

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Highways and Transport Committee**
held on Thursday, 26th January, 2023 in the The Capesthorpe Room - Town
Hall, Macclesfield SK10 1EA

PRESENT

Councillor C Browne (Chair)
Councillor L Crane (Vice-Chair)

Councillors S Akers Smith, L Braithwaite, H Faddes, A Gage, I Macfarlane,
C Naismith, M Sewart, D Stockton, P Williams, S Holland and L Smetham

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Tom Moody, Director of Highways and Infrastructure
Mike Barnett, Head of Highways
Richard Hibbert, Head of Strategic Transport and Parking
Mandy Withington, Principal Lawyer
Samantha Oakden, Principal Accountant
Wendy Broadhurst, Lead Finance Partner
Paul Mountford, Democratic Services Officer
Nikki Bishop, Democratic Services Officer

The Chair referred to the recent sad death of Councillor Steve Carter.
Committee Members observed a minute's silent reflection in tribute.

The Chair welcomed Mike Barnett, newly appointed Head of Highways, to his
first Highways and Transport Committee meeting.

The Chair advised that item 11 – Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2023-27
would be considered after item 4 – Public Speaking/Open Session.

39 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Les Gilbert and
Councillor Mike Benson. Councillor Sally Holland and Councillor Lesley
Smetham attended as substitutes.

40 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Sally Holland declared an interest in an item on the agenda
relating to the minutes of the Public Rights of Way Committee. Councillor
Holland confirmed that she was an acquaintance of Mrs Andrea Bossen.

In relation to the agenda item on the Congleton Greenway – River Dane Bridge and Multi-user path, Councillor Suzie Akers-Smith, in the interest of openness, declared that she was the Cheshire East Cycling and Walking Champion.

41 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was requested that the minutes of the previous meeting be amended to reflect Councillor Phil Williams' attendance at the meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2022 be approved as a correct record, subject to the above amendment.

42 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

Sue Helliwell attended the Committee Meeting to make a statement in relation to item 5 – Notice of Motion: Criteria for the installation of Zebra Crossings and Light Controlled Crossings, on behalf Sarah Bradley, a member of a Facebook Group called The Hill Crossing Campaign. Ms Helliwell stated that the original campaign in 2018 for a crossing on the A533, The Hill, Sandbach was turned down as there was no private or public funding available, and the footfall criteria had not been met. There was a petition with over 1,500 signatures in support of the campaign and Sandbach Town Council had given their unanimous support.

Stuart Redgard attended the Committee Meeting to make a statement in relation to item 10 – Highways and Infrastructure: Mid-Year Performance Review. Mr Redgard outlined his concerns relating to the performance of the Highways and Infrastructure department. Cllr Browne undertook to ensure that a formal written response would be sent to the issues raised.

43 MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2023-27 CONSULTATION

The Committee received a report on the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2023-2027 and the revenue and capital proposals contained within the MTFS relating to the Committee's responsibilities. As part of the consultation process the Committee was asked to consider the proposals within the remit of the Committee and provide comments and feedback to the Corporate Policy Committee for consideration on, 9 February 2023, before a balanced budget was presented to the full Council meeting of 22 February 2023 for final review and approval.

The following comments were raised by Committee:

- Members raised concerns around the consultation process and that Committee Members had not been involved in the drawing up of the proposals before them in the report. Committee Members requested

to receive the background information (High Level Business Cases – ‘HLBCs’) supporting the proposals as soon as possible.

Tom Moody advised that HLBCs would be presented to the Corporate Policy Committee on 9 February and agreed to explore when it would be feasible to share this information with Committee Members.

- Proposal 108: Parking – Members highlighted that any increase in the current parking charges would have a detrimental impact on town centre recovery, local businesses and residents. Members felt that the current car park charging policy was unfair and there needed to be a consistent and fair policy across the borough. Members queried when the expansion of car park charging to other towns would be considered at Committee and if guidance would be provided to Members to gauge satisfaction with residents.

The Chair confirmed that car parking proposals were due to be considered at the first Highways and Transport Committee meeting scheduled for the new municipal year.

- Proposal 105: Energy saving measures from streetlights - Members raised concerns around the potential public safety implications as a result of switching off streetlights. Members also queried if there were likely to be costs incurred as a result of handling an increase of calls reporting broken streetlights. It was suggested that those streetlights purposefully switched off are clearly marked to avoid this. It was asked if there was a way of targeting any reduction of lighting to areas where there may be ecological benefit to do so.

Cllr Smetham suggested that streetlighting in critical and problematic areas could continue but queried what the significant difference between rural and urban areas was. Mike Barnett committed to providing a more detailed response on the criteria for installing streetlighting in urban/rural areas.

- Members agreed that some of the proposals were unpalatable but recognised the extremely difficult financial situation facing the Council.

RESOLVED (by majority):

1) That the Committee notes:

- a) the year-end forecast outturn position for 2022/23, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.
- b) the financial context and proposals contained within the Executive Summary of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (as set out in the MFTS report at Annex C, Section 1).
- c) the Revenue Grant Funding, as set out in Appendix 4 to the report.

