

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

Date: Tuesday 21st May 2019

Time: 10:00am-12:20pm

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

112. NOTIFICATION OF CHAIRMAN/WOMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN/WOMEN

The Committee noted the appointment of Councillors Shuter and Hunt as the Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively of the Highways & Infrastructure Committee for the municipal year 2019/20.

113. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

114. MINUTES AND ACTION LOG

The minutes of the meeting held on the 12th March 2019 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

115. PETITIONS AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No petitions or public questions were received.

116. FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT- OUTTURN 2018-19

The Committee considered the 2018/19 Outturn Finance and Performance Report (F&PR) for Place and Economy Services. The Strategic Finance Manager informed Members that at year end Place and Economy (P&E) had an underspend of £288k. The service had incurred two significant pressures, the Coroners Services and Waste but this had been known since the start of the financial year. Throughout the year the service had achieved underspends in various services such as street lighting and parking enforcement. Several services through the financial year had received additional income that had allowed the service to fund other pressures. The Capital Programme Variation had budgeted £15m level of slippage but the actual slippage was £16m. Out of 11 performance indicators, 3 were red, 3 were amber and 5 were green at years end.

Arising from the report:

- A Member sought more information regarding the Pothole grant and Safer Roads funding. The Assistant Director, Highways stated that the Safer Roads funding had been awarded 2 years ago, it had been received in two tranches and was spent on the A1303. The Pothole action funding had been received in two tranches last year and had been used across the county. He informed Members that this expenditure was reported back to the Department for Transport (DfT) and noted that he could share this information with Members.
- The Chairman stated that he had requested that the Assistant Director, Highways create a document outlining the various funding streams available to the Highways and Infrastructure (H&I) Committee. This document could then be circulated to the rest of the committee. He noted that this would provide greater clarity for Members. **(Action required: Assistant Director, Highways)**
- A Member asked what officers were doing to narrow the gap between the conditions of highways in Fenland compared to the rest of the county. The Assistant Director, Highways stated that there was a dedicated the Challenge Fund to try and improve the road conditions in Fenland. Once the roads had been resurveyed then they would hope to be able to see an improvement, however he was unsure at this stage whether this improvement would be significant.
- The Chairman stated that the Council had spent £16m on improving the conditions of the roads in Fenland but a significant amount of money was still needed to remove it from being a red performance indicator.
- Furthermore, a Member suggested that in the report it needed to be made clear that the funding received from the DfT could not be spent on some of the more severe roads in the county, but did free up other sources of income that would have been otherwise spent on highways maintenance. This needed to be highlighted as the residents living in the north of the county felt they were being treated unfairly
- A Member raised her concerns that none of the graphs in the report were referring to the maintenance of footways. She asked whether the Council needed to be making submissions to the DfT for special funding for footways. The Executive Director, Place and Economy clarified that the report only outlined the specific grants that had been provided for significant national issues such as pothole maintenance. He stated that it would be beneficial to put pressure on the government to make them aware that we had a difficult highways network to maintain and needed further funding but did not expect immediate results from this.
- The Chairman stated that the Council had allocated a sum of £900k to the maintenance of footways and cycle ways this financial year. He

commented further that they were not ignoring these issues and were actively trying to improve it.

- A Member commented on the beneficial impacts investing in footways had on isolation and health and wellbeing for older people and young children. She suggested that it was important to the committee to remind central government and the NHS on how important well maintained footways were for residents. The Chairman stated that they had a specific allocation of funding for footways but did agree that they needed to review it.
- A Member requested that the Committee receive a comprehensive document that outlines where the footways money is being allocated, she believed that the footways program was not as well developed as the highways program. The Chairman suggested that a list was being created that outlined where footways funding would be allocated. The Assistant Director, Highways confirmed that money from the budget had been allocated to the maintenance and improvement of footways and he would email this list to Members **(Action Required, Assistant Director, Highways)**
- A Member queried whether the funding received from the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) affected the funding received by H&I from the DfT. The Executive Director, Place and Economy stated that there was no evidence of this and noted that through the years the Council had received more funding from government by applying to these various pots of money.
- A Member requested further explanation regarding the process of raising defect certificates. The Assistant Director, Highways informed the Committee that the team performed routine inspections of certain percentages of the highways network to pick up defects. He suggested that he could create a document providing more detail of what encompasses the defect certificate. **(Action Required, Assistant Director, Highways)**
- A Member raised his concerns regarding the significant amount of Local Highways Initiative (LHI) schemes not being approved and asked why the amount of officers time being used evaluating these LHI bids were not presented in the report. The Assistant Director, Highways clarified that that data was not recorded in the report but noted that as part of the budget that was allocated towards LHI schemes a proportion of it was used for the amount of staff hours used.
- Following on from this, the Member also queried whether the changes they had made to the LHI scheme process last year had an impact on the current LHI schemes. The Assistant Director, Highways clarified that the changes had helped the feasibility stage of the process. He stated that the service had been taking further measures in order to strengthen the overall LHI process.

