

Highways and Transport Committee: Minutes

Date: 4 July 2023

Time: 10:00am to 1.27pm

Present: Councillors Alex Beckett (Chair), Neil Shailer (Vice-Chair), Gerri Bird, Piers Coutts, Claire Daunton, Lorna Dupré, Jan French, Ian Gardener, Neil Gough, Anne Hay, Bill Hunt, Simon King, Alan Sharp, Alison Whelan, and Graham Wilson

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

149. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

Apologies were received from Councillor Dew (Councillor Graham Wilson substituting), Councillor McGuire (substituted by Councillor Hunt), and Councillor Milnes (Councillor Whelan substituting)

There were no declarations of interest.

150. Minutes – 25 April 2023 and Action Log

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 April 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

The action log was noted.

151. Petitions and Public Questions

There was one public question (attached at Appendix A) and no petitions.

152. Improving Transport and Connectivity for Cambridgeshire

The Committee received a report that presented the current strategic objectives of the Council and its partners including the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) and the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP). It also provided the Committee with the outcome of the Making Connections consultation undertaken by the GCP. The presenting officer highlighted the (CPCA's) Bus Service Improvement Plan and the use of innovative technology for improving transport connectivity in Cambridgeshire. Members noted that in relation to paragraph 2.2 of the report, the matter would be considered by the CPCA Board in November 2023.

During discussion of the report, Members raised the following points:

- Questioned why the report was being presented to the Committee at this stage, The presenting officer explained that the report recognised the multiple work streams and various delivery bodies and organisations that were involved in the overarching theme of improving transport connectivity and the report attempted to present it with greater clarity.
- Noted that the Bus Service Improvement Plan would be presented to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority's Transport and Infrastructure Committee prior to it being considered by the Board.
- Noted that 1,061 responses to the Making Connections consultation originated from East Cambridgeshire.
- Commented that questions within the consultation were leading, for example, whether people wanted improved or cheaper bus services and expressed concern that the response was used to push forward a congestion charge.
- Drew attention to the 57% of respondents that expressed opposition to the Sustainable Travel Zone (STV) in the consultation and only 34% indicated they were in favour of the STV.
- Commented that the ambition to increase patronage on the bus network was absent within the report and needed to be expressed more clearly as it was a vital part of the proposals. However, it was clarified that this clearly part of the overall bus improvement plan.
- Drew attention to the focus of the report that appeared to be based mainly on South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge city. Officers explained that there was a significant body of work being undertaken by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority that related to Fenland, Huntingdonshire, and East Cambridgeshire. The work of the Greater Cambridge Partnership focussed on greater Cambridge area but the paper outlined the benefits and issues for the whole County area.
- Expressed concern with the level of communication from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority regarding the termination of bus routes in the Fenland area. –
- Commented that it was due to the ability of private bus companies to terminate routes with such short notice that it was imperative the Bus Service Improvement Plan was moved forward to provide stability for communities and so that people could be encouraged on to public transport. The strongest support for the proposals came from older and younger people. It was essential that the needs of younger people be listened to as their ability to access education was dependent on reliable public transport provision. Public transport was also vital for the elderly in accessing services and support.
- Commented that it was unclear as to why the report was being brought forward. The Local Transport and Connectivity Plan had not yet been approved by the

Combined Authority and the Bus Service Improvement Plan had led to little improvement. The potential changes to the Sustainable Travel Zone, to remove Addenbrooke's Hospital from the scope of the scheme were welcome, however, the potential list of exemptions would likely prove difficult and costly to administer.

