



Minutes of a meeting of the Highways and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee. held at County Hall, Glenfield on Thursday, 26 January 2023.

PRESENT

Mr. K. Merrie CC (in the Chair)

Mr. R. G. Allen CC
Mr. D. C. Bill MBE CC
Mrs. A. J. Hack CC

Mr. B. Lovegrove
Mr. L. Phillimore CC
Mr. C. Smith CC

Apologies

Mr. T. Gillard. Mr Smith was present as substitute for Mr Gillard.
Mrs. M. Wright CC – Cabinet Support Member

In attendance

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

33. Minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd November 2022 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

34. Question Time.

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

35. Questions asked by members under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).

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

36. To advise of any other items which the Chairman has decided to take as urgent elsewhere on the agenda.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

37. 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. L Phillimore CC declared a Non-Registrable Interest in agenda item 11: Special Educational Needs School Transport Service – Update as his wife was employed by the County Council in Special Educational Needs. This item did not directly relate to

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

38. Declarations of the Party Whip in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16.

There were no declarations of the party whip.

39. Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 35.

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

40. Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023/24 - 2026/27

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director of Environment and Transport and the Director of Corporate Resources which provided information on the proposed 2023/24 to 2026/27 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as it related to the Highways and Transport side of the Environment and Transport department. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item '8' is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed Mr. O. O'Shea CC, Cabinet Lead Member for Highways and Transport, to the meeting for this item.

Arising from discussion, the following points were noted:

Growth

i) G9 – SEN Transport

The growth in demand for SEN transport had risen by some 12% in the last financial year and the projections were that there would be continued growth in the coming years. The investment by the County Council in new SEN places would assist in reducing costs. The Department was also looking at how costs could be better managed, and this would be reflected in the savings requirement 'Lean Review of SEN Transport (ET3)'.

The key drivers for the increased costs were attributable to:

- The increasing number of children with Education Care and Health Plans who were eligible for SEN transport. This was a national trend.
- There was an increasing number of pupils with severe and complex needs.
- The cost pressures facing transport providers arising from increased fuel and staffing costs.
- The recent trend of taxi contracts being handed back and these having to be recommissioned at a higher cost.

Savings

ii) ET 7 – Park and Ride

This service was run jointly with Leicester City Council. Work was underway to look at various options to deliver this saving and detailed reports would be submitted to members prior to implementation. There will be ongoing collaboration with the City Council throughout this process.

iii) ET 9 – Community Speed Cameras

The existing 7 cameras have been in operation for some years now and it would be difficult and costly to re-use these at other sites. Members were reminded that the Council had lobbied but failed to convince the Government to allow it to retain a proportion of the fines which would have enabled the Council to expand the scheme. The Director also undertook to provide members with the location of the 7 existing cameras sites.

Capital Programme

- iv) A511 – Members were advised that to an accounting technicality this scheme was not deemed to have “secured” funding and therefore was not included in the report, but that work was on-going on the scheme.
- v) DfT funding for major projects. The concerns expressed by members about the sufficiency of funding that had been allocated to schemes such as the Melton Mowbray Distributor Road some years ago was acknowledged. Members were advised that despite representations to the Department for Transport (DfT) no additional resources were offered. The bidding process limited how much the Council could include in the Outline Business Case to reflected potential increase in cost over the lifetime of the project.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report and information now provided be noted;
- (b) That the comments now made be forwarded to the Scrutiny Commission for consideration at its meeting on 30 January 2023.

41. Leicestershire Highway Design Guide Full Refresh - Policy, Principles and Engagement

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Environment and Transport the purpose of which was to seek comments from the Highways and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Leicestershire Highways Design Guide (LHDG) Full Refresh work undertaken to date. A copy of the report, marked ‘Agenda Item 9’, is filed with these minutes.

