MEETING OF HIGHWAYS AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE POLICY AND SERVICE COMMITTEE: MINUTES

Date: Wednesday 7th December 2016

Time: 10:00am-12.20pm

Present: Councillors Bates (substituting for Councillor Butcher), Chapman, Criswell, Chapman, Connor, Gillick, Hunt, McGuire (Chairman), Palmer (substituting for Councillor Rouse), Reeve (Vice-Chairman), Scutt and Williams

Apologies: Councillors Ashwood, Butcher (Councillor Bates substituting) and Rouse (Councillor Palmer substituting)

219. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Bates declared a non-prejudicial interest on the Business Planning item, as a Member of City Deal Executive Board.

220. MINUTES AND ACTION LOG

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th October 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

In response to a question from Councillor Hunt, officers confirmed that there had not been a further meeting since the last Committee meeting with East Cambridgeshire District Council (ECDC) regarding the potential for shared parking facilities at Ely Archives Centre, as the issue was now with the Assets & Investment Committee for a decision, but contact with ECDC was being maintained.

The Action Log was noted.

221. PETITIONS

The Committee considered a 90 signature petition requesting speed restrictions on Mayfield Road for reducing the speed limit to 20mph.

Mr Jolly-Betts, presented his petition. He handed out photographs showing the nature of the road and some of the issues encountered. He outlined the problems caused by some parents dropping their children off at school, and then being impatient to leave, and the risks faced by unaccompanied children crossing between cars. In terms of measures sought, they would like a speed reduction to 20mph, a layby, or a raised area for the children to cross, and also better signage. There were two schools in the vicinity, Mayfield Primary School and Spring Common School. St Johns Ambulance Multiple Sclerosis Centre and the Olympic Gym were also accessed off Mayfield Road. There were also a number of building sites at that

location, and the road was only going to get busier and busier. The road was also used as a rat run.

Members noted written comments from one of the Local Members, Councillor Shellens. Councillor Shellens understood the petitioners' concerns and was well aware of the speeding issues in the area. He outlined his concerns with the effectiveness of introducing 20mph speed limits which may not be enforced by the Police, and his recent suggestion to the Police that a table top ramp may be the appropriate solution at this location.

Members asked the following questions and made the following comments:

- suggested that the petitioner seek the support of his Local Members in making a bid for Local Highway Initiative funding, or approaching the Town Council for a Third Party funded bid. A Member outlined a similar successful bid in his Division that had resulted in a 20mph limit and traffic calming;

- noted that the petitioner had the support of both Schools, and that the headteachers had wanted to attend the meeting with him;

- noted that the speed limit was currently 30 mph outside both schools, although a number of other schools in the area had 20mph zones. In response to a question, officers confirmed that 30mph was the normal speed limit for built-up areas. Officers added that whilst not everyone complied with 20mph limits, they did reduce the average speeds, and whilst the Police often indicated that they did not have the resources to enforce limits as they would like, there were benefits.

The Committee noted the petition and the Chairman advised that the petitioners would receive a full written response within ten working days of the meeting. He also urged the petitioner to work with his Local Members to explore possible solutions and timescales.

222. MEDICAL EXAMINER

The Committee considered a report on the new Medical Examiner Scheme, and the proposed approach to implementation in Cambridgeshire.

Members noted that the Coroner and Justice Act 2009 (CJA2009) placed a new statutory duty on all local authorities to introduce a Medical Examiners (ME) Scheme. The implementation date had been set nationally for April 2018 – the delay reflecting the complexity and challenges that the new ME scheme can create. Currently around half the deaths in the county (approximately 4000) were referred to the Coroner for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Under the ME scheme, every death would be referred to the Coroner. The costs of these referrals to families using the ME scheme, and the income and costs for Coroner Services were noted. The challenge would be not to prolong arrangements for bereaved families. The benefits of a well-designed scheme were outlined.

Initially, Coroners' Services need to purchase and implement a Case Management IT System and the associated specialist expertise and support. The IT system would

cost between £28K and £56K, the expertise and support would cost £12,250. It was anticipated that most of these upfront costs could be recouped from central government, so the cost to the County Council would be relatively low.

The Chairman advised that he had visited the Coroner's Office recently and discussed this matter with the Coroner Service Manager, and there had also recently been a Member Seminar on this issue.

