

MINUTES of the meeting of the **GENERAL PURPOSES & HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE** held in Room 11 at the Town Hall, at 7:30pm on Monday 15th July 2024.

PRESENT: Councillor Harrison (Chair)
Councillors Antony, Beardwell, Brown, Freeman, Inwood and Rees
In attendance: Deputy Town Clerk
County Councillors Hill and Jarvis

The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting and informed those present that the meeting was being recorded. The Chair reminded Members of the Climate & Biodiversity Emergency declared by Royston Town Council and asked Members to be mindful of this when making decisions on behalf of the Council.

93/25 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

There were no members of the public present, however the Deputy Town Clerk read a statement on behalf of a member of the public regarding item 12, Bus Routes in Royston. The statement highlighted that under Section 9 of the Section 106 Agreement, the developers of Hedera Gardens Estate were obliged to pay an annual bus service contribution to Hertfordshire County Council and posed the following questions:

1. With 80% of the Bus Service Contribution funds due to be paid as of 15/7/24, what sign is there of any bus service connecting Hedera Gardens with – anywhere?
2. Is it acknowledged that, once residents move into a new development without any alternative to a car, the delayed addition of a bus becomes more futile?
3. Finally, if there are any representatives from HCC present – please can they confirm i) that these instalments have been collected and ii) assuming they have been, where has the money been spent?

The Chair thanked the member of public for his statement.

94/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies were received from Councillors Birch, Compton and Langdon.

95/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS:

Members were advised to declare any interests at the commencement of the relevant item on the agenda. No requests for dispensations were received.

96/25 APPROVAL OF GENERAL PURPOSES & HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE MINUTES:

Members **RESOLVED** to approve as a correct record the minutes of the General Purposes & Highways Committee meeting held on Monday 20th May 2024 (minutes 40/25 to 45/25). The minutes were signed by the Chairman.

97/25 MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTY MEETINGS:

Members received the notes of the Climate and Biodiversity Working Party meeting held on 9th May 2024 into the workings of the Council.

98/25 REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS AND THE CHAIR OF THE NHC ROYSTON AREA FORUM:

The Chair enquired about the application criteria for the Shared Prosperity Fund as mentioned in the report from the Chair of the Area Forum.

The Chair of Royston Area Forum answered that she was unsure of the criteria but would research this further.

The Deputy Town Clerk clarified that after speaking to an officer in charge of the fund, it would be open to applications from parish councils first, and only if there was funding left after their applications, would town councils have an opportunity to apply for funding. Councillor Harrison asked whether a site had been found for the proposed Community Health Hub.

The Chair of Royston Area Forum answered that several sites were being considered but she believed no suitable locations were for sale right now.

County Councillor Jarvis added that investigations were still ongoing.

The Chair thanked the County Councillors and the Chair of Royston Area Forum for their reports.

99/25 ARMED FORCES COVENANT:

- a) Members **RESOLVED** to agree to sign the redrafted Armed Forces Covenant.
- b) Members **RESOLVED** to agree to nominate Councillor Harrison to be the Royston Town Council Armed Forces Champion.

100/25 ROYSTON GREEN AWARD:

Councillor Brown proposed an amendment to the award nomination form to include the question: 'Is the nominee aware that you are nominating them?'.

The amendment was seconded and duly carried.

Members **RESOLVED** to agree the establishment of the Royston Green Award and approve the amended award nomination form.

101/25 REMOVAL OF ABANDONED BICYCLES FROM MARKET PLACE BIKE RACK:

Councillor Freeman advised that before bikes were removed, every opportunity was taken to try to identify the owner of the bike.

Members **RESOLVED** to agree the procedure for dealing with abandoned bicycles on the Market Place.

102/25 CHALK STREAMS:

Members **RESOLVED** to write to the Environmental Minister supporting the request for action to be taken on the pollution of chalk streams.

103/25 THE HERTFORDSHIRE (YORK WAY, ROYSTON) (RESTRICTION OF WAITING) ORDER 2024:

Members **RESOLVED** to agree to submit a response supporting the proposal.

104/25 CONCESSIONARY BUS PASSES ON THE A2B BUS SERVICE BETWEEN ROYSTON AND CAMBRIDGE:

There was a lengthy discussion.

It was reported that an officer at Hertfordshire County Council was already going to investigate whether concessionary bus passes could be used on the service between Royston and Cambridge before 9.30am.

The Chair withdrew the proposal on the grounds that the matter was going to be addressed by the officer at HCC and they would await more information on this before deciding on any action.

105/25 BUS ROUTES IN ROYSTON:

The Chair reported that at the Bus Workshop earlier this month, he had submitted a proposal for a route to run from Hedera Gardens to Ivy Farm, to the town centre then up to Meridian Gateway, back to the town centre then up to the station, Tesco, Royston

Gateway then round the bypass to start at Hedera gardens again. This might enable a half-hourly service. He thought the no.16 should also be restored to a half-hourly service which was less confusing for users. This was an important step to becoming a Sustainable Travel Town. There followed a lengthy discussion.

Both NHC and HCC councillors present agreed that it was unacceptable that the services to the new developments had still not been provided. It was regrettable that these services were not provided from the outset.

S106 monies had been collected and would be reserved for spending on bus routes. HCC councillors would investigate this further.

Members agreed to write to Hertfordshire County Council asking for bus routes to be established quickly to cover the new developments of Hedera Gardens, Ivy Farm and Meridian Gate, connecting them with the town centre, and ideally, the railway station and Tesco Extra.

106/25 UPDATE FROM CHAIRMAN:

The Chair gave an update:

- During a follow-up bus workshop meeting on 8th July, he brought up the subject of the concessionary bus passes on the no.26 bus service between Royston and Cambridge as well as a bus route that covered the Hedera Gardens estate. He had also asked whether buses that ran on a Wednesday from Bishop's Stortford and Haslingfield could also run on a Saturday. He was told that the possibility of a Saturday service from Bishop's Stortford would be investigated, however the service from Haslingfield was a Cambridgeshire service therefore outside of the remit of HCC.
- At the Sustainable Travel Town Meeting various topics were discussed including the lifts at the railway station not working, the proposed route of the foot and cycle bridge over the A505 was being reassessed to avoid power cables, and there would be only one access for pedestrians and cyclists from the new Burloes development into the Ridings estate at the top of Aintree Road.
- No progress had been made on the junction of Market Hill to improve accessibility; however, he and Councillor Rees had offered to meet with engineers on site to discuss ideas.
- The free Cybercrime Prevention Event organised by the Police has been booked and is due to take place on Monday 8th October 2024 in the Heritage Hall at 7pm. The event will be publicised soon via notices.

107/25 COUNCILLORS' REPORTS ON TOWN COUNCIL ACTIVITIES AND AS REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS:

There were none.

Date of next meeting: 14th October 2024.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.48pm.

Signed: _____

Date _____