- d) the Earmarked Reserves, as set out in Appendix 5 to the report.
- 2) The Committee feedback be noted on the proposals within the MTFs, as related to the Committee's responsibilities, that can support and advise full Council in fulfilling its responsibilities to approve a balanced budget for 2023/23 in the following areas:
 - a) Revenue Proposals, as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report
 - b) Capital Programme, as detailed in Appendix 3 to the report.

44 NOTICE OF MOTION: CRITERIA FOR THE INSTALLATION OF ZEBRA CROSSINGS AND LIGHT CONTROLLED CROSSINGS

The Committee considered the report in response to a Notice of Motion put to Full Council in October 2022.

The motion, which had been proposed by Cllr Suzie Akers-Smith and seconded by Cllr Lata Anderson, proposed that 'a report be prepared for the relevant Committee which will enable the Council to review the criteria for traffic light timings and to review the criteria for the installation of zebra crossings and light controlled crossings with the ambition to installing more each year'.

The report outlined proposals to review the Council's current Pedestrian Crossing Policy, with an exercise to be undertaken to engage with identified stakeholders to develop an approach to the provision of controlled and uncontrolled pedestrian crossing facilities that considers pent-up pedestrian demand.

Members requested that the policy review:

- further explores different types of zebra crossings and crossing points at junctions of roundabouts.
- consider alternative interventions to pedestrian crossings and how these could be achieved.
- review the condition of road surfaces at pedestrian crossings.
- develop a 'Frequently Asked Questions' document for members setting out the criteria for pedestrian crossings to be developed.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the Committee endorses the proposed response to the Notice of Motion with a review to be undertaken to the Council's approach to:

- a) Traffic signal timings.
- b) The criteria for the installation of zebra crossings and light controlled crossings.

with the aim of updating the existing policy.

45 **NOTICE OF MOTION: SAFE NIGHT-TIME TRAVEL FOR WORKERS**

The Committee considered a report in response to a Notice of Motion put to Full Council in October 2022. The motion, which had been proposed by Cllr Laura Smith and seconded by Cllr Sally Handley, proposed a number of actions to improve night-time travel for workers.

Councillor Laura Smith, who addressed the Committee as the proposer of the Notice of Motion, encouraged Committee Members to consider introducing workable solutions to ensure safe night-time transport was available whilst working with those delivering transportation to deliver a number of key priorities outlined within the Notice of Motion.

It was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved subject to the deletion of recommendation 3.2.3 and the insertion of an alternative recommendation that ‘the Council continue to consider municipal ownership of buses in Cheshire East in the future’.

The motion was carried by majority.

RESOLVED (by majority):

That the Highways and Transport Committee agrees:

1. To endorse the proposed response to the Notice of Motion, which would be made available on the Council’s Highways and Transport webpages.
2. That the Council continue to engage with local bus operators through its Enhanced Partnership arrangements acknowledging that any consideration of improved evening and late-night services on the local bus network would be dependent on central government funding, such as the Government’s Safety of Women at Night Fund, being made available to provide financial support.
3. That the Council continue to engage with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority to ensure their plans for bus franchising protect cross boundary bus services.
4. That the Council continue to consider municipal ownership of buses in Cheshire East in the future.

Note: Councillor Mike Sewart left the meeting at this point.

46 **HIGHWAY ASSET MANAGEMENT POLICY, PLAN AND STRATEGIES**

Consideration was given to a number of new and updated strategies and plans which would enable the further application of high-quality asset management principles and the promotion of safety in the stewardship of the Borough’s highway network.

It was highlighted to members that failure to operate the Asset Management Principles would risk a reduction of c.£1.45m funding. Taking a 'worst first approach' would see the overall condition of the highway network deteriorate and risks on the network unmitigated. The Chair suggested that the Council needed to do more to communicate this with residents.

Councillor Laura Crane queried when the Inspection Code of Practice Policy would be brought forward for consideration at Committee. Officers committed to provide a written response to clarify timescales.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That

1. The updated Highway Asset Management Policy 2023 be adopted as policy and subsequently implemented operationally.
2. The updated Highway Asset Management Strategy 2023 be adopted as policy and subsequently implemented operationally.
3. The new Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan 2023 be adopted as policy and subsequently implemented operationally.
4. The updated Cheshire East Resilient Highway Network Plan 2023 be adopted as policy and subsequently implemented operationally.
5. The updated Highway Safety Inspection Code of Practice be adopted as policy and subsequently implemented operationally.
6. Authority be delegated to the Director of Highways and Infrastructure to make technical amendments to the Highway Asset Management Policy, the Highway Asset Management Strategy, Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan, Resilient Highway Network Plan and the Highway Safety Inspection Code of Practice as required and to update the Highways and Transport Committee on any significant changes at a future meeting.
7. Authority be delegated to the Head of Highways to make and approve amendments to the Asset life cycle plans and life cycle plan summaries.