- Emphasised the importance of rail connectivity that was not given sufficient weight within the report. Commenting further, the work being undertaken to lobby Network Rail and the Government on the re-opening of the Wisbech to March line should have been mentioned in the report.
- Commented that there should have been a greater emphasis on cycleways for rural areas within the report. The condition of roads was not conducive to cycling and there were no measures proposed to improve cycling provision on rural routes.
- Drew attention to the TING demand responsive transport trial operating in Huntingdonshire. Although welcome, it needed more buses, as the current 4 were insufficient to meet demand.
- Commented that the report represented a piece of the strategic picture and that it was important to see the umbrella programme from the Combined Authority. The Bus Service Improvement Plan and franchising was integral to the approach. Rail connectivity was also an important part of this. Park and Ride improvements were quick wins, in particular welcoming the introduction of electric buses, but Cambridge centric. The Making Connections consultation did not have all the answers and proposals had and would continue to evolve considerably. It was welcome that alternative funding streams such as work placed parking levies were being assessed. Attention was also drawn to home to school transport that was a key consideration.
- Drew attention to the cost implications of Demand Responsive Transport that was a particularly expensive solution and needed substantial passenger numbers to be cost effective. There was also a need for the service to be better advertised. In particular, when the provider changed, travellers were unaware that they needed to download a new app.
- Highlighted the importance of the dial-a-ride service in Cambridge that was a vital element of community transport.
- Highlighted residents that were not able to drive or have access to a car in rural areas that were particularly poorly served by buses and were therefore isolated.

It was resolved to:

- a) Note the overall current strategic objectives of the Council and its partners for the improvement of transport and connectivity for the County as outlined at 1.1
- b) Note the current activities on the implementation of the Bus Strategy, and the relationship between the City Deal Programme and the Bus Reform Model

being advanced by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA)

- c) Note the results of the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) Making Connections consultation as set out in Appendix of the report
- d) Note that, subject to identification of a preferred option, any future decision will require the development of an Outline Business Case (OBC) that would be considered by Full Council in October 2023.

153. Procurement of Civil Parking Enforcement Services

The Committee received a report that sought authorisation to commence procurement of Civil Parking Enforcement Services (CPE) and delegate the authority to award the contract following a full procurement process to ensure a high-quality service at the best achievable cost. The report also requested the Committee considered an extension of the existing enforcement services contract for an additional year to facilitate the procurement process.

Currently the contract environment is challenging and we need to review and look at the options for the future and make sure that we future proof.

During discussion of the report, Members:

- Questioned how the procurement would affect the current Civil Parking Enforcement Process. It was explained that consideration was being incorporated for the developing Civil Parking Enforcement Process.
- Noted that the Council was at the latter end of the current contract and the option would provide flexibility for the Council.
- Expressed disappointment that proposals for Civil Parking Enforcement in Fenland were still not progressing.
- Expressed concern about Enforcement Officers that were not penalising drivers following committing parking offenses. The presenting officer encouraged Councillors to contact him with details for the matter to be taken forward.

It was resolved to:

- a) Delegate the authority to extend the existing contract within the current contract terms and conditions to the Executive Director of Place & Sustainability in consultation with the Chair and Vice of the Committee, if and as required to meet operational demands from 01 August 2024 for a period of up to a year; and
- b) Note a report will be prepared in due course on the options for future procurement and seeking a decision on a preferred approach.

154. Local Highway Improvements Programme 2023/24

Members received a report that informed them of the outcome of the Local Highway Improvement (LHI) member panels and officer scoring of the Complex and Non-complex LHI applications for 23/24 and to approve the prioritised lists for delivery.

The Committee received a public question and contribution from local Member, Councillor Alex Bulat attached at Appendix A.

During discussion of the report, Members raised the following points:

- Noted that the form of feedback on unsuccessful schemes would be discussed at the Member Working Group meeting, however, due to the number of unsuccessful applications, it may not be possible to provide detailed feedback on every occasion.
- Noted that the moderated scoring could be shared with members if they wished.
- Commented that communities were deeply invested in the process as they could shape the highways, they use daily. There had been few applications from East Cambridgeshire, however, a significant increase in the numbers from South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge city and that it was important to understand the reasons. It was suggested that bid failure was a key reason with Parish Council's and communities putting forward well-developed and funded proposals that were not successful and then losing motivation. Communication on a small number of proposed schemes had been poor and there were some issues that had arisen as a result of the revised process that had not occurred before and needed to be addressed, specifically relating to weight limit applications.
- Noted that although there were several vacancies within the projects team, the posts were currently filled by interim employees. Work on non-complex schemes had begun and been assigned to the design teams, which was much faster than under the old LHI process.
- Sought clarity regarding the cost of speed reduction measures. Officers explained that it represented an average across the county and was designed to manage expectations around costs and preventing further funding having to be found. It was intended for the website to be updated and a price banding system to better inform applicants.
- Commented that the Council needed to take a more wholistic view of schemes and assess their impact on neighbouring villages.
- Drew attention to East Cambridgeshire that had the smallest budget, but the largest underspend and emphasised the importance of all areas were funded equitably. Officers explained that funding was based upon census data.
- Highlighted the significant inflationary pressures that were affecting the highways service that would likely result in a circa 25% reduction in spending power. Parish Councils did not fully understand the impact of inflation and therefore there was a likelihood that there would be a high failure rate for good schemes.

