

Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny Commission held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday, 27 February 2013.

PRESENT

Mr. S. J. Galton CC (in the Chair)

Mr. G. A. Boulter CC
Mrs. R. Camamile CC
Dr. R. K. A. Feltham CC
Mr. G. A. Hart CC
Dr. S. Hill CC
Mr. D. Jennings CC

Mr. W. Liquorish JP CC
Ms. Betty Newton CC
Mrs. R. Page CC
Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC
Mr. E. D. Snartt CC

331. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 31 January were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

332. Question Time.

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

333. Questions asked by members.

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

334. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

335. 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.

No declarations were made.

336. Declarations of the Party Whip.

There were no declarations of the party whip.

337. Presentation of Petitions.

The Chief Executive reported that no petitions had been received under Standing Order 36.

338. Local Transport Bodies and the Devolution of Funding for Major Transport Schemes.

The Commission considered a report of the Director of Environment and Transport concerning the progress being made in setting up a Local Transport Body (LTB) for Leicester and Leicestershire as a consequence of the Government's devolution of major transport scheme funding to local highway authorities. A copy of the report, marked 'B', is filed with these minutes.

Prior to discussion, the Director of Environment and Transport clarified the following points for the benefit of the Commission:

- The new system for allocating funding for major transport schemes as set out by the Department for Transport was overly prescriptive and took away some control from local authorities. This issue had been questioned by some local authorities. The Council would be submitting its draft response to the proposals on 28 February in collaboration with the City Council and the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP), who would each be represented on a new "Leicester and Leicestershire Transport Board" (LLTB);
- The LLTB would be made up of one voting member each from the City Council, the County Council and the LLEP. The member from the LLEP should not be an elected representative, in order to comply with the rules of representation set out by the Government. The Board would be supported by officers of both the City and County Councils;
- It was felt that Overview and Scrutiny had a key role to play in ensuring the accountability of the LLTB. More would become known about this role as the plans evolved. The City Council would be acting as the "accountable body" and all information pertaining to the operations of the LLTB would be transparent;
- The viability of major schemes would be based on economic benefit and value for money. It would be for the LLTB to make decisions on how to allocate the funding based on the evidence provided by officers;
- It was expected that there would be in the region of £24 million available to the County and City over the period 2015-2019.

Arising from the debate, the following points were noted:

- Following briefings from government about the likely availability of capital finance, there were no major schemes currently in the planning stages. The cost threshold for projects had up until now been £5 million. The Government's change in direction was a marked departure from previous guidance and the Council would be working with the City Council and the LLEP to develop a ranked list of major projects to benefit both areas;
- The ranked list would be projected to 2019 and would be submitted to both Councils' Cabinets and then Government in July 2013. There would be an opportunity for the Commission to scrutinise the proposals prior to

submission;

- It was important to note that projects earmarked for this funding were not likely to be schemes such as bypasses, as these were too costly compared with the benefits they might bring. It would be important for the LLTB to focus on achievable projects within the context of the likely funding allocation;
- It would be possible to fund projects with the aid of the Community Infrastructure Levy and other pots of funding, for instance the Growing Places Fund. It was hoped that the LLEP would be able to provide insight in this regard and open up the possibility for joint-funded projects;
- Although the district councils were not represented on the LLTB, they would have a voice on all proposals as the Local Planning Authorities;
- Both the City Council and the County Council were signed up to the use of the Leicester and Leicestershire Integrated Transport Model. This would be the sole vehicle through which the potential projects would be screened;
- It was acknowledged that there was a danger under the new arrangements that the collective impact of a series of smaller schemes might be get lost amongst the search for single major schemes. The Council was already looking at alternative funding avenues for such projects and more would be known about these in due course.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be noted and that the Commission be informed of progress made with the prioritised list of schemes prior to its submission to the Department for Transport in July.

339. Second Refresh of the Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) Implementation Plan (2011 - 2014).

The Commission considered a report of the Director of Environment and Transport concerning a progress update on the implementation of the Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) and seeking comments on the refresh of the Implementation Plan for 2011-2014. A copy of the report, marked 'C', is filed with these minutes.

Following circulation of the agenda, a copy of the latest working copy of the LTP3 Implementation Plan 2011-2014 was circulated to members. A copy of this document, marked 'CC', is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the debate, the following points were noted:

- Work was ongoing with district councils to ensure highway input into Core Strategies;
- The Council was in active dialogue with the Highways Agency with regard to the planned improvements to the strategic road network at Junction 19 of the M1. The project had experienced significant delays, due in the most

part to changes to the design in the light of financial constraints. The County Council remained supportive of the project and it was hoped that work could commence as soon as possible;

- The progress of work to deliver “smart ticketing” back to bus services in the County was dependant on the County Council gaining access to the ticketing data held by bus companies. It was hoped that this service would be delivered on the back of the A426 Bus Corridor project;
- The use of “quiet road surfaces” was primarily dependant on value for money and the speed of traffic on the road in question. The noise pollution benefits from utilising this type of surface were only harnessed to any worthwhile extent when cars travelled at greater speeds. The fact that this surface tended to be less durable and therefore required more regular maintenance meant it was hard to make a value for money case for its use in the present financial climate;
- Reducing the Impact of Traffic or “RIOT” schemes were very costly to operate and there had been limited road safety benefits. It was acknowledged that, despite their limited impact, they had provided residents with a level of reassurance;
- Works to improve the condition of byways would now be funded through revenue budget. Previously, there had been a nominal capital budget allocated to these works. It was noted that works to byways would be carried out only where there was a clear justification and a value for money case had been made.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the draft proposals for the second refresh of the Implementation Plan for Local Transport Plan 3 be noted;
- (b) That the work to continue to refine the draft proposals prior to publication in early April 2013 be noted; and
- (c) That the comments as set out above be submitted to the Cabinet for consideration at its meeting on 6 March.

340. Date of next meeting.

It was NOTED that the next meeting of the Commission would be held on 27 March at 2.00pm.

2.00 pm - 3.30 pm
27 February 2013

CHAIRMAN