



Minutes of a meeting of the Highways and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
held at County Hall, Glenfield on Thursday, 3 March 2022.

PRESENT

Mr. K. Merrie MBE CC (in the Chair)

Mr. R. G. Allen CC

Mrs. R. Page CC

Mr. D. C. Bill MBE CC

Mr. L. Phillimore CC

Mr. Max Hunt CC

Mr. C. A. Smith CC

In attendance

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

Mrs. M. Wright CC – Cabinet Support Member

35. Minutes of the previous meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2022 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

36. Question Time.

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

37. Questions asked by members.

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).

38. Urgent items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

39. Declarations of interest.

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

The Chairman declared an Other Registerable Interest in agenda item 8: 2022/23 Highways and Transportation Capital Programme and Works Programme as he was the Cabinet Lead Member for Planning at North West Leicestershire District Council. This item did not directly relate to or affect the financial or other wellbeing of that body to an extent that this prevented the Chairman from participating in the meeting.

Mr. D. C. Bill CC declared an Other Registerable Interest in agenda item 9: Major Road Network – Identification of the next priority corridor as he was the Cabinet Lead Member for Planning at Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council. This item did not directly relate

to or affect the financial or other wellbeing of that body to an extent that this prevented the Chairman from participating in the meeting.

40. Declarations of the Party Whip.

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

41. Presentation of Petitions.

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

42. 2022/23 Highways and Transportation Capital Programme and Works Programme.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Environment and Transport regarding the proposed 2022/23 Highways and Transportation Capital Programme and Works Programme and sought comments prior to these programmes being presented to Cabinet on 29 March 2022. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 8', is filed with these minutes.

Members raised concerns regarding paragraph 37 of the report which stated that the Authority's funding alone, as well as Government funding allocations, would not be sufficient to provide for all the highways and transport infrastructure and measures that would be needed to meet the requirements of the County's growing population and to fulfil the Council's wider growth agenda. In response the Director gave reassurance that some of the Capital Programme was funded by one-off Government grants for specific purposes therefore the funding for those projects would not be affected by the financial difficulties facing the Department as a whole. However, it was acknowledged that there was a shortage of revenue funding and difficult decisions would need to be made on where funding was most needed. Members asked for their concern regarding this issue to be drawn to the attention of Cabinet.

In response to a question from the Chairman, the Director confirmed that a report would be taken to the Cabinet meeting on 29 March 2022 requesting permission to submit a planning application for the extension of the Bardon Link Road which was an element of the A511 Growth Corridor Scheme. Should Cabinet give its permission the planning application would be submitted in April 2022.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the proposed 2022/23 Highways and Transportation Capital Programme and Works Programme be noted;
- (b) That the comments now made be forwarded for consideration by Cabinet at its meeting on 29 March 2022 including the concerns regarding funding for Highways infrastructure.

43. Major Road Network - Identification of the next priority corridor.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Environment and Transport relating to the study work carried out to identify the County Council's next priority Major Road

Network (MRN) corridor and proposing that the A6 North (N) corridor between the Leicester boundary and Kegworth (including A6004/Epinal Way in Loughborough), be the County Council's next priority MRN corridor. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 9', is filed with these minutes.

In presenting the report the Director explained that Major Road Network schemes were required to have a minimum of 15% match (non-government) funding which could come from developer contributions or the County Council. It was also emphasised that the proposal that the A6 North (N) corridor between the Leicester boundary and Kegworth (including A6004/Epinal Way in Loughborough), be the County Council's next priority MRN corridor did not imply that other roads in the County did not have challenges. The A6 north/A6004 route had come top of the scoring table which meant that it best fit the criteria set by Midlands Connect for priority Major Road Network corridors.

The Committee was in receipt of written representations from Dr. R. K. A Feltham CC and Mr. P. King CC which raised concerns that the A6 South had been classified as very low priority for any improvements and as inter-urban and requested the Committee ask for the A6 South to be re-assessed using updated annual average daily traffic flow (AADF) measurements and considering air pollution. Copies of the representations from Dr Feltham and Mr King are also filed with these minutes. It was noted that Cllr. Simon Whelband, Harborough District Council, representing the Kibworths Ward had written to the Committee in support of the representations. In response the Committee had received a written explanation from the Director of Environment and Transport which clarified that the study work had covered traffic issues and air quality. The Director further clarified that any reassessment of the A6 South route would yield the same results therefore there was no benefit in carrying out a further assessment. The Committee agreed with this view and supported the proposals within the report.