- A Member asked when the deadline for LHI submission would be. The Assistant Director, Highways clarified that it was subject to the committee's decision.
- A Member raised his concerns as to why he was the contact for an LHI Scheme in Chesterton. He noted that this specific scheme was not in his Division. The Executive Director, Place and Economy apologised stated he would follow this up outside of the meeting. **(Action Required, Assistant Director: Highways)**
- A Member commented that it would be useful to bring a presentation to District Councils providing information on the work being done by the Council on improving highways in Fenland. The Chairman commented that it would be useful if Members were circulated a previous presentation that highlighted the process of improving roads and then passed that on to District and Parish Councils. The Assistant Director, Highways informed Members that they would update this presentation and circulate it to Members. **(Action Required, Assistant Director, Highways)**
- A Member raised their concerns regarding the significant amount of LHI schemes with a red RAG label and asked whether this linked with the shortage of staff in the service. The Assistant Director, Highways stated that due to the format of the document many of the LHI schemes labelled as red were brought over from last year, he noted that many of the schemes brought over were more complex. He noted the services capacity had influenced them.
- A Member raised concerns regarding the number of staff vacancies in the Highways Directorate. The Executive Director, Place and Economy stated that the services were doing everything in their capacity to attract potential employees to the service. They were trying to recruit for posts internationally, offering work offsite and promoting apprenticeships. He noted that they had recently seen success in employing staff.
- A Member suggested that the services' recruitment issue could be influenced by the Council not paying the living wage for employment. She noted that it would be useful to be given information regarding how our council's wages compares to other authorities. The Executive Director, Place and Economy stated that he did not have the specific information regarding this matter and that as all posts are graded differently, such a comparison would be difficult.
- The Executive Director, Place and Economy commented that he thought there were a wide range of determinants that affected vacancy rates. He clarified that recruitment issues were experienced throughout the whole system not just by the Council. He stated that

despite this, the service had continued to recruit high level, experienced officers.

- A Member queried whether the 99% street light target corresponds with other authorities' target. The Chairman commented that the reliability of street lights had improved dramatically. The Executive Director, Place and Economy stated that they were very close to reaching 100% performance but noted that it was almost impossible to reach the 100% figure.
- A Member expressed her appreciation regarding the officers in the Trading Standards service who were working to negate the levels of rogue trading in the county. The Executive Director, Place and Economy thanked the Member and said he would pass this on to the appropriate service.
- A Member raised concerns that there was no target for the unclassified roads in the report, a target would be useful to monitor the progress of improving these roads.
- A Member raised their concerns regarding why cycle and walkways were not a Key Performance Indicator (KPI). The Executive Director, Place and Economy clarified that through a discussion with officers the service had just revised their KPIs. He reminded the Committee they had previously decided to keep the number of KPIs the same.
- A Member queried why officers were waiting on him to suggest the location of trees in his division. He suggested that officers could communicate with Members and remind them of this. The Executive Director, Place and Economy suggested that this had been an important issue for the Committee and agreed that if Members felt like they had not been effectively communicated with then they will go back to officers to make sure Members are notified as early on in the process as possibly.
- The Vice-Chair said there was a lack of clarity in the East Tree works graph in the report. The Assistant Director, Highways suggested that they could remove this spreadsheet and replace it with a foot note instead.

It was resolved to:

review, note and comment upon the report

117. HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING CENTRE VAN AND TRAILER E-PERMIT SCHEME

The Committee considered a report providing information on the proposal to introduce a Van and Trailer e-permit scheme at the Household Recycling Centres across Cambridgeshire. The Commission Manager (Waste) stated

that the background of the report outlined concerns of the effect of increased quantities of waste on recycling centres and the different types of waste that the Council has a statutory duty to either accept or decline at these centres. He informed the Committee that the Council had seen an increase in waste collected at HRCs in recent years, this may have been partly due to other authorities introducing permit schemes and starting to charge for the disposal of Construction and Demolition (C&D) waste. This may have resulted in the residents travelling across the border and disposing of their C&D waste at Cambridgeshire's HRCs. He noted that the e-permit scheme would be a paperless fully electronic system and would help the authority gather more information on the types and quantities of waste being disposed of in vans and large trailers and could help identify individuals who were abusing the HRC policies.

