

Environment Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Minutes of the Meeting Held on Wednesday 22 September 2010

Present:

Mr A Adams	Mr B Iles
Dr A Boswell	Mr J Joyce
Mr A Byrne (Chairman)	Mr M Langwade
Mr N Dixon	Mr B Long
Mr P Duigan	Mr P Rice
Mr T Garrod	Mr J Ward
Mr B Hannah	Mr A White
Mr M Hemsley	

Non-Voting Cabinet Member:

Mr A J Gunson	Travel and Transport
Mrs A Steward	Sustainable Development

Non-Voting Deputy Cabinet Members:

Mr B H A Spratt	Travel and Transport
Mr J Mooney	Sustainable Development

The Chairman reminded Members about the Member Development Session to be held after the meeting at 1.30pm, on Norfolk Forward – Strategic Review of Environment Transport and Development – Priority Area Training.

1. Apologies and substitutions

Apologies were received from
Mrs M Chapman-Allen (Mr T Garrod substituted),
Mr T East (Mr B Hannah substituted),
Dr M Strong (Mr P Rice substituted),
Mr R Wright
Mr G Cook.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the Environment Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 21 July 2010 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. Declarations of Interests

The following declarations of interests were received:

Mr Alec Byrne declared a personal interest as a member of the Police Authority and Chairman of the Casualty Reduction Partnership. Mr Byrne took no part in the discussion or decision made on the Future of Safety Camera Funding (Item 13).

Mr Brian Iles declared a personal interest as a member of the Police Authority.

Mr Brian Hannah declared a personal interest as a member of the Police Authority.

Mr James Joyce declared a personal interest in item 13 as a local Speed Watch Member.

4. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

5. Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

6. Local Member Issues/Member Questions

There were no Local Member issues/Member questions.

7. Cabinet Member Feedback

7.1 A joint report (7) by the Cabinet Member for Travel and Transport and the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development was received.

7.2 The Civil Parking Enforcement report considered at the Overview & Scrutiny Panel on 21 July had been presented to Cabinet at their meeting on 9 August 2010. Cabinet had agreed the recommendations set out in the report and agreed to submit a draft application to the Department of Transport for the introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement across the remainder of Norfolk outside the city of Norwich, based on the operation models which had been agreed with each district council. The draft application was likely to be submitted by the end of September, with the likely date for implementation being Autumn 2011.

7.3 Members noted that no further progress had been made in encouraging Norwich City Football Club to contribute to the costs of civil parking enforcement. The Director of Environment Transport and Development would update Members when there was anything further to report.

Scrutiny Items

8. Broadband and Mobile Phone Coverage in Norfolk

- 8.1 The annexed report (8) by the Chairman of the Scrutiny Working Group was received and introduced by Philip Duigan, the Chairman of the Working Group, the Head of ICT and the Economic Development Manager.
- 8.2 Mr Duigan informed Members that a very successful public meeting had taken place at the end of July which had further raised the profile of broadband and mobile phone problems in Norfolk.
- 8.3 A meeting with the Retail Head of BT had taken place on 21 September and the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development had offered to accompany him on a visit around Norfolk to show him where the problems were and the types of issues faced by the people of Norfolk.
- 8.4 Mr Duigan thanked Laura Childs for all her work on the Broadband Working Group.
- 8.5 Bids to EEDA and Broadband Delivery UK had been submitted to try to get funding for rural broadband projects. It was hoped the outcome of these bids would be received in the next couple of months. Members were reassured that the bids contained evidence of social exclusion and deprivation in Norfolk.
- 8.6 Members were asked to consider and further comment on progress with the Broadband and mobile phone coverage scrutiny.
- 8.7 During Member questions, the following points were noted:
- The latest television sets are often broadband enabled, but services could only be enjoyed if a reasonable broadband speed was available. Members felt this was a further argument for upgrading the network which would also provide financial benefits to the providers.
 - Norfolk County Council had worked hard to try to find solutions to all the Broadband and mobile phone issues raised. The broadband “not spots” in Norfolk were considered to be the highest priority.
 - All nine Members of Parliament supported the need for better broadband capacity and raised the issue in Parliament at every opportunity.
 - Although broadband coverage had been mapped, it would be difficult to map mobile phone coverage throughout Norfolk, to highlight areas of genuine need, as coverage was not static.

