

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE: MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 6 October 2020

Time: 10.00 a.m. to 11.20 am

Present: Councillors I Bates (Chairman), H Batchelor, D Connor, R Fuller, J French, Lynda Harford, M Howell (Vice-Chairman), N Kavanagh, S King, I Manning and A Taylor.

Apologies: None

32. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

33. Minutes – 15th September 2020

The minutes of the 15th September 2020 were agreed subject to the following amendments:

Minute 30 - correction of typographic errors relating to Lynne Road, Wisbech and the capitalisation of the word 'to'.

- revision to paragraph 1, page 21 requesting that a cycling map be updated for Wisbech and that it be included on the Committee Action Log. ACTION

In relation to the minutes the following queries were raised:

- questioned whether the details of One.network had been circulated to all Councillors. ACTION
- questioned whether schemes could still be added to tranche 2 of the COVID-19 Temporary Cycling Proposals. ACTION

34. Highways and Transport Committee Action Log

The Committee noted the Action Log and the following update relayed to Committee

Action No. 146 and part (a) of No. 311;

Following a meeting with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman it had been agreed to present a report to December's Highways & Transport Committee recommending the creation of a Member Working Group to review the Local Highways Initiative (LHI)

process ready for the 2022/23 application round. The report would include a draft terms of reference for the Working Group. The review would focus on 4 specific items:

- Parish financial contribution level
- Equity of number of applications permitted
- Simplifying the scoring process
- Delivery of Mobile Vehicle Activated Signs (MVAS)

35. Petitions

None.

36. Ring Fort Path

The Committee received a report that provided details of a path to link A14 interchange into the Orchard Park development. The presenting officer drew attention to the history of the proposed scheme. Funding had originally been approved by Cabinet in 2012 and the former Economy and Environment Committee in 2015 had indicated that should extensive strengthening of the embankment be required or that there was risk of future failure of the embankment then the provision of steps may be the only feasible option. The projected costs to date and funding were highlighted to the Committee that illustrated the ramp option could cost £800k and the current budget was £255k and therefore the ramp option could not be delivered. The proposed scheme would be constructed from concrete and a channel would be provided to allow bicycles to be pushed up and down.

The Chairman invited Councillor David Jenkins to address the Committee. Speaking in support of the scheme Councillor Jenkins, explained that it was a long standing project that had been presented to Cabinet in 2012 and later, to the Economy and Environment Committee. Orchard Park was something of an island community as it was cut off by the A14 the Guided Busway and Kings Hedges road and therefore suitable access for residents was essential. The scheme provided an advantage to walkers and those that climbed the bank currently. However, the steps did not assist disabled residents although, they were well served by the alternative route along the B1049.

In response to Member questions Councillor Jenkins:

- Confirmed that he had received no representations from disability groups and drew attention to the route that led to the A14/B1049 roundabout that was accessible for people with disabilities and people with prams and pushchairs.
- Explained that although not opposed to a ramp solution in the future, a ramp would destruct a large amount of vegetation and therefore should not be a high priority.

During discussion Members:

- Drew attention to the Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) and commented that not all disabilities were the same and should not be treated as such and suggested that the EQIA should be wider in scope.
- Noted the comments of the local Member in supporting the scheme. Although it would not benefit all the community it was well supported.
- Sought clarity regarding £20k that had been allocated to Highways England. It was explained that due to the steepness of the embankment and it supporting a major highway (A14), Highways England involvement was required for survey works.
- Noted the proposed timescales for the project that if approved would begin construction in early 2021 and take around 16 weeks.

It was resolved to:

- a) To note the scheme development to date.
- b) To approve the delivery of the steps option within the available budget of £255k; and
- c) To note that should further funding be made available, the option for provision of a ramp may be explored further.

37. England's Economic Heartland Draft Transport Strategy

Members received a report that set out the consultation on a draft Transport Strategy produced by England's Economic Heartland (EEH) and also sought views regarding a proposal to establish the EEH as a Sub-national Transport Body (STB) on a statutory basis. Members noted the view of the Government and that it was not supportive of the establishment of a further statutory transport body. The Transport Strategy was broadly consistent with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority's (CPCA) strategy and supported the delivery of infrastructure brought forward by the CPCA. There was also a strong emphasis on climate change and emissions. Officers suggested a broadly supportive response to the consultation with minor suggested amendments.

During the course of discussion Members:

- Requested that reference was made to Wisbech Rail within the consultation response as it was vital to the prosperity of the area and the county as a whole.
- Noted the need for a more joined up approach between regions. Sought clarity regarding the governance arrangements for the STB.
- Welcomed the priority afforded to decarbonisation which was in contrast to Transport East and powers regarding rail franchising.