During consideration of the report, the following points were noted:

- i) In response to a question as to whether the workload involved in reviewing the LHDG could be shared between authorities, members were advised that the previous document was the 6C’s Design Guide covering six authorities. However, County Council had wanted some autonomy over decisions, for example, active travel and public transport, to reflect different priorities for the area.

- ii) Members suggested the use of Section 106 monies and commuted sums should be maximised and funds should be used where needed, not necessarily where the built development was.
- iii) Concerns were raised that new build roads were too narrow, there were issues with pavement parking causing obstructions and destruction of grass verges, and that on some estates, footpaths were being designed out. Officers acknowledged these as valid comments and agreed to consider them in the next iteration of the new guide.
- iv) With regard to those who had permitted development rights the guidance would be amended to ask them to have regard to the walking and cycling infrastructure, and guidance would also be provided to planning authorities.
- v) Members commented about there being no defined minimum specification for garages, with the definition in the guide being a parking space which dated back to 1973. It was suggested minimum dimensions be included in designs sufficient to accommodate cars which had changed in size over the years.
- vi) Members noted that the design guide should cover all street furniture, including of the location of 5G masts to ensure they did not cause obstruction on highways.
- vii) In terms of unadopted roads, it was noted that the onus was on the home purchaser to ensure they had received appropriate legal advice and were aware of the implications. The concerns raised about commercial traffic using roads that had been primarily designed for residential users only was noted.
- viii) Members asked that developers be encouraged to use as much of the carbon capture technologies available, such as advanced concrete methodology to capture carbon.

RESOLVED:

That the review of the Leicestershire Highway Design Guide (LHDG), the commuted sums scenario testing and the proposed engagement and consultation activities be noted.

42. Progress Review of Flooding Scrutiny Review Panel

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Environment and Transport which was the second annual report from the Flooding Scrutiny Review Panel, the purpose of which was to update the Highways and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the progress made and work undertaken towards the approved recommendations of the January 2021 Scrutiny Review Panel report since the first annual report was presented on 20 January 2022. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 10', is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion the following points were noted:

- i) In response to a question from Members with reference to paragraph 9, table (v) Flood Plans, a written detailed update on timescales would be provided to Members following the meeting.
- ii) Members were advised that the Flood Risk Management Board had been reconvened to respond to recent flooding events and that Leicester City Council was a partner in the Board.

The Committee were in agreement that updates would no longer be provided to the meeting as a matter of routine but would receive items on request or when necessary.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee note the update provided and agreed the proposed approach for future reporting arrangements.

43. Special Educational Needs School Transport Service - Update

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Environment and Transport, the purpose of which was to provide the Highways and Transport Overview Scrutiny Committee with an update on progress regarding the Special Education Needs (SEN) transport for the academic year 2022/23 since the previous report in June 2022. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 11', is filed with these minutes.

During discussion the following points arose:

- i) Members noted that the demand on SEN transport would increase and supported the proposal to use larger vehicles for those children capable of travelling on bigger vehicles.
- ii) It was noted that the transport for individuals fell under government legislation and the Council was duty bound to provide transport for eligible students. However, the Council did encourage self-help and the use of Personal Transport Budgets (PTBs) which had helped in relieving some of the financial pressure. It was further reported that for post-16 students personal travel budgets were provided as default.
- iii) As part of the management of growth work was undertaken to increase awareness of personal travel budgets including good news stories of people who had PTBs in place.
- iv) With regard to the large turnover of transport providers concerns were raised regarding the safety of the most vulnerable children. Officers advised there were rigorous risk assessments carried out ensure that their needs were met.
- v) Members noted that the legislation around school transport was complex and the Council had responsibility to provide transport for those up to the age of 16 and thereafter to eligible students aged 19 to 25. The gap in legislation covering 16 to 18 years was noted.

RESOLVED:

That the update on progress regarding Special Educational Needs (SEN) transport for the academic year 2022/23 be noted.

44. Date of next meeting.

RESOLVED:

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

2.00pm – 3.53pm
26 January 2023

CHAIRMAN