

Environment, Development and Transport Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Friday, 11 November 2016 at 10am in the Edwards Room at County Hall

Present:

Mr M Wilby - Chairman

Mr R Bird

Mr A Boswell

Ms C Bowes

Mr B Bremner

Mr J Childs - Vice-Chairman

Mr S Clancy

Mrs M Dewsbury

Mr T East

Mr C Foulger

Mr B Iles

Mr M Kiddle-Morris

Mr G Plant

Mr J Timewell

Mrs C Walker

Mr A White

1. Apologies and Substitutions

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Mr T Jermy, who was attending a remembrance service in Thetford, and Mrs J Leggett (Mr M Kiddle-Morris substituting).

2. Minutes

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2016 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

3. Members to Declare any Interests

- 3.1 No interests were declared.

4. Urgent Business

- 4.1 There were no items of urgent business.

5. Public Questions

- 5.1.1 A public question was received from Mr Hawkins, secretary of the Norfolk Area Council of the Ramblers Association; see Appendix A.

- 5.1.2 Mr Hawkins asked a supplementary question: he noted that at the launch of a section of the England Coastal path, the Chairman spoke of the health, financial and touristic benefits of walking for Norfolk. Noting the answer to his question and budgets constraints, Mr Hawkins queried whether it was recognised that this could be a financial benefit to the Council rather than a drain on resources. He wished to ask his question again, as he felt it was a complex issue which should be referred to LAF (the Local Access Forum) to be considered in detail.
- 5.1.3 The Chairman agreed with Mr Hawkins about the health benefits to the community of walking; he confirmed that the Committee were looking to address issues around walks in the future and therefore would like to take the issue no further at the present time.

6. Member Questions

- 6.1 Mr Bird raised a query regarding a recent article in the EDP about blanket 40mph speed limit trials in rural areas of North Norfolk. The Chairman confirmed that he had written to the Department of Transport regarding funding and **agreed** to report back to the Committee once a response was received.
- 6.2 Mr Clancy raised that he had suggested parish grit bins should be filled as soon as possible, prior to bad weather, however was concerned this would be impeded by the bureaucratic process. The Head of Highways confirmed instruction to begin filling grit bins had been given that week (beginning 7 November 2016), and expected work to be completed by December.
- 6.3.1 Mrs Walker spoke of parking issues experienced by residents on Magdalen Way and Gorleston estate caused by amalgamation of surgeries by the Clinical Commissioning Group. The Head of Highways clarified that the minor traffic works budget was removed by the Committee in 2015; works related to parking would be funded through the Norfolk Parking Partnership Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) budget, implemented through their surplus, however, the CPE were currently working at a loss.
- 6.3.2 The Assistant Director for Highways and Transport **agreed** that a report would be brought to the Committee in the new year regarding coordination of the Committee's budget with the CPE programme to free up resource across these issues, however agreed in the meantime to see whether resource was available to deal with priority issues. The Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services **agreed** that the area manager would arrange to meet with Mr G Plant (as Councillor for Gorleston St Andrews) to review if any options were available to address the problems discussed.

7. Verbal update/feedback from Members of the Committee regarding Member Working Groups or bodies that they sit on.

- 7.1 Mr East gave an update from the Norwich Western Link (NWL) Project Member Working Group, see Appendix B, and referred the Committee in particular to Point 5 of the document.
- 7.2.1 During discussion the following points were noted:

- 7.2.2 With reference to point 4 (Appendix B), officers were requested to press Highways England to ensure the A47 and NWL projects be considered as complementary.
- 7.3.1 Mr East shared that the Working group had been advised prioritising delivery of the NWL project as a County corporate priority would support efficient delivery of the project. Discussion was held over money which may be available if a devolution deal was accepted by the Council. The Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services felt that, based on previous Committee discussions, there were 3 implied priorities around new major highway infrastructure schemes and suggested a paper be brought to committee (see 7.3.3).
- 7.3.2 It was confirmed that the Burlingham to Acle dualling were in the agreed Highways England programme, and public consultation would be launched in spring 2017.
- 7.3.3 It was **agreed** that a report discussing the 3 priorities around future highways schemes (the 3rd Yarmouth river crossing, the Norwich Western Link project and the Long Stratton bypass), would be brought to the next Committee meeting on the 27 January 2017, where the Committee would consider making recommendations to Full Council about new major highway infrastructure priorities. It was also **noted** that priorities should be consistent with those of the LEP (new Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership).