In discussion:

- The Chairman stated that there needed to be complete clarity as to which forms of waste the HRCs would accept and decline. There also needed to be flexibility in the early stages of the scheme. This clarity would be achieved through informing the public thoroughly. If this was not achieved it could lead to an increase of 'fly-tipping'.
- Members agreed with the Chairman and reiterated the need to communicate with the public as to the type of waste and vehicle that could be taken to dispose of waste. This clarity would lead to staff at the HRCs having an easier working experience with users. He also raised his concerns that in his Division they were experiencing increased levels of fly tipping.
- A Member sought clarification on the disparity between the estimated cost of the e-permit scheme between Amey and LGSS IT. The Commission Manager (Waste) informed the Member that the figure from Amey was the cost of employing temporary additional staff at the sites for around 4 months to assist users while the e-permit scheme was being introduced, whereas the LGSS figure of £52,360 was an estimate for all the work needed to adapt the scheme currently used in Northamptonshire to be compatible with Cambridgeshire's policies. The £4,500 was an ongoing maintenance cost to keep the system running and would be paid directly to LGSS IT.
- A Member requested more information on the predicted savings the scheme would generate for the authority. The Commission Manager (Waste) suggested it was difficult to predict the savings figure. Other authorities using this system had made savings from reductions in waste tonnages handled, but it was difficult to draw parallels as other authorities' schemes were all slightly different.
- A Member raised her concerns regarding estimated savings for the scheme, but stated that it was a priority that this scheme be pushed forwards. She noted that the staff at these centres were very helpful

and needed to be protected from service users who may not understand the new system. The Commission Manager noted that all the sites had CCTV and the some staff had a body camera to ensure safety. The Vice-Chair agreed and commented that they should also be protecting Local Members.

- A Member raised his concerns regarding the size of trailer outlined in the report that could be exempt from requiring an e-permit. The Commission Manager (Waste) suggested that the size of this trailer written in the report was believed to be a medium sized hobby trailer.
- The Chairman informed the committee that he had performed some research and suggested that the trailer most commonly used by individuals was the slightly larger 570 litre capacity trailer rather than the 386 litre trailer mentioned in the report. He suggested that officers should revisit the sizing of the trailers.
- Members supported the suggestion of the larger trailer size. One Member then queried whether the application process in the report would be a greater cost to the service than what was proposed in previous meetings. The Commission Manager clarified that the Chair & Vice-Chair had chosen this option.
- A Member sought information on whether he needed two permits if he had a van towing a trailer. The Commission Manager (Waste) suggested that officers would contact these users and inquire as to why they needed that much capacity for waste before a permit would be issued.
- A Member commented that these HRCs need to be encouraging recycling. He raised his concerns regarding the definition of the waste the HRC could accept. The Commission Manager (Waste) suggested that the definitions of household waste was not widely known. He then explained to Members the difference in criteria between household and commercial waste.
- A Member raised his concerns regarding the demographic of people who are visiting these HRCs. He noted that older residents might find it more challenging to apply for the e-permit online. They needed an education program at these centres to inform these people about the application process. The Commission Manager (Waste) stated that they would have to have to contact the call centre who would assist users with applying for a permit.
- Members wanted more information regarding whether the e-permit scheme would be registered to the vehicle or the individual. The Commission Manager (Waste) noted that in the e-permit application process they would need to identify the vehicle registration and which postal address the waste was coming from. Furthermore, he clarified

that during the e-permit application process they would ask if the vehicle being registered was hired.

- A Member followed on from this by suggesting that the permit should be registered to the individual as the system may struggle if a user brings different vehicles every time they disposed of their waste. This needed to be made clear to the public. The Commission Manger (Waste) informed the Member that they were looking at a system where the permit would be registered to the household. He noted that the scheme had to be developed further with LGSS to ensure issues such as the use of hire vehicles are addressed within the system and a detailed communications plan needs to be developed.
- With the Committee's unanimous agreement a Member proposed an amended recommendation c) of the report to include a clear definition of the points made in paragraphs 1.2, 1.3 and 1.6 of the officer report.

