

MINUTES of the meeting of the **GENERAL PURPOSE & HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE** held in Room 11, Town Hall, Royston at 7.30pm on Monday, 15th July 2019.

PRESENT: Councillor Harrison (Chair)
Councillors Bourke-Waite, Coll, Hughes, Inwood, Perry, Phillips, P Smith and Swallow

In attendance: Assistant Town Clerk
Town Councillor Davison
District Councillors Green and Hunter
County Councillors Hill and Jarvis

Members received a presentation from NHDC officers about the Council's strategy on sustainable transport:

- Firstly, an overview of the pedestrian and cycling strategy was explained to members. In response to Government plans to make cycling and walking the main choice by 2040, NHDC have started putting together a local cycling and walking infrastructure plan, which will include high quality walking and cycling networks with cycle parking. There is a shift in priority towards providing a better cycling and walking infrastructure rather than prioritising road improvements.
 - There are six key stages in the Department of Transport guidelines and NHDC have completed stages 1 and 2 so far.
 - The plan is to cover the four main towns in the area along with Knebworth due to its close ties with Stevenage and the railway station.
 - NHDC hope to complete the process by the end of the year, by creating a draft local cycling and walking infrastructure plan, followed by a series of public consultations on the document before it is adopted by the District Council.
 - It was suggested that this could be an opportunity for local organisations and individuals, such as the Town Council, and other interested bodies that operate in North Hertfordshire to participate in the development of the plan. Special knowledge of the town and the needs of the public with regard to routes would be welcomed.
- Secondly, members were informed about the plan to establish a transport user's forum. The aim being to provide various transport users groups, other organisations and residents, the opportunity to identify and discuss improvements, as well as to create a vision for public transport, walking and cycling. Key aims or proposals could be identified for councillors and officers to take on board and to champion with a view to achieving a positive outcome. The NHDC officer informed members that he had met with key people and companies to get an understanding of their views on the current transport network within North Herts. The next stage would be to formulate the information into a clear proposal to present to NHDC members. It is envisaged that the initial launch meeting would be in the autumn. The new transport forum would be a work in progress, as it is such a new incentive.

The Chairman thanked the NHDC officers for their presentation.

Members commented on the importance of providing their local knowledge, the need for safer cycle routes and the need to consider the importance of public transport for those less mobile. Other needs highlighted were; cycle parking on bigger developments, better street lighting on and around cycle and walking routes and the introduction of short-cuts for cyclists and walkers. NHDC officers mentioned that it would be useful to receive feedback from the Town Council during the consultation.

On the question of funding, NHDC informed members that some funding would come from development contributions from the local plan, but that would not cover everything. Having the strategy in place will help when applying for additional funding.

Councillor Hughes informed members that he had already started exploring the provision of more bike racks in town. He felt that Royston town centre had good paths, but the housing estates of Royston seemed very detached and could be connected by a walkway around the town with distances signposted along the way. He mentioned that street lighting is an issue when turned off at night for residents returning home after using public transport, which has safety issues.

115/20 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

The Chairman welcomed Cambridgeshire County Councillor Susan van de Ven who spoke about the Melbourn Greenway Consultation, agenda item 8.

Transport routes do not obey administrative boundaries, and there was a need for transport links to connect communities. The Melbourn Greenway was a project that could fund the link between Melbourn and Royston which is missing from the project to connect Cambridge to Royston. She thanked Royston Town Council for their contribution and financial pledge for the project. Other pledges received include s106 monies from NHDC and HCC's pledge to maintain the bridge for its lifetime. She commented on the fact that many children from both Royston and Melbourn would benefit from the Melbourn Greenway because of the schools and the leisure facilities used by children from both areas. Consultation on the project closes on 5th August.

116/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Brown.

117/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS:

There were none.

118/20 APPROVAL OF GENERAL PURPOSE AND HIGHWAYS MINUTES:

Members **APPROVED** the minutes of the Committee meetings held on:

- 18th March 2019 (minutes 359/19 to 368/19) (the date on the agenda stated 14th March 2019 but should read 18th March 2019)
- 13th May 2019 (minutes 41/20 to 47/20)

The minutes were signed by the Chairman.

119/20 REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS AND THE CHAIRMAN OF NHDC AREA COMMITTEE:

Members received a report from County Councillor Fiona Hill:

- Councillor Hill reported that she had been working with councillors from Cambridgeshire and Royston from the A10 cycling group and safer walking as well. There are two questions at the County Council meeting tomorrow. She would be responding, as County Councillor, to the Melbourn Greenway Consultation as had the area committee and hopefully the Town Council at this meeting tonight. A letter has been sent from the HCC Executive Member supporting the A505/A10 safer crossing scheme to Cambridgeshire for their support.
- Councillor Hill continues to work with the CIC regarding health and social care facilities for Royston. The integration of health and social care is a big government agenda item. The A10 bridge and new pathway fits exactly with public health and the carbon efficiency agendas as well.
- The Summer Reading Challenge is taking place at the library again this year.
- The fire service new integrated risk management plan 2019-2023 has been approved by HCC cabinet. One proposal which was accepted is to reduce crewing on standard type fire engines from five to four. This will be monitored.