- A pilot project had been agreed to explore the possibility of providing broadband in “not spot” areas using a local school’s ICT capacity and wireless technology over a 450m radius of the school. The pilot would take place in West Dereham and would provide wireless access to the internet for local residents.
- Members were reassured that everything possible was being done to improve broadband coverage in Norfolk for everyone.

RESOLVED

The Panel noted the report and the progress made with the broadband and mobile phone coverage in Norfolk.

9 Forward Work Programme Overview and Scrutiny

- 9.1 The annexed report (9) by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development was received and introduced by Sarah Rhoden, Support Manager, ETD.
- 9.2 Members were asked to consider which items they wanted to progress on the forward work programme and whether they wished to invite the Environment Agency to the next Panel meeting to demonstrate the warning messages used by Flood Warning Direct (FWD).
- 9.3 Members agreed that it was vitally important to publicise the Flood Warning Direct service and that the Environment Agency should be invited to bring a demonstration to the Panel meeting in November.

RESOLVED

- 9.4 To invite the Environment Agency to demonstrate the Flood Warning Direct messages to the meeting in November, and to note the report.

Items for Review

10. Environment, Transport and Development Department Integrated Performance and Finance Outturn Report 2010/11.

- 10.1 The annexed report (10) by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development was received and introduced by the Finance Manager and the Planning, Performance and Partnerships Manager.
- 10.2 The report provided an update of the latest progress made against the 2010-13 service plan actions, risks and finances for Environment, Transport and Development (ETD).
- 10.3 Members were asked to comment on the progress against Environment Transport and Development’s service plan actions, risks and budget and consider whether any aspects should be identified for further scrutiny.

10.4 The following points were noted following Member questions:

- The Future Jobs Fund (FJF) had now ceased. This fund had been used to try to get people back into the working environment. The current reserves would be used by the end of this financial year and no further funding would be made available.
- Members noted that the National Indicators had been imposed by the previous Government and the suite of strategic indicators were being reviewed which meant some of those currently reported may be dropped.
- NI 194 – Air quality - % reduction in NOx and primary PM10 emissions through local authority's estate and operations. Processes were in place to formulate systems for recording air quality.
- NI 157 – Processing of Planning Applications within 13 weeks. The ETD Strategic Review was looking at improvements in this area and a BPR project had also started to look at the application process to see how it could be improved.
- NI 185 – CO2 reduction from local authority operations. The Director of ETD would check why no information was included in this report as the information should be available. The latest carbon mediation report would be presented to Cabinet in October.
- NI 186 – Per capita reduction in CO2 emissions in the LA area. Officers were asked to check why there was no information shown for this target as the target covered the period from 2008/2011.
- Members requested an extra column on future reports showing when targets would be assigned and an indication of which ones may no longer be applicable in the future.
- NIs related to 47 and 48 - the number of casualties following road crashes was confirmed as a 12 month rolling figure. Members congratulated everyone on the reported figures which was an excellent result for Norfolk.

RESOLVED

10.5 The Chairman thanked officers for the report and the report was noted.

11. Norfolk's 3rd Local Transport Plan – Connecting Norfolk

11.1 The annexed report (11) by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development was received and introduced by the Senior Transport Planner.

- 11.2 The report outlined the work on Norfolk's Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) and informed Members that the intention was to move away from the previous government's goals and focus on the local priorities identified through stakeholder consultation and supported by the Norfolk evidence base. The work included maintaining the highway network, delivering sustainable growth, improving accessibility, reducing emissions and improving strategic connections into and around the county, which were agreed by members at the Overview and Scrutiny Panel in March 2010. It was also proposed that improving road safety be included in the list.
- 11.3 Members were asked to:
- i) Endorse development of a plan that was structured around the priorities identified through stakeholder consultation and provide views on the inclusion of road safety.
 - ii) Endorse the approach to await confirmation on our funding allocation and direction from Members as part of the strategic review prior to finalising LTP3.
- 11.4 The following was noted during the discussions:
- Not completing any work on the plan would be exposing the County Council to a period in April of not having a Local Transport Plan in place, although the risk was considered to be small, as LTP2 finished in March 2011.
 - Government legislation required Norfolk County Council to put a strategic improvement plan in place. The Environment, Transport and Development Department had received confirmation from the Minister that there were unlikely to be any significant changes to this legislation.
 - Members felt that until it was known how the LTP would fit into the Environment Transport and Development priorities, they would not have enough information to guide officers on the strategic plan.
 - This report was to ensure the Overview & Scrutiny Panel were aware of all the risks involved if no work was done to prepare a plan until budgets were known.
 - One person had been working on the strategic plan and the equivalent of 1.5 full time equivalent staff would be working on the implementation plan to collate all the information. Officers confirmed that activity on the plan had already been greatly scaled back.
- 11.5 The following motion was proposed and seconded:
- 11.6 To delete item (i) in its entirety and to amend the wording of item (ii) to read "To await confirmation on our funding allocation and direction from

Members as part of the strategic review prior to finalising LTP3.”