Arising from the report, Members:

- asked how funeral directors were being engaged in this process. Officers explained that they already had contact with some, and they would also be using SAFE, the trade group for funeral directors. The Member commented that buy-in by funeral directors would be critical to the success of this scheme;

- noted that the new systems should increase the effectiveness of existing processes, and urged officers to claim back as much as possible from central government;

- congratulated the Service on how they had responded to a number of major changes over the last few years;

- opposed the ME Scheme, suggesting that it was a knee jerk reaction that would complicate the system, and could result in processes becoming less safe. The Member particularly opposed the idea of introducing digital signatures in place of wet signatures. He felt that the real issue was the budget, and he asked officers how confident they were that they would indeed be reimbursed for the introduction of the ME scheme. Officers explained that the £700,000 income estimate was the charges that would be recouped from families via Funeral Directors, and this was expected to cover the cost of running the service. There was considerable national debate on how those charges would be recovered, and as yet, no conclusions had been reached. Funeral directors were not enthusiastic about the introduction of the scheme, and it was anticipated that a charge of around 5% (i.e. £5) per case would be levied by them. There would also be the option to pay online, or pay in person at a Registration Office – it was unlikely there would be a GRO set fee though. The estimated IT system costs of £24-56K reflected recent soft market testing, and it was anticipated that at least 50% of that would be recouped, and the balance would be divided between the County Council and Peterborough City Council;

- another Member strongly opposed the introduction of digital signatures. Officers explained that the GP signing the death certificate would still be a wet signature. Only the Coroner would be able to apply a digital signature, it would not be possible for administrative staff or any other individuals to apply the digital signature. It was suggested that those Members that had outstanding concerns about digital signatures could meet with the Coroner, who could explain exactly how it would work in practice. **Action required.**

It was unanimously resolved to:

a) agree the proposed approach;

b) continue to pre-fund the set up of the Medical Examiner Scheme on the expectation that the Ministry of Justice (MOJ)/ Department of Health (DOH) will cover these costs when the national scheme formally launches;

c) delegate the necessary decisions to implement the Medical Examiner Scheme to the Executive Director for Economy, Transport and Environment in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee.

223. REAL TIME PASSENGER INFORMATION

The Committee received a report that proposed the renewal and extension of the Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) Partnership Agreement with partnering authorities and enter into a joint procurement exercise for a new Real Time Passenger Information supply, installation and maintenance contract.

Officers explained how RTPI encouraged the public to make greater use of the public transport system. It was not viable to update the existing, outdated RTPI equipment, and to abandon RTPI at this stage meant that the value of the investment to date would be lost, and there would be a negative impact on partnerships with bus operators.

Arising from the report, Members:

- commented that there were no references in the report to the Quality Bus Partnership or City Deal, the criticisms Stagecoach had of the existing system or the relationship with Passenger Transport team. For these reasons the Member said he could not support the report. Officers commented that the partnership aspects would be explored as part of the renewal of contract. It was confirmed that in terms of organisational responsibilities, whilst the responsibility for RTPI sat within Integrated Highways Management, there were strong links to the Passenger Transport team;

- another Member commented that the approach needed to be more strategic, with a fundamental review of the whole offer. He also observed that many people now access real time information on their Smartphones so there was much less of a need. A number of Members commented that not everyone had access to a Smartphone, and indeed bus patrons may be less likely to have a Smartphone, and a more inclusive approach needed to be taken;

- noted that operators other than Stagecoach e.g. Whippet use the RTPI systems too;

- there was a query on how much bus operators contributed to RTPI, and whether any such contributions were for the on-board technology or for the signs and back-office facilities too. Officers advised that they met regularly with the bus operators, who were very much involved in the process to replace the system, and very much on board with the proposed directions. Historically units had to be fitted to each bus, but this was now done via the GPRS ticket machine, which sent a private mobile signal to the control unit which linked in with the website,

apps and displays. Audio announcements were also a possibility for the future. Officers also confirmed that if the current contractor was the successful bidder, no hardware or software would have to be changed. If a new contractor was appointed, there would be a 3-6 month changeover period. Members were reminded that technology was changing rapidly, there were now new open data sources, and potentially savings for the Council in the longer term. The bus operators provided the data to the Council, but agreement needed to be reached whereby they paid a contribution to the back office costs. The Council enjoyed a good relationship with the two main bus operators in the county, Stagecoach and Whippet;

- a Member commented that many people in rural areas did not have access to a bus service, or at best had very limited services, and he suggested that the money could be better spent enhancing bus services in rural areas;

- noted that if bus routes change, the new displays had sockets and brackets which could be unplugged and reused in new locations;

- in response to a question as to whether RTPI was still relevant, officers advised that in their experience, it was still popular with the public. If the contract was not renewed, the data feed would not happen, so the data would not be available to the website, apps etc. The actual amount of revenue funding was £109K per year;

- a Member indicated that he was willing to support the proposal, on the basis of regular reports back, and a number of other Members supported that view.

