

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY POLICY AND SERVICE COMMITTEE: MINUTES

Date: Thursday 9th July 2020

Time: 10:00am – 12:20pm

Present: Councillors A Bradnam, L Dupre, J French (Substituting for Councillor M Shuter), I Gardener, J Gowing, P Hudson, J Schumann (Chairman), J Scutt, G Wilson and T Wotherspoon (Vice-Chairman).

Apologies: Councillor M Shuter

15. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were noted as recorded above.

Councillor Ian Gardener declared a non-pecuniary disclosable interest in relation to Item 7 and 8, as he was the Vice-Chairman of Cambridgeshire County Council's Planning Committee.

16. MINUTES – 25TH JUNE 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 25th June 2020 were agreed as a correct record subject to the following amendment. Minute 11 - Wisbech MVV Medworth Energy from Waste Combined Heat and Power Proposal - Paragraph 6 – insert 'not' into the following statement, 'She commented that she did 'not' want to challenge the professional advice provided by officers, but wanted to ensure that all aspects of the application had been considered'.

17. ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE ACTION LOG

The Action Log was noted, together with the following update:

Action 13 - This action had been completed following the circulation of an email update on 7th July 2020.

18. PETITIONS AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No petitions or public questions had been received.

19. FINANCE MONITORING REPORT - MAY 2020

The Committee was presented the Finance Monitoring Report for Place and Economy (P&E) Services as at the end of May 2020. The Strategic Finance Manager informed the Committee that the shaded budget lines in Appendix 1 of the report indicated the budgets that were under the remit of this Committee. However, it was reported that a number of these shaded lines had not been included in the report. It was noted that this error would be corrected in future reports. P&E were forecasting a revenue overspend of £3.6m. £5.2m of the forecasted pressures were attributable to loss of income due to the impacts of Covid-19. Offsetting these pressures were a £600k underspend on waste and a £1m prior year adjustment on street lighting. On the capital side, attention was drawn to Appendix 8 of the report which detailed the budget changes needing to

be agreed. It was highlighted that the 'Waste – North Cambridge HWRC' budget line should be shaded.

One Member queried why the tonnage of waste and recyclables collected at the kerbside had increased due to the impact of Covid-19. The Strategic Finance Manager stated that she could not provide any detail on this. She had discussed this with the Waste Management Team and they had suggested that this increase was linked to a number of factors which could not be pinned down.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Confirm support for the capital budget changes as detailed in Appendix 8 and refer them to General Purposes Committee for approval;
- b) Review, note and comment upon the report.

20. APPROVE GRID CONNECTION COSTS FOR ST IVES SMART ENERGY GRID

The Committee considered a report seeking approval to accept a grid connection offer from UK Power Networks for the St Ives Park and Ride Smart Energy Grid. The Committee's attention was drawn to the information found within the report. The Delivery Manager, Energy Investment Unit stated that the St Ives Smart Energy Grid project was one of a portfolio of clean energy projects being developed on Council owned assets. It was highlighted that at times there would be a shortfall in the generation of electricity at the Park and Ride site, which would need to be supplemented by grid-supplied electricity. There were two ways to accomplish this; either via a grid connection owned by a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) customer, or through a direct connection to the grid. The first option established a two-way connection to a PPA customer, allowing the project to sell and purchase electricity. This process was only possible with one of the two potential PPA customers. As commercial negotiations were still ongoing, the customer who could achieve this two way connection would be referred to as 'customer A'.

The Chairman informed the Committee that there had been no response from Customer A since their last meeting with them due to the impacts of Covid-19. The Delivery Manager stated that the Energy Manager who was employed by Customer A had been furloughed, but was still able to work on this matter.

Individual Members raised the following issues in relation to the report:

- In reference to Appendix 1, highlighted the Covid-19 related risk regarding the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) reducing the number of staff working on European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) projects. The Member queried how the impact of this risk would be mitigated. The Chairman clarified that the project was at a stage where this risk would not cause a significant issue. However, if officers needed the ERDF funding signed off then the impact of this risk would be more significant. He stated that it was important for officers to be cautious whilst managing risks.
- In reference to Appendix 1, highlighted the non-Covid-19 related risk regarding the new immigration policy and the impacts of this on staffing cost. The Member queried how realistic it was to hire staff from within the

UK and to ensure they were available when needed. The Delivery Manager stated that the only mitigation that could be put in place was to, where possible, hire staff from within the UK. She explained that in order to do this, officers would need to survey subcontracting companies to establish if they would be available when the installation process commenced. Some projects had been put on hold due to Covid-19, which meant that some UK based firms could be available for installation. It was noted that officers were waiting on confirmation from MHCLG before they progressed this project.

