

Highways and Transport Committee: Minutes

Date: 23 July 2024

Time: 10.00 a.m. to 1:15 p.m.

Venue: Red Kite Room, New Shire Hall

Present: Councillors Alex Beckett (Chair), Neil Shailer (Vice-Chair), Piers Coutts, Steve Criswell, Claire Daunton, Jan French, Ian Gardener, Bill Hunt, Simon King, Peter McDonald, Tom Sanderson, Alan Sharp, Philippa Slatter and Graham Wilson

217. Notification of Chair and Vice-Chair

The Committee noted that on 21 May 2024, Full Council had appointed Councillor Alex Beckett as the Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee, and Councillor Neil Shailer as the Vice-Chair, for the 2024/25 municipal year.

218. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lorna Dupré (substituted by Councillor Slatter), Anne Hay (substituted by Councillor Criswell) and Lucy Nethsingha (substituted by Councillor Wilson).

Councillor French declared a non-statutory disclosable interest in Agenda Item 7 (March Area Transport Programme), as a member of the March Area Transport Study Steering Group.

Councillor Sanderson declared a non-statutory disclosable interest in Agenda Item 8 (Consideration of Representations and Objections to Proposed 20mph Speed Limit Zone in Huntingdon), as a Huntingdon Town Councillor.

219. Minutes – 30 April 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 April 2024 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

While reviewing the Minutes Action Log, it was confirmed that the session with town and parish councils would be scheduled in liaison with the partners to ensure they were able to attend, as referred to in Minute 211 (Minutes – 5 March 2024 and Action Log). It was also agreed to circulate a recording of the Member briefing on Gaist, as referenced in Minute 203 (Highways Maintenance Capital Programme). **Action required**

The Committee noted the Minutes Action Log.

220. Petitions and Public Questions

The Committee was informed that five public questions had been accepted and that the questions would be taken at the start of the relevant agenda items. It was noted that four questions related to agenda item 8 (Consideration of Representations and Objections to Proposed 20mph Speed Limit Zone in Huntingdon) and one question related to agenda item 9 (East West Rail Company Consultations). A further public question had not been accepted because it was not relevant to the agenda items of the meeting.

221. Active Travel Fund 4 Extension

The Committee received a report on £1.1m funding that had been awarded by Active Travel England, via the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, for three schemes under the Active Travel Fund 4 Extension programme, including routes from Alconbury Weald to Huntingdon, Brampton to Hinchingsbrooke, and Whittlesford to Duxford.

While discussing the report, individual Members:

- Welcomed the ongoing development of active travel routes in more rural parts of the county. It was noted that in 2022 the Department for Transport had announced a review and refresh of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans guidance, and Members sought clarification on when this was expected to occur. **Action required**
- Clarified that the Huntingdon to Alconbury Weald cycling and walking route did not extend as far as the Alconbury and Kimbolton division. It was agreed to provide Members with an update when it had been established how residents in the villages surrounding Alconbury Weald would be able to connect to the route. **Action required**
- Highlighted the benefits of the Whittlesford to Duxford scheme, particularly the improved connectivity for students living in Sawston that needed to travel to Whittlesford train station. It was also noted that a separate scheme crossing the A505 would further improve connections between Duxford village and Whittlesford train station.
- Clarified that engagement would be held with local Members, town councils and parish councils on the Godmanchester to Huntingdon town bridge modal filter before a wider consultation was held with members of the public and stakeholders.
- Suggested that future Equality Impact Assessments could provide more detail on the potential impacts of schemes, particularly on people with sensory or mobility impairments, although it was acknowledged that such impacts of schemes always continued to be assessed and reviewed throughout the design of schemes.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note progress with the Active Travel Fund 4 schemes;
- b) Agree that the Council accepts £1.1m of funding from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority for the delivery of schemes under the Active Travel Fund 4 Extension;
- 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 and the Section 151 Officer, to enter a Grant Funding Agreement with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority;
- d) Approve the ongoing development of the design, including consultation with stakeholders; and
- e) 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 agree the procurement route for projects in the Active Travel 4 Extension programme, using an existing contract or framework available to the authority.

222. Procurement of Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

The Committee received a report.