It was resolved to:

- a) Introduce a van and trailer e-permit scheme at the nine Household Recycling Centre across Cambridgeshire
- b) To consider an exemption for small trailers from the requirement to obtain and e-permit
- c) Delegate responsibility to the Executive Direct Place and Economy in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of Highways and Infrastructure Committee **to agree clear definition of the points made in paragraphs 1.2, 1.3 and 1.6 of the report**, the amendments required to the waste Private Finance Initiative contract in a Deed of Variation and obtain approval from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for the amendments through the submission of a variation business case. **(Action Required Executive Director, Place and Economy)**

118. LOCAL HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT (LHI) REFINEMENT

The Committee received a report outlining possible refinements to the Local Highways Improvement (LHI) initiatives. The Highway Projects & Road Safety Manager stated that following the discussions that occurred in the Highways and Community Infrastructure (H&CI) Committee meeting in March, this report had been created and brought back to the Committee for their approval. The LHI process was split into 5 stages: Application, Feasibility, Assessment, Approval and Delivery. Feedback had initially been collected from officers and Members who attended the LHI scoring panel and then further branched out to Members on this committee. This data had then been collated and was presented in the report.

Arising from discussion:

- A Member expressed their appreciation that the Council's contribution to these schemes should be raised to £15k and that the application form was updated to reflect the scoring criteria.
- A Member queried whether the increase from £10k to £15k was affordable for the council. The Chairman clarified that the amount of money in the scheme does not change but the limit just changes. He noted that this could lead to fewer schemes being approved.
- A Member suggested that the report should have stated that an increase in LHI contribution could have affected the number of LHI submissions being approved.
- A Member sought clarification regarding the percentage of fund that needed to be raised by Parish Councils for a LHI submission. The Highway Projects & Road Safety Manager clarified that they would only have to raise 10%, which would be around £1500 maximum.
- A Member raised their concerns regarding the location and inclusiveness of the LHI scoring panels. The Chairman suggested that it would not be known how many people would be attending a panel and therefore the appropriate venue may not be selected. Some Members noted that all scoring panels should be open to the public. The officer confirmed that in the past they had not received many requests from the public to attend the panel. He noted that this report just reflected the comments made by the Committee.
- Members suggested that they agreed that the LHI scoring panel should have a chair and this chair should be a Member not an officer. A Member disagreed with this and suggested that in Fenland they did not have a chair and the panel had still been effective. The Chairman suggested that they needed a formal chair.
- A Member inquired as to where the surplus from the Huntingdonshire schemes will be spent. The Executive Director, Place and Economy confirmed that the surplus goes into the overall underspend of the P&E service and not carried over.
- A Member suggested that the outcomes of the feasibility studies were not always correct and needed to be revisited. The Member suggested that some LHI schemes did take considerable time to implement and therefore public expectations had to be managed.
- A Member suggested that Members should be circulated the specific LHI bids in advance of the scoring panel and this would allow sufficient time for the panel to read through the vast number of LHI schemes.
- A Member stated that there were a large number of LHI bids that were not successful. He suggested that this could be resolved by delegating

the LHI budget to Parish, Town Councils or Area Committees. This would be a cost saving measure as it would ensure that a greater number of bids are not unsuccessful at the assessment stage.

- A Member suggested that he would have liked to have seen data collected from all elected Members and not just the ones who had attended the LHI scoring panel.
- A Member suggested that they had attended a LHI scoring panel where an officer was chairing and this had worked perfectly well as they had a comprehensive knowledge of the schemes.
- With the agreement of the Committee a Member requested an amendment to the report regarding the feasibility stage section in the report
- A Member raised her concerns regarding the confusion surrounding the different Divisions within the Arbury ward in Cambridge
- Members discussed and debated in great detail the disparities and confusion between the number of LHI scheme submissions that could be made by rural divisions compared to Cambridge City divisions. Population size of the divisions was also a factor that influenced the discussion.
- The Chairman, with agreement from the Committee stated that going forward the LHI bid limit for each county division for Cambridge City would be five.

It was resolved to:

Approve the proposed amendment to the LHI process described in section 2 of the report.

119. HIGHWAYS AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE AGENDA PLAN AND APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Members requested that an item be put onto the agenda that presented the Highways schemes that were being proposed by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA). The Executive Director, Place & Economy suggested that this could be achieved by putting a standing item at the end of the agenda that was updated and brought to Committee on a quarterly basis. The Chair agreed with this and suggested that this would improve clarity and provide more information to Members.

It was resolved to:

- a) Review its agenda plan attached as Appendix 1
- b) Review its training plan attached as appendix 2

- c) Agree the appointments to outside bodies as detailed in Appendix 3;
and
- d) Agree the appointments to Internal Advisory Groups and panels as
details in Appendix 4

Chairman