- Queried whether the report could have been considered in confidential session due to the Council having ongoing negotiations with customer A. The Chairman suggested that whilst the Council and Customer A did want to work together, putting this information in the public domain would show customer A that alternative routes were being explored if negotiations were unsuccessful. He suggested that publishing this information would not cause any issues in the negotiations with customer A. The Delivery Manager stated that if the Council did not get a response from customer A, alternative arrangements would have to be made. The Programme Director, Climate Change and Energy Investment agreed that including the £73,120 provisional quote from UKPN in the report should not impact negotiations as if this route was taken, customer A would not be involved in the project.
- In reference to paragraph 2.6, queried whether UKPN had been able to conduct a site visit recently and whether officers had been provided with an updated provisional quote. The Delivery Manager confirmed that UKPN had not conducted another site visit since providing the initial quote of £73,120. She suggested that she could contact UKPN and request an updated quote. **(Action required)**
- Councillor Dupre, with agreement of the Committee proposed to make the report recommendations more explicit to include the delegation to the Chief Finance officer in consultation with the Chair to proceed with the UKPN grid connection offer in a timely manner if the negotiations with the necessary customer was unsuccessful.

It was resolved unanimously to:

If negotiations with the necessary customer are unsuccessful, delegate authority to the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Chairman of the Environment and Sustainability Committee, to proceed with the UKPN grid connection offer in a timely manner.

21. APPROVE ADVANCE EXPENDITURE ON THE CIVIC HUB SOLAR CAR PORT PROJECT

The Chairman reported that he had accepted this as a late report on the following grounds:

1. Reason for lateness: The Solar carport project must integrate with the Civic Hub Build Programme. Last week it was identified that an opportunity to deliver the solar carport foundations could save the council £200,000 if this work dovetailed with on-site works on the Civic Hub due in July.
2. Reason for urgency: As this spend had not yet been agreed as part of the solar carport project investment grade proposal, a decision was taken on Wednesday morning 1st July, to urgently submit a paper for 9th July committee for approval.

The Committee considered a report requesting budget approval for advanced works that would facilitate the Solar Carport Project more cost effectively by dovetailing with construction planned on the Civic Hub. The Programme Manager, Energy Investment Unit drew the Committee's attention to the information found within the report. She stated that it was important to complete the ground work now in order to enable the solar canopies to be installed above ground at a later date. The contractors on site had estimated that this work could be completed now for £187,989 in comparison to approximately £391,000, if the work was completed at a later date.

The Chairman thanked the officers who had worked on this project and welcomed the speed at which it had been delivered. However, he noted the requirement for a contingency budget.

Individual Members raised the following issues in relation to the report:

- Sought more information regarding planning permission for the project. The Programme Manager stated that a pre application meeting had been held with planners from Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) and Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) and had been positively received. Three key pieces of feedback had been received which were:
 1. To ensure that the solar carports matched the colour of the Civic Hub;
 2. The landscaping should be considered further, as the solar carports would block some sunlight. She commented that officers would communicate with the landscape architect who was used for the Civic Hub to address this; and
 3. The layout of the carpark should be considered further. The Chairman commented that this feedback suggested that there was nothing fundamentally wrong with the project design.
- Sought more information regarding the challenging ground conditions. The Programme Manager stated that ground surveys had already been undertaken for the Civic Hub. This had meant that officers had a greater understanding of the ground conditions on the site which meant the appropriate foundations could be chosen for the solar car ports.