Mr. M. J. Hunt CC asked for it to be recorded that he was against the majority view of the Committee. He believed that the proposals would result in increased traffic through the centre of Loughborough and insufficient regard had been given to alternative routes. Mr. Hunt stated that he was in support of the representations from Dr. Feltham and Mr King and he believed it was worth carrying out a reassessment of the A6 South route.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the proposal for the County Council's next priority Major Road Network corridor to be the A6 North (N) corridor between the Leicester boundary and Kegworth (including A6004/Epinal Way in Loughborough) be supported.
- (b) That the comments now made be forwarded for consideration by Cabinet at its meeting on 26 April 2022.

44. Highways Initiative - Delivering for Parishes and Communities.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Environment and Transport which provided an update on the Highways Initiative – Delivering for Parishes and Communities. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 10', is filed with these minutes.

Concerns were raised that areas of the County which did not have Parish Councils were at a disadvantage because they did not have a formal group to represent them which made it difficult them to compete for funding and take part in consultations. Parished areas also had the ability to raise money via a Precept which could be used to top up

schemes funded by the County Council whereas non-parished areas did not have this ability. It was noted that non-parished areas had the lowest car usage. In response the Director acknowledged the concerns and reassured that the Department was continuing to consider how it could better work with non-parished areas but noted that core highways funding was allocated according to need based on evidence rather than whether an area was parished or not.

RESOLVED:

That the update on the Highways Initiative – Delivering for Parishes and Communities be noted.

45. Road Casualty Reduction in Leicestershire.

The Board considered a report of the Director of Environment and Transport which provided an update on road casualties in Leicestershire. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 11', is filed with these minutes.

The Board also received a presentation from Graham Compton, Road Safety Officer, Leicestershire Police on the approach of the Force to Road Safety.

Arising from discussions the following points were noted:

- (i) Improved design of vehicles with regards to safety had played a significant role in the reduction in road casualties.
- (ii) Whilst the Covid-19 pandemic had resulted in less vehicles on the roads which had helped reduce the overall casualty rate, the lack of cars on the road had encouraged some vehicles to drive at higher speeds and therefore there had been more casualties as a result of high speed incidents.
- (iii) There were still a number of drivers not wearing seatbelts which meant that minor road incidents often resulted in more serious injuries. Publicity campaigns regarding wearing seatbelts were required.
- (iv) In response to a query as to whether the road casualty statistics took into account the population growth in Leicestershire the Director of Environment and Transport agreed to give this issue further consideration.
- (v) Members raised concerns about accidents being caused by electric vehicles due to pedestrians/cyclists not being able to hear them coming and asked for future reports to contain a breakdown of how many accidents involved electric vehicles.
- (vi) It was illegal to use e-scooters on public roads or pavements unless as part of a government-backed rental trial scheme and none of these schemes were in Leicestershire. Should Leicestershire Police encounter an e-scooter on a public road for the first time the owner would receive a warning and for any subsequent incidents the e-scooter would be confiscated by the Police.
- (vii) A member raised concerns regarding the increase in casualties for pedal cyclists and noted that by encouraging the public to use bikes rather than cars there was a risk that there would be more casualties involving cyclists. In response the Director

referred to the Road Safety Initiatives set out in Appendix C of the report, emphasised the partnership working that was taking place with Leicestershire Police and reassured that road traffic incidents involving cyclists were analysed by the County Council to see if there was any learning that could be gained from them. It was also noted that recent changes to the Highway Code could have a positive impact for cyclists.

- (viii) Members welcomed the report and stated that it provided very useful information. However, due to the report's length it was suggested that future iterations could focus on a smaller number of key issues in relation to road casualties. Members asked for more data on cyclists but also recognised that a balance had to be struck with regards to the content and length of the report.

RESOLVED:

That the update on road casualty reduction in Leicestershire be noted.

46. Highways and Transport Performance report to December 2021.

The Board considered a report of the Director of Environment and Transport which provided an update on the key performance indicators that the Council was responsible for within its Strategic Plan covering Highways and Transport Services to December 2021- Quarter 3. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 12', is filed with these minutes.

It was noted that 'Overall satisfaction with the Rights of Way Network' had decreased and it was suggested that this could be due to more people using Rights of Way during the Covid-19 pandemic and noticing issues.

RESOLVED:

That the update on the key performance indicators be noted.

47. Date of next meeting.

RESOLVED:

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on 9 June 2022 at 2.00pm.

2.00 - 3.50 pm
03 March 2022

CHAIRMAN

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