

# Highways and Transport Committee: Minutes

Date: 8 March 2022

Time: 10:00am to 1.40pm

Present: Councillors Alex Beckett, Piers Coutts, Doug Dew, Lorna Dupre, Jan French Ryan Fuller, Derek Giles, Simon King, Peter McDonald, Mac McGuire, Elisa Meschini Brian Milnes, Neil Shailer, Alan Sharp and Mandy Smith

Venue: New Shire Hall, Alconbury Weald, Huntingdon, PE28 4YE

## 64. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

Apologies were received from Councillor Gerri Bird, Councillor Meschini substituted.

## 65. Minutes – 25 January 2022 and Action Log

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2022 were agreed as a correct record and the action log was noted.

Members raised an issue relating to HGV movements and highlighted a particular incident where National Highways undertaking work at the Guyhurn roundabout closed the junction completely but did not inform the Council it was doing so. This resulted in routing arrangements for HGVs not being able to be put in place. Requested that officers engage more with National Highways to avoid similar situations. Concern was also expressed regarding the significant backlog of Local Highway Improvement (LHI) schemes that appeared to be increasing with little indication that the situation was improving.

Attention and concern were drawn to the apparent disparity between funding arrangements regarding on-street parking enforcement between the District Councils and suggested a future agenda item to ensure that as a Committee it was fully understood what was being committed to.

## 66. Petitions and Public Questions

The Committee received 3 petitions and public questions, the responses to which are attached at Appendix A to these minutes.

Local Member Councillor Douglas Dew spoke in support of the first petition regarding Low Road, Fenstanton and informed the Committee that the dual-use path was barely wide enough for 2 pedestrians to pass one another. Councillor Dew, as local Member also spoke in support of the second petition relating to the A1096. The perception was that problems had become progressively worse over the last year following the opening of the new A14. There were now many more HGVs using the route and highlighted how few parents in Hemmingford Grey walked their children to school. Speedwatch

data indicated that there were up to 10,000 daily movements on the route of which a third were HGV and commercial vehicles.

## 67. Highways & Transport Service Resource Update

The Committee received a report that provided an update on resource planning across the Directorate. The report also sought the Committee's agreement to extend the existing interim arrangements and source a further 21 interim workers with a maximum cost of £2m together with sourcing further interim workers should further permanent staff leave or address short-term pressures covered from existing salary budgets or capital projects.

During the discussion, Members:

- Recognised the additional cost of employing interim members of staff and questioned whether setting those costs against the capital cost of projects was increasing the overall cost of those schemes. The Committee noted the comments of officers that it was common practice for staffing costs to be associated to capital costs, however emphasised the impact the increased costs partly driven by the use of interim staff, the funding of which could be better utilised.
- Noted that recruitment of an Active Travel Officer had been advertised for and interviews were due to take place in the near future.
- Noted that the average cost between retained staff and interim staff was around 40%. However, the cost varied depending on the role.
- Acknowledged that interim positions detailed at Appendix B of the report were being recruited through ESPO and supported by the Council's Procurement Team.
- Questioned whether additional funding would be enough to recruit to the vacant positions. The presenting officer commented that it was essential to remain positive. The re-structure of the Directorate was being cascaded following recruitment at Director level and it was a long-term project that was committed to.
- Noted the comments of the Executive Director: Place and Economy, regarding the Council's growing reputation for change and improvement. It was essential that commitments to schemes were delivered. It was necessary to recruit interim staff otherwise there would be limitations in project delivery. There was also a focus on training and development within the Directorate in order that the Council developed its own talent.
- Expressed concern regarding the progress to date relating to a Local Highway Improvement bid for Norwood Road, March that had subsequently absorbed into the March Area Transport Study (funded by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority). The timescales had consistently slipped, and attention was drawn to the Future High Street fund where funding was dependent on delivery at key milestones. It was therefore essential that there were no delays as funding

could be jeopardised. The Committee noted that a report would be presented at the April meeting of the Committee to update on progress.

