf of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA). There had been a breakdown at the Mechanical Biological Treatment (MBT) waste facility, this had resulted in a reduced landfill tax which was forecast to lead to around a £1m underspend. The Capital Programme Variation was £11.7m. Out of 11 performance indicators, 3 were red, 1 was amber and 2 were green at year end.

Arising from the report:

- A Member queried whether they could review the concessionary fare usage policy so that individuals with disabilities could use it before 9:30am. The Strategic Finance Manager stated that she did not know the precise details regarding the concessionary fares scheme and noted that this scheme was managed on behalf of the CPCA. The Chairman raised his concerns regarding the application of this and noted that they would have to communicate with the CPCA.
- The Member then commented that technology would have to be installed into the bus pass that allowed it to identify who was using the card and if they were eligible to use the bus before 9:30am. The Chairman stated that they should be encouraging people with disabilities to travel to work. He then asked officers whether they could look into whether this was feasible.
- A Member queried whether they had agreed to list staff vacancies within the report. Upon further discussion it was established that vacancy rates were present in the report.
- A Member raised his concerns regarding the breakdown at the MBT plant and the effect this would have on the quantity of waste not being processed.
- A Member queried why the breakdown at the MBT plant had effected the finance figures found within the report. The Interim Assistant Director, Environment & Commercial Services clarified that due to our contract with AMEY, for each month the MBT was not operating, the Council had received a reduced landfill tax bill as the penalty charge for waste not being processed was being paid by AMEY.
- A Member queried the differences between 'vacancies from establishment' and 'true vacancies' and raised his concerns regarding the percentage of true vacancies for outdoor education. The Strategic Finance Manager clarified that 'true vacancies' are post that they were actively trying to recruit to whereas other establishment vacancies were not filled for a specific reason. For example, the outdoor education posts are seasonal jobs and thus vacancy rates fluctuate throughout the year.
- The Member queried whether financial savings had influenced the number of vacancies. The Strategic Finance Manager confirmed that if there was a job post in the establishment, then it was fully costed and funded.
- A Member sought clarification regarding whether the Executive Director costs were on target and some of the other finance figures in the report. The Strategic Finance Manager confirmed that they were on target and stated that they had an underspend in Highways and Infrastructure & Growth.

- A Member sought clarification regarding whether there had been a reduction in pothole funding for the 2019/20 financial year. He was concerned that members of the public may believe that the budget had been reduced. The Executive Director, Place & Economy and the Strategic Finance Manager stated that this was not the case.
- A Member queried whether the funding for Place & Economy (P&E) had remained the same for this financial year or whether it had decreased due to less additional funding from the Department of Transport (DfT). The Member followed on from this by raising her concerns regarding the stretched budget of the Local Highways Officers.
- A Member sought clarification regarding the budget allocation for footways maintenance. She noted that the condition of footways had a significant impact on the older population. The Chairman stated that Members of the Committee had already received a document outlining where the £900k footway budget was being spent.
- A Member expressed concerns regarding the responsiveness of Skanska to Highway Schemes in his division. He asked whether the underspends presented in the report were impacted by their relationships with 3rd party contractors. The Strategic Finance Manager stated that the Forecast Variance Outturn figures found within the report was additional income and was completely separate to Skanska. The Executive Director, Place & Economy stated that he was not aware of any delays with Skanska causing underspends, but noted that he would take it away and would report back to Committee if there were any issues. The Chairman commented that this query was impacted by local capacity issues and suggested that if Members believed this issue was becoming more prominent, then they could raise it at the Skanska Board meeting.
- A Member suggested that the vacancy data found within the report could be made clearer if they introduced a direction of travel arrow. He commented that it would be useful if it was highlighted how these vacancies had impacted service delivery. The Strategic Finance Manager stated that she would take that away but noted that it could be difficult to fit this into the report. She raised concerns regarding the increased size of the report.
- A Member raised his concerns regarding the comparison between Classified Road Conditions in Fenland to other areas of the county. He stated that he believed that the gap was widening and asked whether officers could review the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The Executive Director, Place & Economy stated that he was currently familiarising himself with the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and that he would pay particular attention to this one.

