



Minutes of a meeting of the Highways and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
held at County Hall, Glenfield on Thursday, 4 November 2021.

PRESENT

Mr. T. Gillard CC (in the Chair)

Mr. D. C. Bill MBE CC

Mr. B. Champion CC

Mrs. H. J. Fryer CC

Mr. Max Hunt CC

Mr. K. Merrie MBE CC

Mr. C. A. Smith CC

In attendance

Mr. O. O'Shea CC – Cabinet Lead Member for Highways and Transportation

Mrs. M.A. Wright CC – Cabinet Support Member for Highways and Transportation

Mrs. P. Posnett - Cabinet Lead Member for Community and Staff Relations (minute 18 refers).

11. Minutes of the previous meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 September 2021 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

12. Question Time.

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Standing Order 35.

13. Questions asked by members.

The following questions were received from Mr. M. Hunt CC:

1. According to the Treasury's figures the East Midlands has been consistently the lowest funded region per head for transport of any English region and the latest data published in July 2021 confirmed that funding has declined over the last 20 years to just 58% of the UK average.

Could the Chairman provide me with a list of all transport related bids by the County Council (or shared by the County), annually over the last 10 years, of over £1million, indicating the size of the bid and that of the award, if made?

Response from the Chairman:

Please see the attached table.

2. A report in early October 2021 by the LGA indicated that capital funding for this current year 2021/22 was to be cut by £400m (which they estimated to represent 9.5million pothole repairs). What was the initial budget for road maintenance for this year and how has this announcement affected our plans?

Response from the Chairman:

The allocated maintenance budget for 2021/22 of £22.4m has not changed and no in year funding cut has been advised by the Department for Transport.

14. Urgent items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

15. Declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda.

The Chairman invited members who wished to do so to declare any interest in respect of items on the agenda for the meeting.

Mr. K. Merrie CC and Mr. C. Smith CC declared personal interests in agenda item 10: A511 Growth Corridor Proposals as the proposals related to the electoral divisions they represented.

Mr. T. Gillard CC also declared a personal interest in agenda item 10 as he was the Cabinet Lead Member at North West Leicestershire District Council for Business and Regeneration.

16. Declarations of the Party Whip.

There were no declarations of the party whip in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16.

17. Presentation of Petitions.

The Chief Executive reported that no petitions had been received under Standing Order 35.

18. Engagement on the Council's Strategic Plan.

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive, the purpose of which was to seek the Committee's views on the draft Strategic Plan (2022 – 26) as part of the 12-week public consultation period which commenced on 1 November 2021. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 8', is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed Mrs. P. Posnett CC, the Cabinet Lead Member for Community and Staff Relations, to the meeting for this item.

Arising from discussions the following points were noted:

- (i) Whilst members endorsed the ambitions set out in the Strategic Plan, they raised concerns that the funding was not available to match those ambitions.
- (ii) Members were of the view that some of the aims in the Strategic Plan were in opposition to each other, for example the plan to increase cycling and walking conflicted with the major road programme which would increase traffic. In response

members were referred to section 5.4 of the Strategic Plan which set out how the local economy would be decarbonised.

- (iii) The Strategic Plan was a living document and could be updated as time went on to reflect the difficulties bus operators were facing as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and whether that situation improved or not.
- (iv) The Director undertook to speak to Mr D. Bill CC after the meeting regarding his concerns about the Council's response to the Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan 2020-2039.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the update on the work undertaken to review and refresh the Council's Strategic Plan be noted.
- (b) That the Chief Executive be requested to give consideration to the comments now raised as part of the consultation on the Council's Draft Strategic Plan (2022 – 2026).

19. National Bus Strategy.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Environment and Transport which provided an update on work associated with the implementation of 'Bus Back Better' the National Bus Strategy and set out the financial implications for the Leicestershire Bus Service Improvement Plan. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 9', is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussions the following points were noted:

- (i) The Council's ability to deliver the Bus Service Improvement plans was dependent on the amount of funding that would be received from central government. Consideration was being given to what other funding options would be available should the Government funding not materialise, and developer contributions was one option, however decisions on alternatives could not be made until the announcement on the Government funding was made. The table in Appendix C set out which sources of funding were intended to be used for which scheme and where non-government funding was required this was marked in the table as 'Private'.
- (ii) Some of the funding from government would be used in Leicestershire to encourage behavioural changes regarding public transport. It was important to encourage young people to use public transport before they became entrenched in the habit of using private vehicles to move around. New ways to engage with and get feedback from young people regarding public transport needed to be found and digital methods and use of mobile phone technology were being considered.
- (iii) Leicestershire County Council and Leicester City Council worked closely together with regards to public transport and the Leader of the County Council had recently met with the City Mayor to discuss the National Bus Strategy and each authority's Bus Service Improvement Plan. However, the two authorities were to have separate Enhanced Partnership Schemes as the City and County had different needs and priorities with regards to public transport particularly as the population of the County

was much more dispersed and therefore the public transport market faced different challenges in the County.

- (iv) A member was of the view that greater consideration needed to be given to market towns when planning bus services.
- (v) Car parking prices could be used as a lever to encourage people to use public transport. Off-street parking was the responsibility of district authorities therefore the County Council could only control the price of on-street parking if it were to choose to charge for on-street parking. A member raised concerns that using parking prices as a lever would be ineffective and have undesirable consequences.

RESOLVED:

That the update on work associated with the implementation of 'Bus Back Better' and the financial implications for the Leicestershire Bus Service Improvement Plan be noted.

20. A511 Growth Corridor Proposals.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Environment and Transport which provided an update on the progress of the A511 Growth Corridor proposals and an opportunity for comment prior to seeking Cabinet approval to submit a planning application for the extension of the Bardon Link Road. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 10', is filed with these minutes.

It was noted that a pre-submission consultation exercise had been undertaken to support the submission of a planning application in respect of the new Bardon Link Road. The feedback from the consultation was still being analysed but approximately 50% of respondents were in support of the proposals.

Members supported the proposals but raised concerns regarding the escalating costs of materials.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the update on the progress of the A511 Growth Corridor proposals be noted;
- (b) That the proposal to submit a planning application for the extension of the Bardon Link Road be welcomed.

21. Highways and Transport Annual Performance Update.

The Committee considered a joint report of the Chief Executive and Director of Environment and Transport which provided an annual performance update on the key performance indicators that the Council was responsible for delivering against the Council's Strategic Plan. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 11', is filed with these minutes.

The Director of Environment and Transport encouraged members to complete the National Transport Survey which was currently open.

It was noted that the County Council had secured £1.3m of the Government's Rural Mobility Fund to introduce a 3-year pilot of a modern demand responsive transport (DRT)

service which was anticipated to start early in 2022. In response to a question from a member the Director gave reassurances that it was intended to make maximum use of Section 106 Developer Contributions to expand and promote demand responsive transport services.

The Cabinet Lead Member for Highways and Transportation praised and thanked officers for achieving such a high level of performance whilst the Authority was in receipt of low levels of funding.

RESOLVED:

That the 2020/21 Annual Performance update be noted.

22. Fuel Position Update

The Director of Environment and Transport gave a verbal update with regards to the recent fuel shortages and the impact on County Council services. It was reported that the impact had been very minor and the situation had returned to normal both locally and nationally. There were no current issues in connection with fuel shortages for Leicestershire County Council.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the update be noted.

23. Date of next meeting.

RESOLVED:

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on 20 January 2022 at 2.00pm.

2.00 - 3.20 pm
04 November 2021

CHAIRMAN

This page is intentionally left blank