- Acknowledged that it was essential that roles were remunerated at the correct level as Cambridgeshire was an expensive place to live, however, it was also important to draw attention to the other benefits of living and working in the county. The Council provided a high degree of flexibility as an employer. It was important to understand the root causes of people leaving the Council through effective exit interviews and make the Council the best place to work.
- Questioned how the Committee would be assured that the recommendations set out in the report were successful. Officers explained that initially progress would be reported to the Highways Improvement Board and then reported to Committee. A Member suggested that the Committee receive a quarterly update and requested that the minutes of the Highways Improvement Board be circulated to the Committee once available following its meeting. **ACTION**

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note current resource pressures and challenges;
- b) Note progress since this matter was last reported to this committee on the 7 December 2021;
- c) Agree to extend existing interim arrangements shown in Appendix B from 1 April 2022;
- d) Agree to procure 21 new interim workers from April 2022 to a maximum expenditure of £2M shown in Appendix C;
- e) Agree to procure further interims should further permanent staff leave or to fill short term pressures covered from existing salary budgets or capital projects from April 2022;
- f) Support the proposals seeking to resolve resource pressures and challenges over the medium to long term;

## 68. Highways Maintenance Capital Programme

The Committee received a report that sought approval for capital funded maintenance schemes. The report provided visibility of forthcoming maintenance programme in accordance with the Council's approved asset management policies.

During the discussion, Members:

- Noted that it was indicated that highway maintenance block funding would remain the same as the 200/21 allocation for the remaining 3 years.

- Questioned whether active travel could be separated. Officers commented that separation had been attempted within the report but would be made clearer if the programme was approved by Committee.
- Commented that it appeared that the Fenland area had been historically underfunded. Officers explained that the allocation of funding was in accordance with previous years' allocations. The programme aimed to balance spending against the needs of the network. Officers undertook to review the percentage allocation. **ACTION**
- Highlighted the poor condition of Fenland roads that were very different from those in the south of the county. Officers informed the Committee of the ongoing work to scan roads and that would provide quantifiable data on the condition of the network.
- Welcomed move to asset-management based approach to maintenance as there was significant collaborative work with the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA), particularly regarding active travel. Concern was expressed regarding the condition of road surfaces as it was a danger to cyclists and a barrier to active travel.
- Attention was drawn to Bellamy's Bridge that was not reflected in the list of schemes. A meeting took place some years ago where assurance was given that it would be included within the list. Officers undertook to review the status of the junction in relation to the maintenance programme. **ACTION**
- Commented that it would be beneficial for a briefing note to be produced for Members that explained the asset-management based approach to maintenance in comparison to a reactive approach. **ACTION**

It was resolved to:

- a) To approve the 2 year forward programme of highway maintenance capital schemes, Appendix One.
- b) To agree that the Service Director, Highways and Transport, in consultation with the Chair/Vice Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee, can make minor amendments to the programme of highway maintenance capital schemes, in accordance with the Authority's approved asset management policies.
- c) Agree that the Service Director, Highways and Transport, in consultation with the Chair/Vice Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee, can commission the delivery of the highway maintenance capital programme, via existing contracts that have been formally procured.
- d) To note the indicative highway maintenance capital programme for the following 3 to 5 years, Appendix Two.

## 69. Future Transport Priorities and Integrated Transport Block Funding Allocation

The Committee received a report that sought the approval for the Local Transport Plan Integrated Transport Block (ITB) funding for the year 2022/23 and to update the Committee on future transport priorities for scheme development.

Members noted that the estimate amount allocated for 20mph schemes ranged from £100k – £250k based on data available from Local Highway Improvement schemes.

It was resolved to:

- a) approve the proposed allocation of the ITB funding for 2022-23 subject to the funding being passed to the County Council by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA).
- b) Note the process and proposed timeline for sifting schemes for development.

## 70. Highways Operational Standards 2022/23

The Committee received a report that sought approval to update three sections of the Highways Operational Standards. The presenting officer highlighted the proposed changes to the document relating to the inspection of cycle routes, the introduction of a new risk assessment for lighting columns and the record of all highways maintainable at public expense.