While discussing the report, individual Members:

- Considered whether it would be better for the committee to retain responsibility for the functions that this report, as well as others on the agenda, recommended be delegated to the Executive Director of Place and Sustainability, although it was acknowledged that such delegations were made to allow projects to proceed in an expedient manner. It was also highlighted that a report to seek final approval to commence the project and enter into contracts would be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.
- Noted that the report did not clarify how the funding would be divided across the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough region and suggested that it would be necessary to be informed of such information before the committee gave final approval. Members were informed that the allocations would be agreed following confirmation of the funding being provided.
- Highlighted that while the benefits of electric vehicles would continue to increase as society transitioned to more sustainable forms of generating electricity, their support in improving air quality, particularly in urban areas, was a current benefit.
- Drew attention to the need to overcome the barrier and unequal access to electric vehicles faced by people who did not have access to charging via off-street parking, particularly given that commercial charging rates were sometimes ten times higher

than charging via home connections. The importance of developing procurement specifications that were both attractive to providers and beneficial to users was acknowledged, and it was emphasised that although the report focused on specific grant funding for charge points in rural areas, there was additional ongoing work with electric vehicle infrastructure, which would be presented to the committee in future reports.

- Emphasised the importance of informing stakeholders and members of the public about this scheme and other initiatives across the county, and it was requested that Members be provided with a briefing or seminar on the wider ongoing work with electric vehicle infrastructure, including on the various grants that were available to different people and organisation to support its development. **Action required**

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note the range of work that is being undertaken locally to accelerate the roll-out of Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure, and the specific objectives and purpose of the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund;
- 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 sign any grant funding agreements to draw down allocations from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority;
- 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 commence procurement for the delivery of the project; and
- d) Note that a report to seek final approval to commence the project and enter into contracts will be presented to a future meeting of the Highways and Transport Committee.

223. March Area Transport Programme

The Committee received a report on the next stages to deliver schemes relating to the March Area Transport Study, which outlined the conclusions of the Full Business Case 2 that had been undertaken for schemes included in the study. The report also proposed the acceptance of £7m funding from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) and the commencement of procurement for the provision of construction and professional services related to the programme.

While discussing the report, individual Members:

- Welcomed the unanimous approval by the CPCA's Transport and Infrastructure Committee on 22 July 2024 to provide funding to the Council.
- Paid tribute to the work of officers over previous years to support the development and regeneration of March, noting that the first stage of work was scheduled to be completed in October 2024. Members highlighted the integrated nature of the

individual schemes and emphasised the importance of supporting similar schemes around Cambridgeshire in the future.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note the conclusion of the Full Business Case 2 for the March Area Transport Study schemes;
- b) Subject to approval by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, agree that the Council accept £7m funding to progress to construction of the Twenty Foot Road and St Peter's Road junctions, and develop Full Business Case 3 for the Northern Industrial Link Road;
- 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 and the Section 151 Officer, to enter a Grant Funding Agreement with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority;
- d) Approve the ongoing development of the design for the Northern Industrial Link Road, including consultation with stakeholders;
- e) Approve the commencement of procurement for:
 - (i) The provision of construction starting March 2025 and extension periods; and
 - (ii) The provision of professional services to develop Full Business Case 3 for the Northern Industrial Link Road starting September 2024 and extension periods; and
- f) 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:
 - (i) For the provision of construction starting March 2025 and extension periods; and
 - (ii) For the provision of professional services to develop Full Business Case 3 for the Northern Industrial Link Road starting September 2024 and extension periods.

224. Consideration of Representations and Objections to Proposed 20mph Speed Limit Zone in Huntingdon

The Committee received a report proposing the implementation of a 20mph speed limit on most residential roads in Huntingdon, following the completion of a public consultation on the proposals.

Mr John Morris, leader of the Hunts Walking and Cycling Group, was invited to address the committee and a statement was read out on his behalf. Highlighting the increased safety for pedestrians in an area with a reduced speed limit, Mr Morris highlighted the death of a recent cyclist in Huntingdon following a traffic collision, and expressed his support for reducing the number of injuries by implementing a 20mph zone.