It was resolved, by a majority, to:

a) renew and extend the Real Time Passenger Information Partnership Agreement with partnering authorities for the length of the new contract period;

b) enter into a joint contract procurement exercise with the partnering authorities for a new Real Time Passenger Information supply, installation and maintenance contract.

224. BUSINESS PLANNING

The Committee received a report providing an overview of the draft Business Plan Revenue proposals for Economy, Transport and Environment Service and specifically, the elements of that budget that were within the remit of the Highways and Community Infrastructure Committee. It was noted that there had been no changes to the Business Plan tables since it had been considered by Members at their Committee meeting in October.

Members noted the savings identified against different workstreams over the next five financial years. Although there were still £3.298M worth of savings to be finalised, officers were confident that a balanced budget could be prduced.

A Member commented that pressures had changed in terms of Winter Maintenance, which had become an area of great public concern, specifically the lack of flexibility in the new gritting routes, i.e. where parishes had indicated that they were happy to pay, there was actually a lack of capacity/resources. Members were also reminded that the proposal to cut the Winter Maintenance budget had gone through unopposed when the 2016/17 budget was considered. The Member suggested that the Winter Maintenance Working Group be reconvened so that the criteria could be reviewed, as some Members felt there had been a lack of engagement over certain routes.

The following amendment was proposed by Councillor Criswell, and seconded by Councillor Hunt:

Request reinstatement of the Member Working group to review criteria for winter maintenance

On being put to the vote, the Amendment was carried unanimously.

The following points were made by Members during the debate on the report:

- noted that the monies for Darwin Green and Clay Farm came from developer contributions: the only contribution made by the Council was the revenue uplift, so there would be a small revenue pressure;

- noted that the Book Fund line B/R.6.209 included newspapers. A Member suggested that the proposal to reduce services to voluntary libraries should be reconsidered at a time that voluntary libraries were becoming more important. Officers acknowledged this point, but commented that any proposals to reduce the reduction in the Book Fund should include alternative proposals for savings. It was confirmed that this would not be an appropriate area for Transformation Funding;

- discussed the Street Lighting Synergies (B/R.6.214), specifically the Break Cost of £800K, which officers advised was included in the Business Plan as being charged to the Transformation Fund;

- noted that the inflationary increase on concessionary fares reflected that the level of entitlement was set, and was based on a percentage reimbursement of fare, but as fares increased, the amount reimbursed increased. Officers further advised that the formula was set by the Department for Transport;

- a Member asked if it would be possible to bring forward the Open Libraries project, given the positive pilot in St Ives. Officers advised that a report would be presented to the next H&CI Spokes meeting for consideration, looking at potential roll out: however, it was not straightforward, as there were cost implications;

- a Member commented that he was frustrated that the options put forward by officers always proposed cuts to services, when there were other ways of approaching the budget e.g. working more holistically – there should not be cuts

to front line services, and the choice should not be between cutting services and increasing Council Tax rates;

- a Member commented that it was often cited that many areas of ETE's work experienced higher than average inflation, but as a corollary, there should be areas of the Council's work which benefitted from lower than average inflationary increases. Officers advised that for most items, there was not an explicit line for inflation, and Finance colleagues were very strict about inflationary and demographic uplifts being applied;

- a Member commented that there was a lot of confusion about the switching off and dimming of street lights overnight. Some Parish Councils had paid for streetlights to be left on, but they were still being dimmed overnight. Officers confirmed that all streetlights were dimmed overnight. The Member also queried the proposal regarding accrued street lighting. It was confirmed that this related to streetlights that had become the Council's responsibility through public highway adoption, which had not yet been upgraded;

- a Member queried the whole schedule of ETE Fees & Charges. In response, officers noted that a general principle of the Council was to charge for services where this was possible and the principle was being followed in ETE. The Executive Director noted therefore where fees and charges were levied, they were reviewed and increased accordingly to ensure that where applicable, the full cost of administering and managing the task was covered;

- a Member opposed increasing income from those accessing digital archives, given the proposal to move to the Archives Centre to Ely, which would not be accessible from many parts of the county.

Councillor Williams advised that he would not be supporting the Business Plan proposals as the Liberal Democrats would be submitting their own budgets.

It was resolved, by a majority, to:

a) note the overview and context provided for the 2017/18 to 2021/22 Business Plan revenue proposals for the Service, updated since the last report to the Committee in October;

b) comment on the draft revenue savings proposals that are within the remit of the Highways and Community Infrastructure Committee for 2017/18 to 2021/22, and endorse them to the General Purposes Committee as part of consideration for the Council's overall Business Plan;

c) comment on the changes to the capital programme that are within the remit of the Highways and Community Infrastructure Committee and endorse them;

d) consider the proposed fees and charges for those Economy, Transport and Environment services that are within the remit of the Highways and Community Infrastructure Committee for 2017/18;

e) reinstate the Member Working group to review criteria for winter maintenance.