It was resolved to:

- a) Note the prioritised lists as attached for the 23/24 programme, and delegate authority to approve these to the Executive Director of Place & Sustainability in consultation with Chair and Vice-Chair, following a review of the moderated officer scoring for those applications in the Non-complex process by the LHI Member Working Group (MWG).
- b) Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Place & Sustainability in consultation with Chair and Vice-Chair to remove schemes that prove to be undeliverable and add new schemes in their place as outlined in the report.

155. Speed Strategy

Members were presented the speed strategy for Cambridgeshire County Council. The report sought the endorsement of the Vision Zero Speed Management Strategy. It also outlined the County Council's approach to the integration of speed buffer zones.

During discussion of the report individual Members:

- Welcomed the report and commented that speed buffer zones had been proven to be effective in reducing speeds through villages and highlighted the positivity which they had been received by Parish Councils.
- Noted that there was a significant body of evidence that demonstrated the effectiveness of speed buffer zones in reducing the severity of injuries. Commenting further, a member requested that, given the funding pressures on the Council, demonstrable evidence of a reduction in the number of killed and seriously injured would be beneficial.
- Expressed disappointment that the Police would not enforce 20mph zones, however, noted that they were generally self-enforcing through design.
- Highlighted the nature of many Cambridgeshire roads that were long, straight, and flat that saw significant speeding and serious accidents as a result. It was therefore essential that the Vision Zero was communicated widely to improve safety on such roads. The use of such roads by cyclists was noted as there were no cycle paths.

It was resolved to:

- a) To endorse the Vision Zero Speed Management Strategy
- b) To note the process to progress Speed Buffer Zones in Cambridgeshire, in response to the County Council motion of July 2022.

- c) To delegate authority to make amendments to the Local Highway Improvements scoring criteria, to better accommodate buffer zones, to the Executive Director of Place and Sustainability, taking account of comments from the cross-party Members Working Group

156. Road Safety Programme 2023/24

The Committee received a report that presented the Road Safety Programme for 2023/24. Attention was drawn to the section of the report that provided updates on specific schemes, namely the Wheatsheaf Crossroads, Puddock Road and the Swaffham Heath Crossroads.

It was resolved to:

- a) To approve the capital programme of Safety schemes for 2023/24 outlined in Appendix A of the report
- b) To note the schemes being delivered by the Greater Cambridge Partnership as set out in Appendix B

157. Integrated Transport Block Funding Allocation 2023/24 – Update on Funding Allocations for Delivering Transport Strategy Aims

The Committee received a report that presented an update on the funding allocations for delivering transport strategy aims.

During discussion, Members:

- Drew attention to the link to the schemes within the ITB and the lack of provision of active travel schemes and questioned whether a more integrated approach could be implemented.
- Sought greater clarity regarding the 20mph schemes and a new round of applications and the proposed timescales. **ACTION**
- In response to concern expressed regarding the number of 20mph scheme applications from the Fenland area, it was explained that for Chatteris, the only proposal was for the entire town and that was too extensive and not appropriate.
- Sought an update regarding the proposed Bridge Street pedestrian crossing in Chatteris that did not appear in the list and expressed concern that the scheme had been discontinued and Chatteris Town Council had not been informed. **ACTION**
- Emphasised the importance of ensuring that 20mph schemes were properly implemented with proper signage and roundels painted on the highway.

- Sought assurance that projects would move from the design phase to implementation expressing a desire that money was not wasted on feasibility studies that would not be implemented. Officers reminded the Committee that a report would be presented at a future meeting that would demonstrate how projects progressed from proposal to potential delivery.
- Noted that that unsuccessful 20mph scheme applications would not be removed from the list and the process for which would be set out within a report planned for the October 2023 meeting of the Committee.
- Questioned the degree to which town and district councils were consulted on schemes. Officers explained that all schemes came forward from the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) and other strategies that had been agreed by the Committee. It was confirmed that town and district councils were consulted on these strategies.
- Suggested that the various plans and strategies were difficult for parishes to navigate and the process would benefit from work to make them more user friendly and accessible.