Mr Conor Dignam, a resident of Huntingdon, was invited to address the committee. Drawing attention to heavy traffic volumes, Mr Dignam argued that residential roads were often used as cut throughs by vehicles travelling at excessive speeds, and noted that they were used by buses and heavy goods vehicles rather than more appropriate roads. Drawing attention to collisions that had occurred, he also highlighted the danger for people crossing roads, particularly disabled people and suggested that a 20mph speed limit would improve safety and quality of life.

Councillor Nathan Hunt, a Huntingdonshire District Councillor for the Huntingdon East ward, was invited to address the committee. Expressing concern about how the consultation process had been managed, Councillor Hunt nonetheless expressed support for the proposals, which he argued would make Huntingdon safer for residents and road users. Drawing attention to the success of a 20mph scheme in Godmanchester, Councillor Hunt welcomed that the proposals excluded the major roads in Huntingdon. Arguing that there was more support for the scheme than suggested by the consultation, he emphasised that the scheme was about improving safety rather than punishing car drivers.

Councillor David Cole, a Huntingdon Town Councillor for the Huntingdon North East ward, was invited to address the committee. Highlighting that such schemes required local support in order to be successful, Councillor Cole expressed concern about how the consultation had been conducted and how the consultation feedback had been represented in the report. Clarifying that he broadly supported 20mph schemes and had sought to encourage local support for the proposals, he challenged the report's assertion that Huntingdon Town Council (HTC) had submitted any Local Highway Improvement bids for 20mph schemes. Acknowledging that the proposed scheme was better than having no scheme at all, Councillor Cole nonetheless drew attention to HTC's preference for targeted 20mph zones in specific locations and proposed that a further consultation be held in order to attract greater support. Members were informed that the Council had considered HTC's proposals in detail and had concluded that they would be unlikely to have as significant an impact on speeds and behaviour.

The following amendment to the recommendations was proposed by Councillor Beckett and seconded by Councillor Sanderson (additions in bold, removals in strikethrough):

- a) Consider the objections and other written representations received during the statutory public notice period for this scheme;~~and~~
- b) Approve the implementation of the 20mph speed limit as published.; **and**
- c) **Bring a report back to this Committee in 24 months, reviewing the impacts of the 20mph program.**

While discussing the proposed amendment, individual Members:

- Highlighted the importance of reviewing the impact of 20mph schemes once they had been implemented to ensure that they achieved their original objectives, noting that initial concerns were often overcome, resulting in higher levels of support, as had been the case with the introduction of seat belt legislation. It was confirmed that the committee would be able to consider what action to take if the review identified that the scheme had not achieved its objectives.
- Clarified that the review would not impact the proposed implementation of the 20mph scheme, and that it would take place 24 months after implementation. Members were informed that the Council habitually reviewed the impacts of all schemes it implemented, and it was noted that such reviews took place two or three years after implementation to ensure that sufficient data had been captured for a meaningful analysis to be carried out.
- Emphasised that the proposed review should consider a wide range of data, including accident statistics, speed recordings and anecdotal evidence, noting that such data could be difficult to obtain and that engagement with local communities was important to support such a process.
- Suggested that other 20mph schemes across the county should also be reviewed, although it was acknowledged that this would be a significant task.

Following discussion, the amendment was approved by a majority.

While discussing the report and amended recommendations, individual Members:

- Highlighted the importance of local initiation and support for 20mph schemes from the communities in which they were implemented, with some Members emphasising that although they opposed the Huntingdon proposals due to the apparent lack of local support, they supported such schemes in general.
- Argued that the consultation only sought objections to the proposals, rather than genuine input to their development, although it was acknowledged that consultations often received disproportionate levels of engagement from those opposing proposals compared to those supporting them.
- Acknowledged concerns about the consultation process but drew attention to a further consultation that had been carried out by HTC, alongside extensive discussion of the proposals within the local community. It was noted that only 42 representations had been received from a community of over 20,000 people, and it was suggested that more widespread opposition would have resulted in higher levels of objections. Notwithstanding, Members acknowledged that engagement carried out through consultations could be improved to increase the benefits of such processes.
- Considered whether a further consultation would be beneficial, with some Members arguing that residents' views should be sought prior to implementation and others arguing that an informed analysis of the impacts two years after implementation

would provide greater insight. It was argued that consultations were always problematic and rarely resulted in unanimous support for any proposals, and emphasised that the Council was required to make decisions based on the data and feedback that was available.