225. NETWORK RAIL ANGLIA LEVEL CROSSING REDUCTION STRATEGY IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE

The Committee received a report providing the proposed response to Network Rail's level crossing proposals, which were part of its Anglia Level Crossing Reduction Strategy. There were over 100 level crossings affected across the Anglia region, 32 of which were in Cambridgeshire. There had been two rounds of public consultation, and the results of those consultations had been discussed with relevant stakeholders, including local authorities and Local Members. It was likely that there would be a Public Inquiry.

The Chairman advised that since the agenda had been published, Network Rail had informed the County Council that they were making changes to 8 of the 32 proposals listed in the report, as a result of feedback received from the second round of public consultation in September and October. However, the detail had not been made available until the day of the meeting, when it had been made available on the Network Rail's Anglia level crossings website (http://www.networkrail.co.uk/anglialevelcrossings/). It was understood that Network Rail were writing to relevant local members to update them, and would be holding a period of 'public information update' from 7th December 2016 to 6th January 2017.

The eight where there would be further changes were:
1) C06 Barrington (Barrington Road, Foxton)
2) C08 Ely North (FP11 Ely)
3) C26 Poplar Drove Littleport (road)
4) C27 Willow Row Drove (BOAT 31 Littleport)
5) C09 Second Drove Ely (FP49 Ely)
6) C24 Cross Keys (FP50 Ely)
7) C20 Leonards (FP101 Soham)
8) C19 Wicken Road (FP106 Soham) (to be removed from the scheme)

To explore the latest changes to the eight crossings above, it was proposed that a further report would be taken to the next meeting of the Highways & Community Infrastructure Committee in January. Officers agreed to send personalised emails to the Local Members for the eight level crossings above. **Action required.**

Officers explained that whilst welcoming the proposals in general, more generally they had some concerns. These included the appropriateness of the Network Rail approach e.g. whether they were truly working in partnership, the cost to the County Council of the scheme, and specifically the Diversity Impact Assessment Scoping Report, which did not adequately assess the impact of the closure and the alternative routes on users, communities and vulnerable groups.

Members noted comments received from two of the Local Members, Councillors Dupre and Rouse.

Councillor Palmer commented as a Local Member on the Leonards Level Crossing (Soham FP101) which was a very well used crossing used frequently by walkers and

ramblers, and had an excellent safety record, which Network Rail were proposing to close. Officers agreed to discuss this further with Councillor Palmer. **Action required.**

A Member raised C30 Westley Road Six Mile Bottom, as there had been discussions about keeping this open for non-motorised transport. Officers advised that this one was not on the list of 8, and that the County Council had a holding objection, as the proposal was for it to be a bridleway, but the Council's suggestions was that this was extended to include motorbikes.

A Member complimented officers on their comprehensive report. He also commented that the Railway Acts allowed railway lines to cross highways and Rights of Way, but highways always have precedence, and there was an obligation to keep the highways open. Officers explained that Network Rail had previously made individual Highways Act applications, but were now taking a different approach with this set of crossings, but under TWA Orders, there was an obligation to mitigate the effects of Order.

It was resolved unanimously to:

a) approve the County Council's draft response to Network Rail's proposals including the main points as detailed in sections 2.2-2.4 of the report, and in accordance with the recommendations set out in Appendix 4 of the report;

b) approve the notification to the Secretary of State for Transport, when consulted, that the County Council intends to object to as many of the proposals as are unresolved by the time the Transport & Works Act Order application is made.

226. ECONOMY, TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT RISK REGISTER UPDATE

The Committee received a report providing details of the Highways & Community Infrastructure Committee risks in the ETE Risk Register.

It was resolved unanimously to:

1) Note the position in respect of the ETE Risk Register.

227. FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Committee received a report setting out financial and performance information for Economy, Transport and Environment (ETE) as at the end of October 2016.

It was noted that at this stage of the financial year there were no significant variances, and ETE was showing a £161,000 forecast underspend. The main change in forecast related to Winter Maintenance, which was now forecasting a £356K overspend. This was based on the assumption of 'average' winter conditions – a more severe or milder winter would increase or decrease the overspend accordingly.

It was resolved unanimously to:

1) review, note and comment on the report.

228. COMMITTEE AGENDA PLAN AND APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Members reviewed the Agenda Plan, and noted changes to items at forthcoming meetings.

It was resolved to:

1) note the Agenda Plan

Chairman