8. Broadband and Mobile Phones – update from Member Working Group

- 8.1 The Committee received the report from the broadband, mobile phone and digital Member Working Group giving an update on mobile phone and digital coverage.
- 8.2 Prior to introducing the report, in reference to earlier discussions about parking issues (paragraph 6.3), Cllr Strong shared that she had spoken with the Police, who believed that they didn't have powers to act on obstructions to drives or pathways. Cllr Strong had found evidence that this was in fact the responsibility of the Police and that they had accepted this was the case. Cllr Strong agreed to circulate this information to Members.
- 8.3.1 During Discussion the following points were noted:
- 8.3.2 The better broadband for Norfolk steering group had interviewed all 4 major phone operators Vodafone, 02, EE and 3, and the Mobile Broadband Group who had agreed to look into when Norfolk would reach 90% Superfast Broadband coverage, and when a map would be available showing plans for future coverage. Maps showing current coverage on Mobile Networks' websites and Ofcom's website was discussed however the reliability of the data was noted.
- 8.3.3 It was clarified that Mobile phone companies shared infrastructure networks, with Eastern infrastructure shared between Vodafone and 02, and Western infrastructure shared between EE and 3.
- 8.3.4 Following discussion, the Chairman **asked the working group**, if not enough progress has been made by January, to write a letter to the Minister.

- 8.4 The Committee:
- **CONSIDERED** the information provided and the progress being made.
 - **AGREED** that the next update to Committee would be in April 2017.
 - **ASKED** the Better Broadband for Norfolk working group, if not enough progress has been made by January, to write a letter to the Minister requesting intervention to improve Norfolk's access to mobile phone networks.

8.5 There was a break from 10.52am until 11:14am for the County Hall Remembrance Service.

9. Better Broadband for Norfolk Programme update

9.1.1 The Committee received the report giving an update on progress of the rollout of Better Broadband for Norfolk against delivery of contractual commitments and exploring issues regarding take-up of superfast broadband services.

9.1.2 The Programme Director asked the Committee to note properties with access to superfast broadband in comparison to those who had taken it up; for those households who take up superfast broadband it was noted that money was clawed back by the Council, which would be reinvested in further broadband improvements.

9.1.3 It was clarified that the actual speed used was lower than the maximum available due to the number of people still using copper wiring, which compressed the speeds, and consumer choice resulting in people taking up packages of different speeds.

9.2 The Committee **CONSIDERED** progress to date and particularly levels of Take-up of fibre services versus levels of availability.

10. Street lighting update

10.1 The Committee received the report requested at the Committee meeting on 14 October 2016 providing an update on initiatives related to street lighting.

10.2 The Chairman updated the Committee on a report in the EDP about this item, and a letter he had received from the Campaign to Protect Rural England supporting the work of the Committee on this issue.

10.3.1 During discussion the following points were noted:

10.3.2 The Head of Highways clarified that dangerous lighting had been replaced in the first 5 years of the initiative; redundant lighting would be removed after the trial period.