- Emphasised that proposals from HTC for targeted zones had been assessed by officers and considered less effective than a wider scheme across the whole town, noting that they did not include routes to schools which were often as dangerous as those directly outside schools. It was also argued that frequent changes between speed limits within an area was a cause of confusion and uncertainty for drivers. Nonetheless, it was suggested that the HTC proposals and subsequent analysis could have been given greater support and could have been included in the report to provide further justification for why they were dismissed by officers.
- Highlighted that although the police had provided comments on particular aspects of the scheme, they did not object to its implementation and supported the overall strategy of reducing speeds.
- Sought clarification on why the proposals were being considered by the committee, while other similar schemes, such as a 20mph scheme implemented in Ely, had been decided by officers. Members were advised of the process for officer delegations as they were set out in the Constitution.
- Acknowledged that there would always be vehicles that exceeded whatever speed limit was on place but argued that a reduction in the speed limit would subsequently lead to a reduction in the average speed, thereby reducing accident rates. It was suggested that the benefit of saving lives could not be over-stated or over-valued, with attention drawn to the immediate changes in behaviour and other benefits of schemes that had already been implemented, such as those in Duxford, Ickleton and Godmanchester.
- whether a further consultation would be beneficial, with some Members arguing that residents' views should be sought prior to implementation and others arguing that an informed analysis of the impacts two years after implementation would provide greater insight. It was argued that consultations were always problematic and rarely resulted in unanimous support for any proposals, and emphasised that the Council was required to make decisions based on the data and feedback that was available.
- Noted the environmental benefits from reduced traffic speed, emphasising that such benefits were greater than those achieved by reducing congestion. Reduced speeds would also improve safety and encourage active travel and use of public transport, an objective particularly supported by travel ambassadors across the county in improving safe and healthy routes to schools.

It was resolved by majority to:

- a) Consider the objections and other written representations received during the statutory public notice period for this scheme;
- b) Approve the implementation of the 20mph speed limit as published; and

- c) Bring a report back to this Committee in 24 months, reviewing the impacts of the 20mph programme.

225. East West Rail Company Consultations

The Committee received an update report on the East West Rail (EWR) project, including an outline position on several key topic areas for the Council's response to a future consultation.

Mr Mark Kleinman was invited to address the committee. Suggesting that the EWR scheme would undermine some of the Council's strategic ambitions, Mr Kleinman argued that its proposals did not come from an evidence-based approach, did not address the region's connectivity challenges, and did not offer good value for money. Suggesting that the EWR scheme overestimated the level of future job growth at the Cambridge Biomedical Campus, he also expressed concern that the future housing growth anticipated in Cambourne and Tempsford would lead to a greater level of car journeys, rather than an increase in use of public transport. Noting that the future of the EWR project remained unclear following the election of a new government, Mr Kleinman encouraged the committee to reject the recommendations and undertake a Council-led analysis of the impacts of the current EWR proposals on residents, businesses and the Council's own budget and policies. It was clarified to Members that the proposed delegated authority to respond to the anticipated future consultation would include a review of the proposals against the Council's strategic ambitions.

While discussing the report, individual Members:

- Acknowledged the concerns of residents and businesses about the potential impacts of EWR but emphasised that further information from the new government would be necessary before the Council could assess the project's business case in detail. Specific concerns were highlighted about incremental housing development as a result of the project, as well as the route alignment and location of potential new stations, but it was argued that such issues should be considered after further development of the proposals.
- Drew attention to the potential wide-ranging impacts and benefits of EWR across the county and the wider region, and highlighted the important role of the Council as a statutory consultee in the process. It was clarified that if the consultation proceeded, the Council would discuss relevant issues with a wide range of other bodies, including district councils, the Combined Authority, Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency, as well as residents and businesses.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Endorse the position set out in this report and note the latest information and updates on the East West Rail project;
- 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 submit Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project related responses to both the Applicant and the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the Council; and

- c) Note that where delegated powers are used, draft responses will be sent to Local Members and the members of the Highways and Transport Committee ahead of submission to the Planning Inspectorate.

226. A1421 Traffic Management and Road Safety Options

The Committee received a report in response to a motion agreed by Full Council in October 2023, which set out options to address safety concerns relating to the A1421 between the A1123 in Haddenham and the A141 at Witcham Toll.

