

HIGHWAYS AND INFRASTRUCTURE POLICY AND SERVICE COMMITTEE: MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 8th October 2019

Time: 10:00a.m – 11:00a.m

Present: Councillors I Gardener, M Goldsack, L Harford, W Hunt (Vice-Chairman), S King, I Manning, M Shuter (Chairman) and G Wilson.

Apologies: Councillor T Sanderson

135. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

136. MINUTES AND ACTION LOG

The minutes of the meeting held on the 10th September 2019 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

A Member sought more information regarding the relationship between Cambridgeshire County Council's (CCC) and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority's (CPCA) Transport Plan. He requested that Officers create a simple document outlining this relationship so it could be easily understood by Members and Parish/Town Councils. The Service Director, Highways and Transport stated that creating this document should not be difficult. He confirmed that he would talk to the appropriate team and get this document circulated to Committee Members. **(Action Required)**

137. PETITIONS AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No petitions or public questions were received.

138. FINANCE MONITORING REPORT – AUGUST 2019

The Committee considered the August 2019 Finance Monitoring Report for Place & Economy (P&E) Services. The Strategic Finance Manager informed Members that a bottom line underspend of £1.9m was forecasted. She stated that the street-lighting underspend had been reduced. There was now a new pressure in relation to winter maintenance. This pressure was caused by the fact that when the new contract with Skanska was tendered the Council had reduced the number of gritting routes, since then a number of gritting routes had been reinstated. She informed Members that since the last Committee meeting there had been no changes to the capital budget.

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

- expressed concern regarding the £463K projected overspend on Winter Maintenance. He commented that at the previous Committee meeting Members had been informed of a predicted overspend of £75K. He queried whether Officers should have known at the last meeting that more drivers would have needed to be recruited and provided training. The Strategic Finance Manager stated that a zero variance had been forecast previously, but it had now turned into a pressure. She agreed that this potential overspend should have been identified sooner.
- queried who had reinstated the length of some gritting routes. The Chairman confirmed that in 2016 there had been a decision to cut the length of gritting routes from 44% to 33%, but this decision had then been reversed. The Assistant Director, Highways commented that when the new Highways Service Contract had been tendered between October 2016 and December 2016, the decision had already been taken to reduce the number of routes. He stated that by the time the bids had been submitted, the decision had been made to reinstate the routes. Therefore the cost was based on the reduced number of routes. It was suggested that this information should have been included in the report to set the context.
- queried why an 11% change to the length of gritting routes had resulted in a 22% uplift in budget. The Assistant Director, Highways commented that there was no direct correlation. He explained that the two main changes were each route had two additional drivers and there had been an increase in the amount of salt used. The Strategic Finance Manager added that there were also lease costs relating to equipment which were not proportionate. It was suggested that this information should also have been put in the report to provide more narrative.
- requested more information regarding the additional income forecasted on Highways Development Management. The Service Director, Highways and Transport confirmed that the additional income had come from developers under Sections 38 and 278 of the Highways Act 1980. He explained that due to the significant amount of housing development taking place in the area, the income the Council had received from developers had been greater than expected. It was queried whether this income would continue in future years. The Service Director, Highways and Transport stated that as long as the economy of the area remained buoyant, then the Council could expect to continue to receive high levels of income. He stressed the risk associated with this source of income as it was subject to change and therefore needed to be monitored every year.
- expressed concerns that it looked like the Council had been making a profit from the development. The Service Director, Highways and Transport stated that the Highways Development Team had a certain

level of fee they were allowed to charge, which covered its costs. The work undertaken had been necessary to allow roads to be adopted and the developers to proceed with their work. The Chairman commented that as long as the fees were within the normal range then it would be difficult to challenge. He stated that some of this profit would be used to fund front line services.

- queried why the £650k overachievement of income for Parking Enforcement was being closely monitored. The Strategic Finance Manager stated that this figure could change quickly if service users changed their habits. She commented that demand led budgets were always closely monitored. It was noted that the funding was stable at the moment.
- requested if specific performance exceptions could be reported to the Committee on a monthly basis. The Service Director, Highways and Transport stated that Council had agreed that performance reports would be presented to committees on a quarterly basis. The Chairman asked if the Committee could be updated if a performance indicator suddenly moved from green to red between the quarterly reporting process. In response, the Service Director, Highways and Transport confirmed that he would bring such information to the attention of the Chairman and Committee.
- requested the need to review the performance indicators (PIs) for the next financial year in order to ensure they were fit for purpose. The Service Director, Highways and Transport reminded the Committee it had already reviewed and agreed the current set. The Chairman confirmed that the Committee should review them. Another Member commented that the Committee needed to pay close attention in future to the PIs.
- requested that the Council's Arboriculture Officers should contact all Members who were named on the Tree Works list reminding them that the Council was now entering the tree planting season. Attention was drawn to trees which had not been replaced. The Chairman confirmed that the Council had a tree planting programme. The Assistant Director, Highways added that there would be a significant change in the tree data in the November report.
- queried the locations of where new trees would be planted in the county. The Assistant Director, Highways confirmed that the policy stated that if a tree was removed then a new tree should be planted in the same location. However, if this location was unsuitable then the Local Highways Officer would work with the Local Member to identify a suitable location. He commented that there was not an equal distribution of land across the county suitable for tree planting. Therefore trees removed in Huntingdon may be replaced with trees located in South Cambridgeshire for example. He acknowledged the importance of keeping Local Members informed. The Chairman

confirmed that there was sometimes a lack of suitable highways land. He informed the Committee that a motion was going to be brought to the next Council meeting to plant trees on the County Farms Estate.