- 11.7 Following a vote of 9 in favour and 3 against, the motion was carried.

RESOLVED

- 11.8 To await confirmation on our funding allocation and direction from Members as part of the strategic review prior to finalising LTP3.

12. Concessionary Bus Travel Scheme

- 12.1 The annexed report (12) by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development was received and introduced by the Assistant Director Travel and Transport and the Category Manager, Transport.
- 12.2 This report was a supplementary report to the one received by the Panel at their meeting on 21 July 2010 and incorporated Members comments from that meeting.
- 12.3 Cabinet approval would be sought in November for delegated powers to be given to the Cabinet Member for Travel and Transport services to determine the draft scheme to enable the 1 December 2010 deadline to be met.
- 12.4 Members were invited to discuss the contents of the report and note progress on the implementation of the scheme.
- 12.5 Following Member questions, the following points were noted:
- The concessionary pass scheme allowed passengers holding English travel cards to travel anywhere in England. Holders of passes issued in Wales and Scotland could not travel in England and vice versa.
 - Fare reimbursement was based on the average adult fare, regardless of the distance a concessionary passenger travelled.
 - Random inspections were carried out to ensure no fraudulent activity took place. Any fraudulent activity would be monitored by the company undertaking the administration of the scheme. If any problems were identified part payment could be withheld until issues had been resolved.
 - Members felt that the scheme should be administered nationally as it was a national concessionary scheme, although it was noted the last Government had not wanted to administer the scheme on a national basis.
 - It was intended to use the existing contractors dealing with the management of concessionary travel in the short term, although

longer term options would be considered to ensure the best value for money services were obtained.

RESOLVED

- 12.6 The Panel noted the report and the progress on the implementation of the scheme.

13 Future of Safety Camera Funding

- 13.1 The annexed report (13) by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development was received and introduced by the Assistant Director Highways and the Highways Network Manager.
- 13.2 The Government had reduced the Road Safety Specific Grant by 40% this financial year and had indicated that the grant would not continue in its present form in future years. Local authorities would need to decide how best to manage continued delivery of local priorities, including road safety from the overall funding provided.
- 13.3 The report identified four possible options for Members to consider and asked Members to recommend an approach to go before Cabinet in October 2010.
- 13.4 As the Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Panel had declared a personal interest as Chairman of the Casualty Reduction Partnership and a member of the Police Authority, he took no part in the discussion or the ensuing vote.
- 13.5 The following points were noted during the discussion:
- Some Members felt that the Police Authority should be responsible for the administration of traffic enforcement issues. Other Members felt that their responsibility as a County Councillor included a duty of care to all their constituents and that failing to continue with the safety camera enforcement would put their constituents at risk.
 - Norfolk County Council had a good record in lowering accident rates. Members felt speed reduction cameras had been a part of that success, although they only captured speeding motorists and didn't catch people using mobile phones whilst driving and motorists driving whilst under the influence of alcohol.
 - The Road Safety Specific Grant (RSSG) had been cut by 40% this financial year and would provide no funding in 2011. Therefore Norfolk County Council needed to either find money for safety camera enforcement from other sources or cease the funding altogether.

- Some Members acknowledged that the cuts in government funding had been made and nothing could be done about it, but Councillors could now decide the best way to deal with the money that was available. They felt funding safety cameras, and therefore public safety, was a good investment.

13.6 The following motion was proposed and seconded:

13.7 Option 1 - “No safety camera enforcement or community safety work – no cost.”

13.8 Following a vote of 9 in favour and 4 against, the motion was carried.

RESOLVED

13.9 To recommend to Cabinet that in light that the Road Safety Specific Grant to the Council is due to stop, the Council should stop its funding for safety camera enforcement or community safety work, as set out in the report (Option 1).

The meeting ended at 12.15pm.

CHAIRMAN



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