- A Member raised his concern's regarding the number of red indicators found within the Fenland Works Programme. The Executive Director, Place & Economy stated that he was not satisfied if a red rated Local Highway Improvement (LHI) was present in the KPIs. He noted that there were legitimate reasons why some LHI Schemes were rated as red but officers would review them and do everything they could to address them.
- A Member also raised his concerns regarding the amount of red rated LHI Schemes. He also sought clarification regarding the some of the wording in the report. The Interim Highway Projects & Road Safety Manager stated that 'TC' stood for 'Target Costs'.
- A Member commented that Parish Councils took a lot of interest in LHI schemes and suggested that they got quite concerned if they were not delivered in the suggested time frame. He stated that they needed to be more effective in keeping Parish Councils informed regarding the LHI delivery process.
- A Member raised his concerns regarding how the A14 work had caused Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) to use unsuitable roads in his division. As a result these HGVs were causing severe road and property damage. He commented that Highways England (HE) needed to be made aware of this issue and asked whether the Council would contact Highways England to try and reclaim some money to repair these roads. The Executive Director, Place & Economy stated that he was aware of this issue. They were in the process of performing traffic counts on the effected roads but stated that traffic enforcement was very challenging. He stated that he would make sure this issue was explored further.
- A Member reiterated these concerns and suggested that the same issue were occurring in Cambridge City. She raised her concerns regarding the attitude of the Highways England Officer who had attended their North Area Committee.
- A Members raised his concerns regarding the use of roads in Alconbury Village by HGVs once the A14 has been completed. He queried how the Council would ensure HE would utilise the correct signage to divert HGVs to the appropriate diversion roads. The Chairman suggested that this query could be discussed outside of the meeting.
- A Member raised his concerns regarding the damage being caused to the A1123 by diverted HGVs. He stated that there would be substantial costs the Council to repair it.
- The Chairman suggested it could be beneficial if a report was brought to the Committee every six months regarding the legacy of the A14. He noted that during the creation of the report, all local members

impacted could be consulted. **(Action Required: Executive Director, Place & Economy)**

- A Member sought clarification regarding the percentage of trees near highways that have been replaced in March 2019. The Chairman suggested that the response to this question could be given outside of the meeting.
- A Member commented that trees had a beneficial impact on the environment and asked whether officers had considered a comprehensive tree planting program. He noted that this could be added as a future agenda item. The Chairman commented that tree data was discussed commonly at this Committee, he stated that trees planted near a highway caused a number of safety and maintenance issues. He commented that it could be useful to have a report that provided more information on this. **(Action Required: Executive Director, Place & Economy)**
- The Interim Assistant Director, Environment & Commercial Services commented that officers were currently working on a climate change development strategy at the request of Full Council.

It was resolved to:

Review, note and comment upon the report

124. ROAD CASUALTY DATA ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee received a report providing information regarding collisions on the County's road network for the 5 years from January 2014 to December 2018. The Interim Highway Projects & Road Safety Manager drew the Committee's attention to the Background and Main Issues sections of the report. With the agreement of the Committee he then presented the interactive report which highlighted the summary of collisions accident data. He noted that in the future this style of report would be able to be circulated electronically.

In Discussion:

- A Member asked whether in future, Members would be able to access this software. The Interim Highway Projects & Road Safety Manager hoped that this would be the case.
- The Chairman queried whether this software could be used to produce an annual report that would show the effects of the road safety measures the Council were implementing. The Interim Highway Projects & Road Safety Manager stated that they were planning on creating a monitoring site that could analyse the impact of a prevention scheme over five years.

- The Chairman commented that this software could be a very useful tool as it would provide them with factual information about the effectiveness of road safety schemes. The Interim Highway Projects & Road Safety Manager stated that a map could be incorporated into the software which would highlight collision sites. He noted that there were many operational extras that could be added onto the system.
- A Member expressed his support for the new system. He commented that this program could be used to produce tangible data on the impact of LHI Schemes. This data could then be brought back to Town Councils.
- A Member queried the risks associated with the introduction of this new system. The Interim Highway Projects & Road Safety Manager stated that it would temporarily lead to a reduced quality of data as the new system and reporting mechanism is embedded, however this would improve over time.
- A Member raised his concerns regarding the process of validation for new data being inputted into the systems database. The Interim Highway Projects & Road Safety Manager stated that through the introduction of CRASH, the DfT had undertaken a process to improve the quality of data in the long term. He noted that in the future the CRASH software will include more mandatory validation checks.
- A Member raised concerns regarding the proposed reduction of communications between the Police and Councils data entry/analyst staff. The Interim Highway Projects & Road Safety Manager stated that paper records of road incidents was taking up a large majority of the analysts' time. He noted that they did understand the risk of not processing the paper collision documents, however it would also enable the analysts to have the time to monitoring the data collected electronically.
- A Member raised his concerns regarding the fact that users may misunderstand or misuse the information in the database. The Interim Highway Projects & Road Safety Manager agreed and stated that they wanted to ensure that before the software was disseminated, it must be easy to use and understand so that incorrect data was not used. He advised that this was one of the reasons why this software was not ready for wider public use.
- A Member raised his concerns that the new technology could lead to the production of new inefficiencies. The Chairman stated that he understood the Members concerns. The Interim Highway Projects & Road Safety Manager suggested that in the past they had been too reliant on one source of data, however in the future, with this new system they would be able to analyse multiple databases.

