

## **Environment, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 26 September 2013 at  
2.00pm in the Edwards Room, County Hall.**

**Present:**

Mr B Spratt (Chairman)

|                              |              |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| Mr T Adams                   | Mr J Law     |
| Mr S Agnew                   | Mr B Long    |
| Dr A Boswell (Vice Chairman) | Mr J Perkins |
| Mr B Bremner                 | Mr N Shaw    |
| Ms E Corlett                 | Mr J Ward    |
| Mrs M Dewsbury               | Mr A White   |
| Mr T East                    | Mr M Wilby   |

Also present:

Dr M Strong

### **1 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Mr R Coke (Mr S Agnew substituted); Mr M Baker, Ms A Kemp (Ms E Corlett substituted), Mr D Harrison Cabinet Member and Mr G Nobbs Cabinet Member.

### **2 Minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2013**

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2013 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.
- 2.2 The Panel noted the comments made by Mr White regarding the condition of the Fen Roads and the request for providing special funding for maintenance of these roads.

### **3 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **4 Items of Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

## 5 Public Question Time

No public questions were received.

## 6 Local Member Issues/Member Questions

No local member questions/issues were received.

## 7 Forward Work Programme: Scrutiny

7.1 The annexed report (7) by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development was received by the Panel. The report set out the forward work programme for scrutiny.

7.2 During the presentation of the report, the following points were noted:

- A meeting of the ETD Scrutiny Leads had been held on 19 August when a discussion had taken place regarding the forward work programme.
- The Chairman gave an update on the progress of the Snettisham Access Signs Working Group, informing the Panel that the Group had met on the 26 September and had agreed to hold a final meeting in November with key stakeholders, including the Police, with the aim of agreeing a unified sign. It was hoped that the recommendations from the meeting would be available for the Panel to consider at its November meeting.
- One member from each political group would form a working group to consider the impacts of Fracking. The working group would hold a meeting where the terms of reference would be drawn up and brought back to the Panel for discussion at its November meeting. The following members would form the working group:

Chairman: Andrew Boswell  
Tony White Bert Bremner  
Tim East Michael Baker

It was expected that the working group would bring its report and final recommendations back to the Panel within six months.

- The Leader of the Council, Mr Nobbs, had formally requested that the Panel consider adding 'signs on the highway' to the forward work programme, particularly those signs which were advertising businesses and events and the quantity of such signs. The Panel requested that the Scrutiny Group Leads consider this issue at their next meeting and bring their recommendation to the Panel.

7.3 **RESOLVED** to note the report.

## **8 ETD Integrated performance and Finance Monitoring Report 2013/14**

8.1 The Panel received the annexed report (8) by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development, updating the Panel on the year end position for ETD, together with an update on key projects where they were available. The Panel noted that the department forecast outturn was on target and there were currently no concerns or issues to report.

8.2 The following points were noted during questions from the Panel:

- The £21k spend on RAF Coltishall referred to in paragraph 3.8 of the report, was made up as follows:
  - £14k NPS fees for redevelopment costs and acquisition costs
  - £4k Alan R Cross & Son invoice for street light repairs
  - £3k Freedom Group of Companies invoice for HV maintenance (electrical works).
- Members highlighted that they wished to see the savings achieved through the Highways reprocurement, reinvested in the Highways service. The Director said that the savings formed part of the departmental savings required to close the overall funding shortfall for the authority but that members would have the opportunity to consider this at the November Panel meeting. The Panel would also have the opportunity to raise their concerns over the level of investment in road maintenance (including Fen roads and haunching programme) when the capital programme report was presented to Panel in January 2014.
- Officers were asked to present future reports (shown at paragraph 5.12 of the report) relating to the Public Transport Accessibility to Market Towns and Key Employment Locations from Rural Areas map, to include more detailed information as to how rural villages in Norfolk and market towns were served by public transport.
- Early indications from the 2012/13 waste data flow statistics showed that a significant number of Local Authorities had seen a small rise in the amount of household waste processed.
- In terms of the cost of scheme development, Members' noted the importance of ascertaining views and engaging stakeholders in future consultation schemes and suggested using libraries and websites to publish the public notices as one possible way of saving money.
- Mr Hammond, Minister for Roads had visited Norfolk on 16 September 2013 and had indicated that the A47 was seen as a Government priority for allocation of funds from the significant increase in funding for trunk roads announced in the Government spending review rising to £3.7 billion in 2020/2021. It was anticipated that the funding from the Government for the A47 would become clearer towards the end of 2014 and the Panel would be kept informed of any developments.