While discussing the report, individual Members:

- Highlighted the importance of road safety and acknowledged the specific concerns about the A1421, but drew attention to similar issues across the county, such as additional traffic resulting from connections to the M11 and the A10 corridor, and argued that such matters needed to be considered together and prioritised accordingly.
- Considered whether the benefits of declassifying the A1421 would justify the cost. Some members argued that the benefits for surrounding villages would be significant, while the cost of declassification would be saved on maintenance costs that resulted from heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) not using a B-road. Other members argued that international freight lorries would continue to use a declassified B-road, despite many local hauliers agreeing to use alternative routes whenever possible, because sat nav systems did not consider such issues when proposing routes.
- Expressed concern that the report only set out options and requested a future report with specific proposals for the committee's approval, including further detail on the potential impacts of the available options. However, other Members drew attention to ongoing action, such as speed reduction measures, and suggested that such work needed to be completed and assessed before the committee could consider further action. It was agreed that the committee's Spokes would consider the request for a future report, following the meeting detailed in section 3.7 of the report.

Action received

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note the options set out in this report for the A1421, including declassification;
- b) Note progress made on International Road Assessment Programme analysis; and
- c) Note the options for traffic calming measures set out in paragraph 3.8 of this report.

227. Finance Monitoring Report - Outturn 2023-24

The Committee received the Outturn Finance Monitoring Report for the services within its remit for the 2023/24 financial year, which included an approximate £27m underspend against an approximate £73m budget.

While discussing the report, individual Members:

- Clarified that allocated budgets that were not spent, such as the £180k underspend on the structural footway programme, would be rolled over to the following financial year, with the original projects still scheduled to take place. While it was acknowledged that inflationary costs may affect the budget of some such works being delayed, it was also noted that contracts were often in place and it was just the work itself waiting to be carried out.
- Sought clarification on whether the Wisbech Town Centre Access Study referenced in Appendix 3 of the report was the same project as the Wisbech Access Study.
Action required
- Clarified that vacancies were reported on in the Performance Monitoring Reports that were presented to the committee. It was also suggested that it would be helpful for Finance Monitoring Reports to provide additional narrative on overspends or underspends that officers were concerned about.
- Requested further information on the Local Infrastructure Improvements referred to in Appendix 3 of the report. **Action required**
- Welcomed the service updates that were circulated to Members, particularly regarding the Local Highway Improvement schemes, which it was confirmed would continue to be circulated on a monthly basis.

It was resolved unanimously to:

Review and comment on the report.

228. Finance Monitoring Report – May 2024

The Committee received the Finance Monitoring Report to the end of May 2024 for the services within its remit, which also detailed capital carry-forwards and reprofiling, as set out in Appendix 3 of the report, that had been approved by the Strategy, Resources and Performance Committee at its meeting on 9 July 2024, alongside additional budget and funding, as set out in paragraph 3.5 of the report.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note that Strategy, Resources and Performance Committee approved the capital carry-forwards and reprofiling, as detailed in Appendix 3 of the Finance Monitoring Report;
- b) Note that Strategy, Resources and Performance Committee approved the additional budget / funding, as set out in paragraph 3.5 of this report; and
- c) Review and comment on the report.

229. Highways and Transport Committee Agenda Plan, Appointments to Outside Bodies and Internal Advisory Groups and Panels, and the Appointment of Member Champions

The Committee received a report which detailed the agenda plan and sought appointments to outside bodies, as well as internal advisory groups and panels. Appointments were also requested for the roles of Migrant Champion and Community Safety Champion.

While discussing the report, individual Members:

- Noted that further appointments were required for the Huntingdonshire LHI Panel, and it was suggested that substitutes should also be appointed to all the LHI panels.
Action required
- Agreed for the Committee's Spokes to consider whether local Members should be appointed to the A141 and St Ives Improvements Scheme Member Working Group.
Action required

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Review the committee's agenda plan;
- b) Agree the appointments to outside bodies, as set out in Appendix 2 of the report;
- c) Agree the appointments to internal advisory groups and panels, as set out in Appendix 3 of the report;
- d) Agree to appoint Member Champions, as set out in Appendix 4 of the report.

Chair
1 October 2024