47 THE CONGLETON GREENWAY - RIVER DANE BRIDGE AND MULTI-USER PATH

Consideration was given to the report which set out the feasibility work undertaken to date by the Council to deliver a new pedestrian and cycle bridge over the River Dane, Congleton. The report provided an update on the estimated costs, funding assumptions and constraints of delivering a new pedestrian and cycle bridge crossing of the river Dane. The report

sought approval to put on hold any immediate plans to develop this Scheme and to continue to investigate future funding options.

Members requested:

1. Assurance that developer contributions that already exist and those that come forward in the future are ring-fenced for the project.
2. A future update is provided to the Committee on the funding position going forward.

RESOLVED (by majority):

1. Highways and Transport Committee approve that further project development of the Scheme is put on hold until a viable delivery strategy for the Scheme is established.
2. Highways and Transport Committee notes that:
 - a. A further report will be brought back to Committee to decide on the future of the Scheme if a viable delivery strategy can be established.
 - b. A planning obligation associated with a development on the western side of the river will provide the Connecting Route between the Scheme and the western side of the river as per the planning conditions associated with Planning consent 20/5760C.
 - c. That the Connecting Route cannot be constructed to a fully accessible standard, be provided with Street Lighting, or meet the current requirements for Cycling Infrastructure as defined in national guidelines.
 - d. The latest delivery cost estimate at this stage of development for the Scheme is now £5.3M, including an allowance for inflation, at an expected construction date of 2026.
 - e. That this revised cost envelope means that the Scheme is now not able to be funded through the Council's own local resources (including developer contributions) and that funding would now need to include an external funding contribution.

Councillor Suzie Akers-Smith left the meeting at this point.

48 IT'S NOT JUST WATER - OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee considered a report which provided a response to the report of the former Environment and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny (EROSC) Committee's Working Group – "It's Not Just Water".

Councillor Tony Dean attended Committee on behalf of the Flooding Working Group which produced the report and recommendations “It’s Not Just Water”.

The Committee thanked the Working Group for their time and effort on this important matter.

An amendment was proposed and seconded and subsequently carried which sought agreement to include the Working Group’s recommendation (4) “MPs should be lobbied to bring about change to national flood funding” to the officer report recommendations.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the Committee:

1. Approves Officer Recommendation Responses 1 and 2 contained in section 5 of this report in order that they can be implemented operationally, the officer recommendations are:

- Officer Recommendation 1 Response – Governance and Democracy

That the oversight of the LLFA statutory function is retained with the Highways and Transport Committee in line with the current Constitution.

- Officer Recommendation 2 Response – Delivery of the LLFA Function

To retain the current outsourced arrangement for the Flood Risk Management / LLFA delivery function.

Create a standalone LLFA delivery team initially from existing staff resource within the Cheshire East Highways (Ringway Jacobs) organisational structure which for all operational and decision-making matters relating to flood risk management reports directly to the Council’s Head of Highways.

Implement a succinct set of key performance indicators (KPIs) specifically for the delivery of the LLFA function picking up on the key aspects of the Working Groups concerns.

Flood Risk Management / LLFA specific Key Performance Indicators to be reported to the Highways and Transport Committee as part of the bi-annual reports on the performance of the Highways and Infrastructure division.

2. Approves officer responses 3, 4 and 5 to not implement the Working Group Recommendations 3, and 5 detailed in section 5 of this report at the current time given the costs are not within the current Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).
3. Agrees to implement the Working Group Recommendation 4 - to lobby MPs to bring about change to national flood funding.

49 **HIGHWAYS AND INFRASTRUCTURE: MID-YEAR PERFORMANCE REVIEW**

The Committee considered a report which provided an overview on performance across Infrastructure and Highways Services for the first half of 2022-23.

The Committee placed on record their thanks to all staff across the Infrastructure and Highways Service for their continued hard work.

Councillor Naismith fed back what an excellent reporting mechanism the 'Fix My Street' was. Queries were raised around possible technical faults with automated responses being incorrectly sent. Officers committed to investigate this further.

Councillor Holland queried progress on the installation of street lighting on the Congleton Link Road and requested that an update be provided to members of the public to highlight that this was not a design fault. Officers undertook to investigate and provide a response.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee notes the performance of the Infrastructure and Highways Service for the first half of 2022-23 and the ongoing work of the Highways Service to support the delivery of the Council's Brighter Future Customer Strategy.

50 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee received an update on the Work Programme. It was noted that:

- An item on 'Highways and Transport 2023-24 Programme' had been added to the Work Programme for consideration in March.
- The 'Flowerpot Junction Improvement Scheme' item had been rescheduled for consideration at Committee in March.

Members requested an update on:

- Crewe North-West Package and the closure of Middlewich Road.
- Congleton Link-Road temporary 40mph restriction.

Officers committed to take the requests away for consideration.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme be noted.

51 **MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Public Rights of Way Committee held on 5 December 2022 be received.

The meeting commenced at 10.30 am and concluded at 1.00 pm

Councillor C Browne (Chair)