- The upgrading of street lights to make them more energy efficient was the responsibility of the Parish Councils and therefore the carbon reduction benefits were not recorded within the report statistics.
- The reduction in spend per FTE (full-time employee) was a result of a reduction in the number of premises being used/occupied by the County Council and the associated costs of running those premises rather than a reduction in staffing numbers. A full list of all County Council premises and their uses was regularly reported to Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel (CROSP) and monitored by the CROSP Asset Management Group. Further information could be obtained by contacting the Chairman of CROSP (Cliff Jordan).
- It was not possible to ascertain how many planning applications and minerals and waste applications would be determined by the Planning (Regulatory) Committee which made it difficult to forecast performance.

### 8.3 **RESOLVED to**

- note the progress made against ETDs service plan actions, risks and budget.
- Note the contents of the Economic Intelligence Report.

## 9 **Norwich Area Transportation Strategy (NATS) Implementation Plan**

- 9.1 The Panel received the annexed report (9) by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development setting out the range of transport measures, together with their general intended phasing, for delivery over the short to medium term. The Panel were asked to make any comments on the updated plan and recommended its adoption by Cabinet.
- 9.2 The Principal Infrastructure and Economic Growth Planner introduced the report and informed the Panel that the consultation on the NDR had been extended to allow statutory consultees adequate time to respond. It was hoped that construction of the NDR would commence in spring 2015 with the road being opened to traffic in 2017.
- 9.3 The points below were noted following questions from the Panel:
- The extension to the consultation until mid-October was to allow landowners and specific consultees sufficient time to respond and had been extended to this group of consultees only.
  - The total grant of £86.5m from Government made up the funding for the Northern Distributor Road (NDR), with Norfolk County Council meeting the rest of the costs, a significant element of which would be funded by Partners and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
  - Mr Adams proposed, seconded by Mr White that a start-date for work to

commence on the Northern Distributor Route be agreed as 1 April 2015 or before. With 13 votes for, 1 vote against and 1 abstention, the motion was **CARRIED**.

9.4 The following points were noted during questions on the Norwich Area Transportation Strategy (NATS) Implementation Plan report.

- The report showed good progress was being made on the delivery of the plan and had been updated to take account of the delivery of some of the schemes within the report. Cabinet would receive the report at its meeting in November 2013.
- It was anticipated that funding for the Long Stratton Bypass may be obtained from future developments and allocations from the Community Infrastructure Levy.
- The city centre plan schemes, particularly the pedestrianisation of Westlegate, would not stop people accessing the city centre. It was anticipated that it would stop through-traffic, particularly from the railway station to the Chapelfield roundabout. All existing car parks would remain as accessible as they currently were. As future schemes were developed there would be further opportunities for members to discuss the city centre plan.
- The latest information on air quality management areas in the city showed the emissions had reduced slightly following the introduction of the gyratory system in St Augustines Street, although it had risen slightly in 2012. It was too early to assess the long-term impact in that area.
- It was hoped to introduce an updated 'cycle and ride' scheme using the smart card technology on the park and ride buses as the previous system had been withdrawn following its abuse by some users.
- The traffic calming scheme at West End Costessey and The Street Costessey had been withdrawn and should be deleted from the report appendix showing delivered schemes.
- Members were reminded that the Capital Programme would be presented to the Panel at its meeting in January 2014 when the Panel would be invited to recommend how they wished funds to be allocated.

9.5 **RESOLVED** to recommend the adoption of the updated Norwich Area Transportation Strategy (NATS) Implementation Plan to Cabinet.

## **10 Review of Norfolk Speed Management Strategy**

10.1 The Panel received the annexed report (10) by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development informing Members about the new Department for Transport guidance issued earlier this year for the setting of local speed limits. The new guidance had resulted in a review of current County Council

practice in setting speed limits and the speed management measures used to support these.