- In reference to paragraph 4.3, queried if officers could increase the proposed size of the solar carport. The Member suggested that if the size of the solar car port was reduced, the benefit-cost ratio would also be reduced as they wouldn't be able to export as much electricity to the grid. The Programme Manager stated that the size of the solar carport was constrained by the existing grid network. She commented that officers did not want to design a system that exceeded the capacity of the existing grid network. The Member raised concerns as this project was being built on a brand new site. The Chairman commented that the distribution network was larger than the Alconbury Weald site. By increasing the size of the project, it would become less financially viable as the Council would have to pay a significant grid connection fee. The Programme Director for Climate Change and Energy Investment explained that if the project triggered an upgrade on the distribution network, the Council could be subjected to significant costs for upgrading the distribution network. This could mean that the business case would not pay back within a 20 year time frame. She suggested that that it was important to consider the energy demand on the site and aim to generate as much electricity as possible for the site. The Programme Manager stated that Bouygues Energies and Services Ltd (BES), the engineers who were designing the scheme were aware of this grid constraint and had therefore sized the solar carports accordingly.
- Commented that if a grid connection upgrade was triggered by CCC, whether the cost of this could be divided between subsequent connectors. The Chairman suggested that this was a wider issue that did need to be discussed at a future meeting.
- Councillor Scutt stated that the Labour Group did not agree with Cambridgeshire County Council moving to Alconbury Weald. She commented that the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) had already surrendered their lease on the site. She suggested that the decision to move from Shire Hall was not considered fully and other alternatives had not been explored. The Chairman clarified that a significant amount of work had been undertaken on the Cambs 2020 Programme regarding the move to Alconbury Weald.
- In reference to the Equality Assessment, stated that road users with disabilities should be able to use the solar carports. The Programme Manager stated that the three solar carport arrays would be constructed over every other row of parking. The arrays would not be built over the disabled marked bays so would not cause any access issues. The Member queried whether individuals who parked in the disabled parking bays would have access to the solar carports. The Programme Manager stated that she could not provide more information on this as the Civic Hub Project Board were installing the solar car ports. The Chairman clarified that this would be considered further and agreed that the Solar Car Ports should be accessible to everyone.
- Commented that the new Civic Hub building would be more environmentally friendly than Shire Hall.

It was resolved by a majority to:

- a) Note the challenge of interfacing the Solar Carport and Civic Hub build programmes.
- b) Approve expenditure of £187,959 for the construction of the solar carport foundations to interface with the Civic Hub build programme.
- c) Approve a £60k contingency budget for additional works that may be required.

22. COMMUNITY CONSULTATION ON A HEAT SUPPLY AGREEMENT FOR SWAFFHAM PRIOR COMMUNITY HEAT PROJECT

The Chairman reported that he had accepted this as a late report on the following grounds:

1. Reason for lateness: The heat tariff modelling was only finalised and tested for equivalent costs on servicing costs for oil boilers on 1st July 2020. The report could therefore only be finalised once this evidence had been made available.
2. Reason for urgency: Require Committee approval for officers to consult on the Heat Supply Agreement and the tariff prices with the Swaffham Prior community ahead of asking them to formally sign a Heat Supply Agreement from September 2020. Taking the report to Committee at this stage would allow the project time to share the contents of the Heat Supply Agreement (HSA) and explain it in detail ahead of formal signatures to the local community before September.

The Committee considered a report seeking approval to proceed to community consultation in Swaffham Prior on the key terms and conditions of the HSA and to share how the community sign up process would inform the investment decision. The Programme Director, Climate Change and Energy Investment drew the Committees attention to the information found within the report and Appendix A and B. It was highlighted that the planning application submission for this project was imminent.

The Chairman requested that the full version of the HSA be circulated to the Committee. He thanked the officers who had worked on this project and stated that this was an attractive scheme for residents whilst maintaining financial viability. **(Action required)**

Committee Members agreed that the draft HSA document had been produced to a high standard and could be easily understood by the public.

Individual Members raised the following issues in relation to the report:

- Sought more information regarding the risks associated with residents switching energy supplier. The Programme Director, Climate Change and Energy Investment commented that residents were not inclined to enter a 20 year contract because they wanted to ensure that they were receiving best value for money. She stated that the price of the heat agreement

would be less than the residents' current oil price. Every 5 years, a benchmark calculation would be performed which would demonstrate the best value price offered to them. This calculation would be benchmarked against the price of oil and other heating systems. She suggested that if officers could demonstrate that this project would offer residents best value for money, then residents would not desire to change supplier.

- Sought more information as to how the Council could build up a relationship with the residents of Swaffham Prior who had not yet signed up to the heat project. The Chairman, as the Local Member for Swaffham Prior informed the Committee that the feedback he had received from some residents suggested that they had not signed up due to concerns regarding whether the project could be completed. He suggested that once the project progressed, residents would be much more interested in signing up. He commented that the HSA would help the Council engage with the community. The Programme Director, Climate Change and Energy Investment stated that officers could now provide residents with an accurate price for this heat agreement. She agreed that residents had been unsure as to whether this project could be achieved. She commented that it was important to get as many early adopters of the heat project as possible. To ensure this would happen, officers were offering a free grid connection for the residents who signed up as early adopters.
- Raised concerns regarding the full HSA residents would have to complete to sign up to the heat project. The Member queried whether officers would be able to explain this document to residents. The Programme Director, Climate Change and Energy Investment stated that a set of short videos were being developed by officers from legal and finance to explain the various parts of the HSA. One issue that had been identified was that due to Covid-19, there were a number of residents who were shielding. This had meant that officers would not be able to talk them through the HSA in person. Some of these shielded residents needed this guidance as they had 30 years of having an oil boiler.
- Commented that there could be some residents in Swaffham Prior whose first language was not English. The Member suggested that the HSA had to be explained carefully to them as well. The Chairman confirmed that this issue was already being considered by officers