The recommendation has come following investigations and considerations by senior fire professionals, and then completing due process. This should release resources to be allocated elsewhere.

- Councillor Hill has been working on safety issues in Garden Walk regarding parking problems and speeding issues. Speeding issues on Burns Road are also being looked at. Speed and volume surveys will be taking place and some of the SIDs may be turned around or moved and additional SIDs added. There will be another SID going in at Garden Walk as there is already a socket and at Barkway Road further up the hill. The Newmarket Road SID will be turned around.
- The bus to the Gateway is coming hopefully in the next two to three months.
- The halos on the Melbourn Street crossing are now in place and have also proved to be very effective on Baldock Street.
- There have been various resurfacing schemes across the town and villages.

Members received a report from County Councillor Steve Jarvis:

- New SIDs should be added in the next month or two, including the one in London Road funded by the PCC. There was a suggestion that the SID in Baldock Road should be moved, but Cllr Jarvis thinks it should stay where it is, and consideration given to adding another socket and SID next year.
- The delay to the bus service to the Gateway is because the service is being extended and the bus cannot get around as fast as it needs to. Negotiations are continuing.
- Lots of road maintenance is planned for the summer and the work on the MacDonald's roundabout is supposed to be done in August.

Cllr Jarvis has some dates for the A507 weight limit, and is pushing to ensure that the weight limit on Baldock Road is done at the same time.

Proposals for some interim changes on the A505 have been promised by September. There is currently no funding for the proposal for two roundabouts and changes to a lot of the gaps. Suggested funding from future developments is not going to happen in the near future, so he has asked what can be done in the short term. Work on the Litlington turn is likely to be funded by accident reduction funding because it is marginally the junction with the worst accident record.

Members received a report from District Councillor Tony Hunter:

- The area committee responded to the Melbourn Greenway consultation.
- There was some consideration about removing the Christmas tree from The Cross this year, and using the mast in Priory Gardens instead, with hoops and lights around it. This was not thought to be a good idea. Due to Ministry of Transport rules and regulations, the tree will need to be moved back approximately one further metre from the road at the Cross.
- A letter has been received by NHDC from the Inspector with regard to the local plan, listing issues and reservations, for five main areas; objective assessment of housing need, the green belt review update, the proposed east of Luton sites, safeguarding land to the west of Stevenage and main modifications proposing to allocate new land to dwell on. It also states in the letter that there will be more hearings.

120/20 MEMBERS APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES:

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Stanier be appointed to the Naturally Royston Working Party.

121/20 NATURALLY ROYSTON WORKING PARTY:

Members **AGREED** to receive the notes of the Naturally Royston Working Party meetings held on the 19th March 2019, 16th April 2019 and 21st May 2019 into the workings of the Council.

122/20 PROPOSED MEMORIAL IN PRIORY MEMORIAL GARDENS:

Members **RESOLVED** to defer this item until a new design for the memorial can be agreed.

123/20 MELBOURN GREENWAY CONSULTATION:

In response to questions, Cambridgeshire County Councillor van de Ven informed members that there was no specific figure with regard to estimated number of users of the Greenway, but it is potentially the most important link along the A10 between Cambridge and Royston. The A10 route is attractive from a funding point of view because it has a lot of employment sites along the way. With regard to funding, the idea is to persuade the Greater Cambridge Partnership to pay any balance required for the project. The cost of the bridge is £1.6 million and the pathway would be a similar amount. The cost equivalent of upgrading the road is multiple times the cost plus the cost of maintaining it. The path will be completely on the Eastern side of the road. The crossing point for Melbourn would be at Frog End, Shepreth. At Royston, the path would join the Twigdens cycle path.

Councillor Perry commented on the benefits on both sides of the county border, in terms of public health and the environment. He felt that the council should strongly support the interventions proposed particularly between Royston and Melbourn including the bridge, the path along the east side of the A10 and the improvements on the path between the A10 along London Way into Melbourn itself, and in so doing emphasise the benefits, not only to the people of Royston and the employment centres in Royston but also to the people in Melbourn and other towns and businesses on the Cambridgeshire side.

Members **RESOLVED** to offer total support to the bridge and path into Melbourn and to emphasise the benefits to residents and businesses both on the Hertfordshire side and the Cambridgeshire side.

Members then completed the Melbourn Greenway survey.

124/20 OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS:

Councillor Harrison and Councillor Swallow recently attended the North Herts Bus Users Group where it was reported about the bus that serves the Gateway site in Royston. Cllr Jarvis has already covered this earlier in the meeting.

Date of next meeting: 14th October 2019.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.20pm.

Signed: _____
Chairman

Date _____