10.3.3 The Head of Highways clarified the Council's street lighting energy bill was approximately £2.5m per year.

10.3.4 The Head of Highways **agreed** to find out whether County Hall and the County Hall carpark were lit overnight.

10.4 Mr Clancy left the meeting at 11:25am.

- 10.5.1 The Head of Highways confirmed that capital expenditure for street lighting initiatives was funded from the PFI (private finance initiative) sinking fund and reserve; payments from the DfT met the annual PFI payments. It was intended that savings made from improvements would reimburse the PFI reserve.
- 10.5.2 The Head of Highways agreed to check the accuracy of the 7,500 CO₂ saving to date figure included in the report.
- 10.5.3 It was queried whether the target reduction in CO₂ by 2020 was ambitious enough. The Head of Highways discussed that, bearing in mind additional lighting which may come onto the network before 2020, officers felt this was an achievable target however were aiming to better it. It was **agreed** that further information on Street Lighting would be brought back to the Committee in 6 months' time to review progress and look into whether the 2020 CO₂ reduction target should be reviewed.
- 10.6.1 Mr Bremner **proposed** "Norfolk County Council look to reverse part night lighting in areas where there was a clear demand for the reversal", seconded by Mrs Walker.
- 10.6.2 Discussion was held over the concerns of some residents and perceived dangers attributed to part night lighting, and the evidence brought by Norfolk Police showing a reduction in crime and the positive outcomes on light pollution. It was noted that savings would need to be found elsewhere if the scheme was reversed.
- 10.6.3 The proposal was taken to a vote:
 - With 2 votes for, 12 against and 1 abstention the proposal was lost.
- 10.7 The Committee
 - NOTED** the progress made in delivering savings by introducing new technology and other initiatives;
 - AGREED** that further de-illumination of redundant lighting on main roads was not progressed.

11. Norfolk Energy Futures

- 11.1 The Committee received the report providing an overview of Norfolk Energy Futures Ltd.'s (NEF) current performance and proposing the strategic direction for the company to meet future market demand.
- 11.2.1 During discussion the following points were noted:
- 11.2.3 The Assistant Director clarified that wires from Wind Turbines were buried deep enough to not impact on agricultural work, and no new infrastructure was needed as they could be connected to existing connection boxes.
- 11.2.4 The Assistant Director clarified the structure of the Board and investment panel. Being owned by the Council was seen to bring a position of trust with companies in the competitive market. The Business model had changed due to changes in tariff, and they were moving towards more sustainable investment in Solar Power.
- 11.3.1 Mr Plant discussed his concerns over the investments shown in the report; he

suggested the item be postponed until a business plan showing the profit forecast over the next years was presented, reassuring the Committee that investment was positive and assured. This was seconded by Mr White.

11.3.2 Following discussion on Mr Plant's suggestion, investments and information shown in the report on the commercial direction of NEF moving forward, the Chairman **proposed** an amendment in place of recommendation 2, seconded by Mr Plant:

“freeze all current projects with no more investment to take place from today whilst a review takes place on the future of NEF and for a report to come back to Environment Development and Transport Committee in 6 months' time with a business plan and options available”

11.3.3 The Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services clarified that 3 projects, shown on p34, were contractually signed, 2 projects shown in table 2, page 35, were awaiting a paper to be referred to the investment board, and table 3 was a pipeline of projects for future consideration; therefore 'freezing' would mean freezing the projects listed in table 2.

11.3.4 Discussion was held over the implications and risks of freezing projects and the proposal raised by the Chairman.

11.4.1 The Committee **NOTED** the activities of the company to date.

11.4.2 The proposal was put to a vote.

With 10 votes for and 5 against, the Committee:

- **AGREED** to freeze all current projects with no more investment to take place from 11 November 2016 whilst a review takes place on the future of NEF, and for a report to come back to Environment Development and Transport Committee in 6 months' time with a business plan and options available.

12. Performance management

12.1 The Committee received the performance management report based on the Committee's 15 vital sign's indicators.

12.2 The Committee:

- **REVIEWED** the performance data, information and analysis presented in the vital sign report cards;
- And;
- **AGREED** the recommended actions identified were appropriate.

13. Risk management

13.1 The Committee received the report providing information from the latest Environment Development and Transport Committee risk register as at October 2016 following the latest review conducted at the end of September 2016, aligned with and complementing the performance and financial reporting.

- 13.2 The Committee:
- **CONSIDERED** the changes to risks judged as exceptions (in paragraph 2.2 and Appendix A), and other departmental risks (in Appendix E);
 - **AGREED** the recommended mitigating actions identified in Appendix A were appropriate;
 - **CONSIDERED** the definitions of risk appetite and tolerance in paragraph 2.6.