It was resolved to:

- a) Consider and approve the re-allocation of available Delivering Transport Strategy Aims funding for 2023/2024.
- b) Delegated authority to re-allocate DTSA Funding in 2023/24 to the Executive Director Place and Sustainability, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair, where the total re-allocation is £500,000 or less.

158. Highways and Transport Service Transformation Plan

The Committee received a report that presented the Highways and Transport Service Transformation Plan. Introducing the report, the presenting officer highlighted the improvement work to date and the programme of future actions. The report addressed the motion to Council from May 2023 regarding highway maintenance.

During discussion, Members raised the following points:

- Sought greater clarity on how information for Councillors would be improved for their divisions. Officers explained that the re-structure of the service would have a positive impact, where Local Highways Officers would receive greater management and support. They would also be supported through the procurement of a new asset management system that would enable much improved information to be provided and the development of a more proactive system through which maintenance was undertaken and publicised.
- Noted that the latest Highway Service update circulated to all Councillors would provide details of the new Highways Maintenance structure.

- Noted that the new asset management system was currently in the middle of the procurement process, with a provider due to be recruited in August 2023. Implementation of the system would be undertaken in a modular approach with the system fully functional by the end of 2024.
- Welcomed the inclusion of a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) within the performance report relating the number of defects that had to be reattended due to fault or failure of the repair.
- Emphasised the impact of the 2022/23 winter on the highway network that caused severe issues on the network.
- Noted that a presentation would be provided by Gaist that would demonstrate the technology and how it was being used together with plans to achieve maximum benefit from it.
- Highlighted the need for improved communication relating to street works and signage when undertaking maintenance.

It was resolved to:

- a) To note, review and endorse the approach outlined in this report to transform and improve the Highways Service and the Highways Improvement Action Plan at Appendix 1 of the report.
- b) To note the responses to the Motion to Full Council regarding Highway Maintenance as outlined as paragraph 1.12 in the report.

159. Finance Monitoring Report – Outturn 2022/23

The Committee received the Finance Outturn report for 2022/23. The Committee noted the accuracy of the revenue variance forecast and the end year position was a £400k overspend. There was also a £1m slippage on the capital programme.

During discussion of the report, Members:

- Questioned the overspend relating to Civil Parking Enforcement. Officers explained that the main reason for the overspend was the residual impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Funding had been received from government to offset the impact from the pandemic, however, it was held centrally in order that the budgetary pressures were visible.

It was resolved to:

Note and comment on the report.

160. Finance Monitoring Report – May 2023

The Committee received the May 2023 iteration of the Finance Monitoring Report. There were no reported variances and Members noted the review of inflationary assumptions that had been reviewed, the result of which proposed a budget reset for those areas.

During discussion Members:

- Noted that vacancies would not be reported through the Finance Monitoring Report to maintain consistency across Policy and Service Committees. It was proposed that they would, however, be reported through the quarterly performance monitoring report. **ACTION**
- Noted that one small element of the highways budget had not had inflation applied correctly and therefore would be presented to Strategy and Resources Committee following re-profiling.

It was resolved to:

- a) Endorse the revenue budget re-set adjustments to Strategy & Resources Committee for approval
- b) Endorse the carry forwards / re-profiling / funding changes to the Capital Programme to Strategy & Resources for approval
- c) Review and comment on the report.

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

The Committee received a report that presented the Committee agenda Plan together with the appointments to outside bodies and internal advisory groups and panels. Members noted the following changes to the respective group places:

Transport Strategy Huntingdonshire Member Working Group – Councillor Ian Gardener

Twenty MPH Member Working Group – Councillor Ian Gardener

East Cambridgeshire Local Highway Improvement Panel – Councillors Bill Hunt and Alan Sharp

A Member sought an update regarding the Wisbech Access Forum. **ACTION**

Performance Reporting was added to the agenda plan for October.

The Committee noted its Agenda Plan and appointments to Outside Bodies and Internal Advisory Groups.

Chair