During the discussion, Members:

- Sought further information on how usage levels of cycle routes was determined. Officers explained that some routes had usage data collected, although it was not comprehensive. The busiest routes were relatively straightforward to identify as they tended to be routes to schools for example.
- Commented on the replacement of passive lighting columns and questioned their lifespan and sought greater clarity on the interaction with the street-lighting PFI contract. Officers explained that the guidance was not retrospective and applied only to new columns, however, further information would be requested from the streetlighting team. **ACTION**
- Sought further information from Development Management regarding the adoption of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) in new developments and the level to which adoption could be enforced. **ACTION**
- Noted that when routes were adopted by the Council then the maintenance became the responsibility of the Council and that was undertaken as per the Highways Operational Standards.
- Commented that cycle routes that were used more frequently by nature will have greater reports made of defects and the lesser-used routes would deteriorate more

quickly and cease to be used. In response officers explained that the objective was to balance risk across the network and the frequency of inspections were to identify safety defects. There was also proactive maintenance through larger resurfacing.

It was resolved to:

- a) To approve updates to 3 sections of the Highway Operational Standards.
- b) Agree that the Director – Highways & Transport, in consultation with the Chair/Vice Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee, may approve any future updates to operational process and procedure contained within the HOS

## 71. Active Travel Strategy for Cambridgeshire

The Committee received a report that provided an update on the development of an Active Travel Strategy for Cambridgeshire.

The Committee received comments and questions from members of the public on this item that are set out at Appendix A to these minutes.

During the discussion, Members:

- Confirmed that the strategy would be presented to the Committee for final adoption following the planned consultation and engagement activities.
- Noted that the omission of equestrian users within the hierarchy contained within the draft strategy would be amended and would be in line with the highway code.
- Drew attention to page 7 of the draft strategy and commented that active travel not being included as a leisure activity appeared contradictory. Officers explained that the definition did not apply to leisure activities, however, there was overlap. Members noted that that there was also a rights of way improvement plan that was sought to address leisure routes. A Member commented further that there was no clear benefit to that distinction and active travel should be considered in the whole.
- Commended the Active Trave Team and the work it was undertaking and welcomed the draft strategy as the first step on the journey. In particular its incorporation of LTN 120.
- Commented that there was much to welcome in the draft strategy and drew attention to the comments of the public speakers regarding a proactive approach to pavement parking. Slight concern was expressed regarding the robustness and suggested that it may be beneficial for Members to have sight of it in advance of it being issued.

The Chair proposed with the agreement of the Committee that the following additional wording (in bold) be included within recommendation b) to ensure that all non-motorised users, including equestrians, be included within the proposed stakeholder engagement.

It was resolved unanimously/by majority to:

- a) Comment on and endorse the draft Active Travel Strategy for Cambridgeshire and high-level action plan in Appendix 2 for further stakeholder engagement.
- b) Approve the proposed stakeholder engagement approach as outlined in the report, **including full engagement with all NMUs including equestrians.**

## 72. Transport Strategies for Fenland and Huntingdonshire

The Committee received a report that updated the Committee on the emerging transport strategies for Fenland and Huntingdonshire. The report also sought the approval for the draft objectives and policies for the Fenland Transport Strategy and the proposed approach to stakeholder engagement.

During the discussion, Members:

- Questioned how success would be measured. Officers commented that performance measurements needed development and it was anticipated following adoption, steering groups would be established that would develop a monitoring regime.
- Emphasised the importance of Community Transport in Fenland, given the lack of public transport available in the area. Officers recognised the challenge and highlighted the work of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) bus improvement plan.
- Noted that Paris and Town Council's would be included as part of the stakeholder engagement.
- Commented that it was essential that active transport and community transport had to be joined up.

It was resolved unanimously/by majority to:

- a) Note progress to date and the next steps for the development of both strategies.
- b) Approve the draft objectives (Figure1) and policies (Appendix 2) for the Fenland Transport Strategy

- c) Approve proposed stakeholder and public engagement approach as outlined in the report.

### 73. Finance Monitoring Report – January 2022

The Committee received a report the January 2022 iteration of the Finance Monitoring report. The presenting officer drew attention to the revenue forecast outturn that predicted a £436k underspend and highlighted the material changes in the capital budget listed in the report. Members noted that the overspend allocated to winter maintenance was an error and should have been recorded as an underspend

It was resolved

To review, note and comment upon the report.

### 74. Highways and Transport Committee Agenda Plan and Appointments to Outside Bodies and Internal Advisory Groups and Panels

The Committee noted it's Agenda Plan and Appointments to Outside Bodies and Internal Advisory Groups and Panels.

Chair  
April 2022