14. Finance monitoring

14.1 The Committee received the report reflecting the forecast outturn position for the Services from Community and Environmental Services relevant to the Committee.

- 14.2 The Committee:
- **NOTED** the forecast out-turn position for the Environment Development and Transport Committee and the current risks to the budget as highlighted in the report;
 - **NOTED** the planned use of reserves as set out in section 4 of the report and that proposals for any further use of reserves in 2016-17 would be highlighted to the Committee if the resulting forecast level of reserves falls below the 31 March 2017 balances anticipated at the time the budget was set.

15. Update on the following Offshore Windfarm Proposals: a) Norfolk Vanguard and b) Hornsea Project Three

15.1 The Committee received and **NOTED** the report requested at the Committee meeting on the 14 October 2016 providing information on the Offshore windfarm proposals Norfolk Vanguard and Hornsea Project Three.

15.2.1 During discussion the following points were noted:

15.2.2 It was noted that this item was for information; a full briefing would be given next year when the County Council is consulted on the formal applications. Final decisions on the proposed windfarms would be made by the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, however, Norfolk County Council would be invited to make comments as a statutory consultee.

15.2.3 It was noted that the substation associated with the Vanguard proposal could be within a 2 – 3 km radius of the existing Necton substation.

15.2.4 It was indicated that National Grid had suggested that it is unlikely that any further reinforcement of existing pylons would be needed. It was also confirmed that the cable routes for both projects would be placed underground.

15.2.5 The scope of the project was highlighted; for the Dudgeon windfarm substation at Necton, 2 cables were laid. For the proposed Vattenfall and Dong windfarms, 6-8 cables would be laid; it was hoped that lessons had been learned from mistakes made and mishandling of public complaints on the Dudgeon windfarm project.

16. Forward Plan and decisions taken under delegated authority

- 16.1 The Committee received and **REVIEWED** the report setting out the forward plan for the Environment Development and Transport Committee, and **NOTED** the delegated decisions taken by officers.
- 16.2.1 Throughout discussion of the meeting, the following were requested:
- 16.2.1 A report in the new year regarding coordination of the Committee's budget with the CPE programme to free up resource to help address parking issues experienced in Gorleston and Magdalen Way. In the meantime the Area Manager would arrange to meet with Mr G Plant (as Councillor for Gorleston St Andrews) to review if options were available to deal with priority issues 6.3. (paragraph 6.3.2)
- 16.2.2 A report discussing the 3 priorities around future highways schemes (the 3rd Yarmouth river crossing, the Norwich Western Link project and the Long Stratton bypass), would be brought to the next Committee meeting on the 27 January 2017, where the Committee would consider making recommendations to Full Council about new major highway infrastructure priorities. (See paragraph 7.3.3)
- 16.2.3 If not enough progress has been made by January, the Better Broadband for Norfolk working group to write a letter to the Minister requesting intervention in technology going in to help improve Norfolk's access to Superfast Broadband. (see paragraph 8.4)
- 16.2.4 Further information on Street Lighting would be brought back to the Committee in 6 months' time to review progress and look into whether the 2020 CO₂ reduction target should be reviewed. (See paragraph 10.5.3)
- 16.2.5 A review to take place on the future of NEF, and for a report to come back to Environment Development and Transport Committee in 6 months' time with a business plan and options available. (See paragraph 11.4.2)
- 16.3 The Committee wished the Vice Chairman good luck taking part in the Benjamin Foundation "sleep out" in Norwich that evening.