- suggested that the Local Highways Officers should contact Members to provide them with more information on the tree planting process. The Assistant Director, Highways confirmed that this should be happening and stated that he would take this away and check. The Chairman added that he had been in contact with his Local Highways Officer regarding the removal and relocation of trees in his Division. **(Action Required)**.

It was resolved unanimously to:

review, note and comment upon the report

139. REVIEW OF RISK REGISTER FOR PLACE AND ECONOMY

The Committee received a report presenting the Place and Economy (P&E) risk register. The Service Director, Highways and Transport drew the Committee's attention to the contents of the report and the appendix.

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

- requested more information on the purpose of the report. The Service Director, Highways and Transport informed the Committee that the report highlighted the overarching risks identified throughout the P&E directorate. He stated that each service within P&E had its own service level risk register.
- queried why the impact of the weather and recruitment issues had not been included in the report. The Service Director, Highways and Transport confirmed that weather had been included in the Highways Service risk register. He stated that risk 2, 'staff capacity and resilience' found within the report highlighted recruitment issues. He commented that the corporate level risk register did include a risk outlining staff capacity and service delivery. It was suggested that risks associated with weather and recruitment issues could be included in future reports. The Service Director, Highways and Transport stated the Committee could also receive the Highways Service risk register which contained more detail.
- expressed concern regarding staff resilience particularly the fact officers were facing increasing pressures. It was suggested that it would be beneficial to see how this risk register linked into the corporate risk register in relation to staff resilience. The Chairman confirmed that the Committee recognised that this was an ongoing pressure.

- highlighted the need to review the capacity and resilience of external partners/contractors such as Skanska. It was also queried whether Brexit was included within the report. The Chairman stated that the Council had a quarterly board meeting with Skanska in which staff resilience was a standing item. He commented that he was not aware of any issues in relation to Brexit. The Assistant Director, Highways reported that the Highways risk register included a resource to monitor both CCC and Skanska officers.
- highlighted concerns raised by Councillors with parishes regarding street lighting and electricity supplies. It was suggested that it could be beneficial to include a risk that reflected the positive and negative impact of Committee decisions on Parish/Town Councils. The Chairman stated that this was difficult to quantify unless they had received feedback from Parish/Town Councils.

It was resolved unanimously:

note and comment on the Risk Register

140. SERVICE COMMITTEE REVIEW OF DRAFT REVENUE BUSINESS PLANNING PROPOSALS FOR 2020-21 TO 2024-25

The Committee received a report providing an overview of the draft Business Plan Revenue Proposals for services that were within the remit of the Committee. The Service Director, Highways and Transport drew the Committee's attention to sections four and five of the report. He informed Members that further work would be performed on the report to reflect comments made by the Committee.

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

- requested more information regarding the review of on street parking charges. The Assistant Director, Highways confirmed that a review of parking charges was held every couple of years irrespective of the business planning process. He informed the Committee that a report regarding this matter was scheduled for the November Committee meeting. It was queried whether there would be a consultation process as part of the review of parking charges. The Assistant Director, Highways confirmed that there would be, but not before the November Committee meeting.
- requested clarification regarding the changes in parking charges for the car park in St Neots market square. The Assistant Director, Highways stated that he would have to take this away and check. He confirmed that the District Council were replacing the parking ticket machines on CCC's behalf. **(Action Required)**.
- queried the lack of clarity in the report regarding the delivery of priorities relating to repair and maintenance of the highways network.

The Service Director, Highways and Transport clarified the purpose and content of the report. The Chairman suggested that more information could have been provided in the report explaining its purpose. The Assistant Director Highways commented that a report would be presented to the Committee in February/March 2020 detailing the revenue and capital Highways budget and the proposed programme of work for the next financial year

- highlighted the fact that sections of the report referred to the Committee as the Highways and Community Infrastructure Committee.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) note the overview and context provided for the 2020-21 to 2024-25 Business Plan revenue proposals for the Service,
- b) comment on the draft revenue proposals that were within the remit of the Highways & Infrastructure Committee for 2020-21 to 2024-25

141. SERVICE COMMITTEE REVIEW OF THE DRAFT 2020-21 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Committee received a report providing an overview of the draft Business Plan Capital Programme for Place and Economy. The Service Director, Highways and Transport drew the Committee's attention to the contents of the report, in particular section five which was specific to the P&E Service. He stated that similar to the last report, this report inputted into the overall corporate capital budget.

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

- requested more information regarding the Household Recycling Centre (HRC) improvements. The Service Director, Highways and Transport stated that there were currently nine HRCs in Cambridgeshire which were all operated on a similar basis. He confirmed that there were no proposals in the Business Plan to change this. He commented that Officers had been looking at how to extend the use of the Milton HRC after 2021. He added that there were many factors that influenced the possible changes to the HRCs but assured the Committee that they were not planning on changing the capital allocation.
- queried the amount of funding the service would receive from Government. The Service Director, Highways and Transport commented that he would have to discuss this with Finance. He stated some funding was known such as the integrated transport block and highway maintenance. However, other sources of money were provided on an ad hoc basis. **(Action Required)**

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) note the overview and context provided for the 2020-21 Capital Programme for Place and Economy
- b) comment on the draft proposals for Place and Economy's 2020-21 Capital Programme and endorse their development.

142. HIGHWAYS AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE AGENDA PLAN AND APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

The Committee were reminded that the Highways & Infrastructure induction event was arranged to take place after the Committee meeting in November.

The Committee considered its agenda plan.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- note the Committee Agenda Plan

Chairman