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note how the consultation on the Heat Supply Agreement will inform the investment decision later this year.
- b) Agree the key parameters of the draft Heat Supply Agreement as set out in the report and Appendix A, and to proceed to community consultation.
- c) Approve joining the Heat Trust and signing up to their standards for the Swaffham Prior Community Heat Project.

23. APPOINTMENT TO EXTERNAL BOARDS – LOCAL NATURE PARTNERSHIP (NATURAL CAMBRIDGESHIRE) GOVERNANCE

The Committee considered a report outlining the changes to the Local Nature Partnership's (LNPs) constitution, requesting that a member be appointed to the LNPs Board of Trustees and seeking approval to fund the LNP up to £5,000 for 2020/21. The Flood Risk & Biodiversity Business Manager drew the Committee's attention to the information found with the report and appendix A and B.

Individual Members raised the following issues in relation to the report:

- Stated that she had received concerns from Cambridge residents regarding the amount of development in Cambridge City and the effects this was having on the river and greenspaces. The Member suggested that residents were concerned that the membership of the LNP seemed to serve the interests of developers rather than communities. She sought more information as to how the membership of the LNP was determined and how conflicts of interest were managed. The Flood Risk & Biodiversity Business Manager clarified that the LNP had no formal decision making powers e.g. related to planning. Therefore, conflicts of interest would not be an issue. She explained that the Board of Trustees did have two members who represented businesses. However, the majority of members on the Board represented non-government organisations (NGOs) such as Natural England, Cambridgeshire County Council and environmental charities. The Chair of the Board acted independently. She suggested that across Cambridgeshire there would be a large amount of growth, the LNP believed that they must work alongside and challenge developers in order to create sustainable developments. She informed the Committee that the LNPs agendas and minutes would be available to access online.
- Sought more information regarding who could join the LNP and who made the decision to appoint members to the Board of Trustees. The Flood Risk & Biodiversity Business Manager explained that anyone could contact the LNP and ask to join the Partnership Forum. However, to join the Board of Trustees, individuals must be invited and demonstrate that they've got the necessary environmental knowledge and experience to help inform the LNP's own decision making process. The Terms of Reference (TORs) stated that the Board of Trustees could nominate 3 representatives from the Partnership Forum to sit on the Board.
- Suggested that some communities in Cambridge had not had good experiences with developers. The Member suggested that developers should be co-opted onto the Board of Trustees and not be a full member. The Flood Risk & Biodiversity Business Manager stated that she would pass on the concerns to the LNP. **(Action required)**
- Sought clarification that the Board of Trustees would maintain a register of Trustee interests. The Flood Risk & Biodiversity Business Manager believed that this was the case. The Chairman drew the Committee's attention to page 70 of the agenda which stated that the Board of Trustees would maintain a register of Trustee interests, which would be updated at least annually and published on their website. The Flood Risk & Biodiversity Business Manager informed the Committee that the LNP had

confirmed that all representatives on the Board of Trustees would only sit for a year.

- In reference to paragraph 1.1, sought clarity regarding the meaning of 'Local Enterprises'. The Flood Risk & Biodiversity Business Manager clarified that it should read Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). It was noted that the LEP in Cambridgeshire was linked to the CPCA's Business Board.
- Raised concerns regarding the LNPs accountability and transparency. The Member commented that even though the LNP could not make decisions, they still had some influence on the decision making process. Going forward, the Council's engagement with the LNP would have to be carefully considered. She stated that the LNP was not under the Council's control and believed that the Council had to ensure that local accountability and transparency was being maintained. The Chairman agreed and suggested that the Council should ensure that the LNP was carrying out good governance practices.
- Queried whether the proposed £5,000 of funding would be sufficient. The Chairman commented that the LNP would be applying for grant funding. The Flood Risk & Biodiversity Business Manager stated that in previous years, the LNP had received £1,000 in funding from most its partners so the increase to £5,000 would help. Previously CCC had also allocated an officer to provide secretariat support to the LNP for up to two days a week. She suggested that other LNPs partners will hopefully now also make contributions to help cover secretariat and LNP projects
- The Chairman, with agreement from the Committee proposed that Councillor Nieto be nominated to the LNPs Board of Trustees and Councillor Anna Bradnam be nominated to the LNPs Partnership Forum.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Endorse the Council's request to be appointed to the new Board.
- b) Nominate Councillor Lina Nieto to the Board.
- c) Agree to fund the 'new' Natural Cambridgeshire up to £5,000 for 2020/21.

24. CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19

The Chairman reported that officers had been asked to bring a report on the Covid-19 response to date for those services for which each Policy and Service Committee was responsible. A similar report would be brought to each future meeting until further notice.

Given the rapidly changing situation and the need to provide the committee and the public with the most up to date information possible, the Chairman reported that he had accepted this as a late report on the following grounds:

1. Reason for lateness: To allow the report to contain the most up to date information possible.
2. Reason for urgency: To enable the committee to be briefed on the current situation in relation to the Council's response to Covid-19 for those services for which it was responsible.

Introducing the report, the Executive Director for Place and Economy drew the Committee's attention to the information found within the report and highlighted the actions taken by Place and Economy (P&E) to respond to Covid-19.

Individual Members raised the following issues in relation to the report:

- Raised concerns regarding traffic levels increasing to around 70% of pre Covid levels following the reopening of all non-essential retail. The Member suggested that this issue related to individuals still being reluctant to use public transport and preferring to use a private car. She suggested that it would be difficult to get these individuals to transition back over to using public transport. She acknowledged that encouraging modal shift was going to be difficult at this current time and suggested that this issue should be monitored closely in conjunction with the Highways and Transport Committee. The Chairman commented that the CPCA were aware of this issue. He agreed that this increase in traffic levels had occurred due to the public being sceptical of returning to public transport and the reduction in public transport provision. It was noted that this issue was being addressed. The Executive Director, Place and Economy stated that he had attended a meeting of the Transport Restart Group with the CPCA where it was reported that traffic levels in some part of the County were close to returning to 100%. He agreed that this needed to be closely monitored going forward.
- Suggested there would be a decrease in traffic levels once individuals had seen their friends and families. The Chairman acknowledged that once lockdown measures had eased, there would be an increase in traffic levels.
- In reference to the booking system introduced at the Milton Household Recycling Centre (HRC), informed the Committee that there was a Covid-19 testing station located at Milton Park and Ride, which was in the locality of the Milton HRC. The Member stated that residents wanting to use the HRC were queuing in Milton Park and Ride.

- Queried whether the booking system could be abolished as a number of farmers in the locality of the Milton HRC were finding evidence of fly tipping on their land. She suggested that this was occurring as residents wanting to use the HRC were being turned away as they had not booked a time slot. The Chairman confirmed that the booking system was under constant review. He stated that it was important to ensure the safety of residents and officers at the HRCs. The booking system was introduced to stop queues forming on highways which had been posing a significant risk and to ensure social distancing measures could be adhered to. The Chairman stated that fly tipping was illegal and that the Council would use all the evidence available to them to identify the individuals who were fly tipping. The Executive Director, Place and Economy reiterated the fact that the booking system was introduced to ensure that the HRCs could reopen safely. Officers were meeting weekly to establish whether the booking system could be relaxed. If certain elements of the booking system were not working, officers would take this away and identify a solution.

It was resolved unanimously to:

Note the progress made to date in responding to the impact of the Coronavirus.

25. ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE AGENDA PLAN, TRAINING PLAN AND APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES AND INTERNAL ADVISORY GROUPS AND PANELS

The Programme Director, Climate Change and Energy Investment stated that officers could provide Members with a presentation in August on carbon valuation and environment implications in preparation for a carbon valuation report being brought to Committee in September. She requested that the 'Climate Change Strategy' and 'Energy Projects' training sessions be moved from July to September.

The Executive Director for Place and Economy suggested that the training session in August should focus on the items the Programme Director, Climate Change and Energy Investment had raised and 'How to respond to a consultation response'. He also stated that the 'Waste PFI Overview' training session could be arranged at a later date. The Chairman requested that a more detailed training plan outlining how the session would be delivered, the timings of the session and the outcomes of the session was circulated to the Committee. **(Action required)**

Individual Members raised the following issues in relation to the training plan:

- Highlighted that there were no Policy and Service Committee meetings scheduled for August and expressed concern that it may impact Members' attendance at a training session.
- Sought more information regarding the 'How to respond to a consultation response'. The Executive Director for Place and Economy stated that the wording of this session would be changed when the updated training plan was circulated.

It was unanimously resolved to:

Note the Committee Agenda Plan

Chairman