10.2 During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- Detailed analysis of the number of cycling incidents outside schools had not indicated that school children made up the statistics in this category. Cycling incidents tended to occur within 30 mph zones and at junctions, particularly when cyclists were moving from the carriageway to an off-road position. The Joint Casualty Reduction Partnership (JCRP) regularly reviewed statistics about Killed and Seriously Injured (KSI) on Norfolk's roads and also monitored the targets for all road casualties. The Team Manager Network Management (Analysis & Safety) agreed to provide Members with further information about the JCRP and casualty statistics. Members were informed that the statistics within this category indicated that the profile of casualties tended to be mainly adult males.
- Cycle training offered by Norfolk County Council was delivered to a nationally agreed standard. The Panel at its meeting in September 2011 had reviewed all the work done on casualty reduction and the report was still a good reference point for the work carried out. The Highways Network Manager would be happy to let members have any additional information they requested. A copy of the report received by the Panel in 2011 can be found by clicking on the link below:  
[http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/Council\\_and\\_democracy/Your\\_Council/Committees/Committees\\_Archive/index.htm?SS\\_Year=2011&SS\\_PaperType=0&SS\\_Committee=Environment Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Panel&vNextRow=21#nccMainPageContent](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/Council_and_democracy/Your_Council/Committees/Committees_Archive/index.htm?SS_Year=2011&SS_PaperType=0&SS_Committee=Environment%20Transport%20and%20Development%20Overview%20and%20Scrutiny%20Panel&vNextRow=21#nccMainPageContent)
- It would not be reasonable to expect developers to contribute the full costs of providing traffic calming measures when they applied for planning permission at their proposed housing development sites.
- The Highways Network Manager would try to ascertain how many compensation claims had been made relating to damage caused to vehicles by speed ramps, humps and cushions. The report to members to include how many claims had been successful, including the amount of any compensation paid. The benefits of traffic calming measures which were quoted within the report had been ascertained from a Norfolk County Council viewpoint.
- The Norfolk Speed Management strategy covered all roads across Norfolk, including urban and rural roads. As the national speed limit was set nationally, it would not be possible to reduce this. There was also a need to ensure that Norfolk County Council did not end up with significant sign clutter from erecting extra signs on the highway due to the significant costs in the maintenance of any extra signs erected.
- The Police were responsible for the enforcement of speed limits, as well as incidents where drivers were stopped for not driving safely.

- Erecting speed limit signs at each end of a village had been considered and work was being done to look at the approaches to villages and what signage would be required. Members noted that drivers did not necessarily take notice of signs, they tended to be more aware of the environment they were driving into. One successful way of reducing the speed of traffic was planting trees at strategic intervals along each side of the highway. As the distance between the trees decreased, it gave the indication that a vehicle was moving quicker which in turn led to drivers slowing down.
- All 20mph zones were self-enforcing. There was no criminal offence in exceeding 20mph speed limits hence the schemes being placed in approved locations which would encourage self-enforcement.
- Funding to provide 20mph restrictions for five schools in 2013-14 at a cost of £50,000 had been approved, the details of which could be found in appendix C of the report.
- The term “those” which was referred to in paragraph 2.4 of the report was based on feedback that had been received from people attending speed awareness courses.

10.3 **RESOLVED** to agree the recommendations as set out in Section 2 and Appendix A of the report.

## 11 **Better Broadband for Norfolk**

11.1 The Panel received the annexed report (11) by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development providing an update on Better Broadband for Norfolk. Karen O’Kane, Programme Director ETD gave a presentation (Appendix B).

11.2 The following points were noted in response to questions from the Panel:

- Work was currently being undertaken at the BT laboratories in Martlesham to investigate alternative technologies that might be used for premises where fibre solutions were not possible. It was expected that alternative technologies would be ready for use by 2015.
- The regular six monthly report to Panel would include any excess profit which was ‘claw back’ from BT for properties connected to the new broadband infrastructure that exceeded the expected 20% which was stated in the business case.
- The Norfolk plan was well established and resources were in place to ensure that the project was delivered to the contractual obligations and to timescale.
- A dedicated team member within Environment, Transport and Development department was responsible for planning the road closures associated with

the broadband installation works. Three months was the usual notice period required in advance of a road closure.

11.3 **RESOLVED** to note the:

- activities described within section 2 of the report.
- Government's recent Spending Review which allocated a further £250m to achieve 95% superfast broadband coverage across the UK by the end of 2017, described in section 3 of this report.

## 12 **1<sup>st</sup> Annual Review of the Equality Assessment of ETD Services.**

12.1 The Panel received a report by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development, setting out the findings of the first annual review of the equality assessment of ETD services and would provide the suggested focus for the next year. The Panel would continue to receive regular updates within the ETD Performance Report.

12.2 Following a question about an equality issue and problems experienced by some people when using stiles across public footpaths, it was noted that stiles that had been in situ for more than 20 years could not be removed. The Business Support and Development Manager confirmed that work was being done with the Rights of Way team regarding stiles and the removal of these when opportunities arose, although more could be done if adequate funds could be made available.

12.6 **RESOLVED** to note the findings of the annual assessment, including the area of focus for the 2013/14 improvement plan and to continue to monitor progress against improvement plan actions in the ETD performance dashboard.

(The meeting closed at 4.20 pm)

**Chairman**



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