The meeting closed at 12:17 PM

Chairman



If you need this document in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact 0344 800 8020 or 0344 800 8011 (textphone) and we will do our best to help.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE: FRIDAY 11 NOVEMBER 2016

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

5.1 Question from Mr Ken Hawkins

A recent NCC Press Release announces “Podium position three years in a row for Norfolk” (2016 Highways and Transport Network Survey), for which congratulations are due. It doesn’t mention that for three years consecutively, Norfolk has been in the bottom 3 or 4 for ‘Satisfaction with public rights of way’, this year 25th of 28. If Norfolk is serious in aspirations to promote itself as a preferred tourist destination, public satisfaction scores should be brought towards the top of the list. Will the Committee refer this as a significant concern to the LAF and ask them to bring forward proposals, or does the Committee have other proposals to address this?

Response by Chairman of EDT Committee

The independent NHT survey is a broad analysis of many aspects of highways maintenance and management which found that overall Norfolk ranked 3rd out of 28 similar councils for public satisfaction. We are examining the results to see where we can do better and public satisfaction and acknowledge that public rights of way has a lower satisfaction score than some of our other service. However the report also includes evidence that, in the opinion of the public, increased expenditure on public rights of way is difficult to justify given the constraints on budgets and other competing priorities. When the public were asked which service it would be acceptable to divest from, the highest response was the management and maintenance of country paths and public rights of way.

We are grateful for Mr Hawkins involvement with the ongoing project to reshape the way we deliver the green infrastructure service. This is the Committees approach to address the issue in a proportionate way. Collaboration with the Ramblers, LAF and other groups has helped us shift to a more focused operational delivery with an integrated approach for all Trails and public rights of way in local area teams. We will have dedicated staff in our area offices who will be responsible to the Area Manager for dealing with any maintenance and enforcement issues to do with public rights of way. We will also continue to engage with local communities about how they can help us delivery a better service in this area.

Norwich Western Link Project - Member Working Group update (11 November 2016)

Further to previous meetings of the Norwich Western Link Project Member Working Group and the report provided at the 8 July 2016 EDT Committee meeting, the Member Group met again on 9 November. The following provides a brief summary of the meeting:

1. There was an update provided on the Local Plan Review process by Phil Morris (Principal Planner - NCC) and the recently published 'call for sites' details setting out possible development proposals suggested by landowners. A discussion about the review and the need to consider the implications for the Norwich Western Link project followed. Particular attention was given to how the timing of the project aligns with the overall timescales for the review process. The Member Group requested further details in relation to the project programme and the need to consider wider implications and project risks. This is to be provided for the next meeting.
2. A further update on the current and next 6 month phases of work in delivering the project was provided to the Member Group. This provided a summary of the activities undertaken in the first 6 months as set out in the 8 July Committee Report. One of the early stages of work is a series of meetings with the communities most affected by the project. The Member Group were shown the terms of reference for the proposed stakeholder group (which will include a representative from each of the engaged parish councils). An invite was also agreed for city Members, whose wards are potentially impacted (ie within the western quadrant), to join the stakeholder meetings.
3. Steve Scowen from Broadland District Council (BOC) joined the meeting again to provide a further update on the Food Hub proposals and the associated proposed Local Development Order (LOO) that is being progressed by BOC. It was confirmed that a report on the LOO was taken to and agreed by the BOC Cabinet in October. This set out the next steps and received approval to proceed the LOO to consultation. The timing of that consultation is currently being reviewed, but may be in January 2017. It was agreed that Steve will continue to attend the meetings of the Group to provide ongoing updates on progress.
4. An update was provided on the latest position that Highways England consultants have reached in developing the Easton to North Tuddenham A47 dualling project. This follows a general Member briefing that was provided by Highways England in October, where it was set out that the consultation on the A47 project was now expected early in 2017 (intended before the election period). Disappointment in the seemingly slow progress with the A47 project was expressed. Further approaches are to be made to Highways England to seek reassurances regarding project delivery timescales and to confirm that a possible Norwich Western Link project is assessed as part of their project as well as the Food Hub (LOO) discussed at item 3 above.
5. The Member Group also requested that the prioritisation of the Norwich Western Link project is clarified and asked for the process to confirm this to be looked into. Officers agreed to review this and confirm back to the Group as soon as possible.

For more details, please contact David Allfrey (Major Projects Manager).
Tel 01603 223292