- Requested that the consultation response was strengthened with regard to the meaningful delegation of powers. Consideration of linking with another STB should only be given if there was similarly strong emphasis and commitment on decarbonisation.
- Requested that the electrification of East/West Rail and maintaining and increasing biodiversity should be included. Officers confirmed that they would include the points made.
- Questioned the need for a further STB and noted that it would be very unlikely that the Government would support the establishment of a further statutory body and therefore the meaningful delegation of powers would become a moot point.
- Welcomed the emphasis placed on the links with eastern counties.
- Noted the comments of the Chairman regarding the engagement that had taken place, in particular regarding East/West Rail.

It was resolved to:

- a) Comment on the Draft Transport Strategy; and
- b) Approve the draft consultation response for submission as attached at Appendix B and delegate to the Executive Director – Place and Economy, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee the authority to make any minor changes prior to submission.

38. Business Planning Proposals for 2021/26 – Opening Update and Overview

The Committee was presented the revised draft business planning proposals for 2021/26. Updated proposals had been circulated to the Committee following revisions to the corporate section of the report relating to the impact of COVID-19.

Presenting the report, officers drew attention to sections 4 and 5 of the report that set the context for the directorate and presented a series of proposals for comment which would then be further developed and presented at the December meeting of the Committee.

Members noted that paragraph 5.2 contained recommended proposals and paragraph 5.3 contained more speculative ideas that could be considered depending on Member feedback. However, it was less clear how they could be delivered and what savings they would bring.

Commenting on the report, Members:

- Drew attention to the IT costs contained at page 7 of the report and sought greater clarity regarding them. Officers undertook to provide further information as to what they were and how they were broken down. ACTION

- Expressed concern regarding potentially reducing winter gritting routes, particularly for rural communities and removing Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS). Officers explained the ambition to move to a more localised approach to winter gritting through a plan to introduce 2 further weather domains that would enable a more targeted approach to gritting. Reducing winter gritting routes would only be considered if Members requested it.
- Noted that the reduction of VAS applied to those signs that were hardwired. Officers explained further that there was a cost associated with signs that had been installed through Local Highways Initiative (LHI) funding and were battery operated. This would be addressed through a business case that was being developed by the team.
- Highlighted the digitisation of drainage data, contained within the suggested proposals at paragraph 5.2 and welcomed the assessment of the innovative system. However, it was vital to ensure that it was robustly monitored and measured. Officers explained that the procurement of the overarching asset management system was at the design phase and requirements were currently being built with IT. Management of drainage would form part of that and therefore it would be preferable to only have one system. However, if that was not possible it was essential that the two systems were compatible.
- Welcomed the proposed budget increase for safety related measures.
- Questioned how school crossings were prioritised. Officers explained that a gap analysis was undertaken through which they were rated red, amber or green (RAG) which established the need for a crossing. Those sites that were rated as a red risk would require alternative measures to be enable safe crossing. It was essential to make the necessary improvements to enable safe crossing otherwise the route would be deemed to be 'unavailable' in terms of education transport and the Council would incur additional cost relating to home to school transport.
- Highlighted the impact of reduced winter gritting on walking and cycling routes and that given the emphasis the Council has placed on achieving modal shift, it was vital people were not discouraged.

It was resolved to:

- a) Note the overview and context provided for the 2021-22 to 2025-26 Business Plan.
- b) Comment on the draft proposals for H&T Committee set out in section 5.2 and endorse their development; and
- c) Comment on which of the proposals in section 5.3 should be developed for consideration should the need arise

39. Service Committee Review of the Draft Capital Programme

Members received the Draft Capital Programme for the Place and Economy Directorate. Attention was drawn to section 5 of the report that related to the Place and Economy Directorate. Members noted that there were not many changes proposed from the current programme. Members also noted the funding arrangements for the A14 that included a £1m yearly contribution for 25 years.

During discussion Members:

- Queried the significant variations contained within the table at paragraph 4.4 of the report. Officers explained that it related to all Cambridgeshire County Council schemes and was based on the phasing of those schemes. Officers undertook to provide further information as to the reasons for the variations contained in the table.
ACTION
- Noted that contributions were made through S106 funding, other local authorities and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA).
- Queried the Public Health grant funding. Officers explained that it related in particular to road safety activity and had been previously provided on a rolling basis but had now been transferred directly.

It was resolved to:

- a) Note the overview and context provided for the 2021-22 Capital Programme for Place & Economy; and
- b) Comment on the draft proposals for Place & Economy's 2021-22 Capital Programme and endorse their development

40. Highways and Transport Committee Agenda Plan and Appointments to Outside Bodies and Advisory Groups

Members noted the following update to the Committee's Agenda Plan:

- Chisolm Trail Project Status Report, moved to December 2020.

It was resolved to note the Agenda Plan.

Chairman