- A Member queried whether it would have been possible to simultaneously run the old and new systems in parallel to be able to validate and compare the effectiveness of the new system. The Interim Highway Projects & Road Safety Manager suggested that due to Police resourcing, they might have received a negative response. He noted that the mobile app would remove inefficiencies in data recording. He suggested that he could raise this issue with the Police.
- The Chairman sought confirmation that officers knew of the potential negative implications of the new system. The Interim Highway Projects & Road Safety Manager stated they were and that they would be in a more beneficial position next year.
- The Chairman asked whether officers would receive training for the CRASH system. The Interim Highway Projects & Road Safety Manager stated that the Police would be receiving training as the mobile application is circulated. He noted that in this transition period they may encounter inaccurate data being inputted into the system. The Chairman asked whether the progress made on CRASH would be presented to the Road Safety Partnership Board. The Interim Highway Projects & Road Safety Manager confirmed that it would.
- A Member suggested that in the report, he would like to see an acknowledgement that officers would be monitoring the training received by Police officers, and noted that effective training would mean more reliable data being inputted into the system. With the agreement of officers, the Chairman stated that they could bring back a training progress report to the Committee from the Road Safety Partnership Board. **(Action Required, Interim Highway Projects & Road Safety Manager)**
- A Member queried how the collision cluster sites are scored. The Interim Highway Projects & Road Safety Manager stated that the score was calculated using the following values; A fatal collision scores 4, a serious injury scores 2 and a slight collision scores 1. The Member commented that this would be beneficial if this scoring explanation was included in future reports.
- A Member raised his concerns regarding the increase in road casualties in Fenland and queried what was being done to try and improve this. The Interim Highway Projects & Road Safety Manager stated that officers were completing a long term research project in conjunction with Loughborough University. This work was analysing the areas where collisions were most likely to happen in order to provide intervention. The results of this work would be presented to the Road Safety Partnership Board in September. The Chairman commented that the findings of the report could be brought to the committee for information and comment. **(Action Required, Interim Highway Projects & Road Safety Manager)**

- A Member sought confirmation regarding the percentage of road collisions that the Police were not called to. The Interim Highway Projects & Road Safety Manager clarified that DfT statistics suggested that only 1 in 10 collisions were reported to the Police. He noted that because of this they had prioritised higher severity collisions.
- The Member followed on from this by suggesting that officers may need to review the scoring system as the data is only based on 10% of all collisions.

It was resolved to:

- a) Note the changes to reporting processes for collisions outlined in paragraphs 2.1 to 2.4 and the impact of these.
- b) Approve the actions outlined in paragraph 2.4 to ensure a clean data set for 2020 onwards.
- c) Note the casualty data for the five year period 2014/18 outlined in paragraphs 2.5 to 2.20.
- d) Note the updated collision cluster site list in Appendix 2

125. REVIEW OF RISK REGISTER FOR PLACE AND ECONOMY

The Committee received a report providing an update on the Risk Register for Place & Economy. The Executive Director, Place & Economy drew attention to the three risk registers found within the report.

In discussion:

- Members raised concerns regarding the damage the weather can cause to highways and footways. They queried whether it should be added to the Risk Register for this Committee and others. The Chairman stated that he believed weather should be addressed somewhere in the report. The Executive Director, Place & Economy stated he would explore this to see if it was possible. **(Executive Director, Place & Economy)**
- A Member commented that work could be done to try and change the public's negative outlook on the inconveniences caused by road works. He stated that closures due to roadworks should be viewed as beneficial as funding was being used to improve the roads in that area. The Chairman agreed and suggested that their communication with local people needed to improve. He noted that he would talk to the Communications Team.
- A Member suggested that they should be very cautious when trying to manage public expectations if large communities have been severely affected by major road works, such as the effects of the A14

- A Member queried whether statistics on sexual harassment on public transport were recorded in Cambridgeshire. The Executive Director, Place & Economy stated that he was not entirely sure but would find out. **(Action Required, Executive Director, Place & Economy)**
- A Member asked the Executive Director, Place & Economy if anything in this report concerned him. The Director responded by stating that everything concerned him to a certain degree. In particular, he stated he was focusing on improving staff resilience as the Cambs 2020 program may impact staff retention.

It was resolved to:

Note and comment on the Risk Register

126. HIGHWAYS AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE AGENDA PLAN AND APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

The Committee agreed to cancel the Highways and Infrastructure meeting in August.

A Member queried as to why the Business Plan was not on the forward agenda plan. The Executive Director, Place and Economy clarified that it could be added. **(Action Required, Democratic Services Officer Trainee)**

A Member suggested it would be useful if some induction events could be added to the forward agenda plan. The Chairman stated that it would be beneficial if an induction event was organised in October 2019. **(Action Required, Executive Director, Place & Economy)**

It was resolved to:

Note the Committee Agenda Plan

Chairman