



CAMBRIDGESHIRE & PETERBOROUGH COMBINED AUTHORITY TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE: MINUTES

Date: Friday 15th May 2020

Time: 11.00am – 12.01pm

Present: James Palmer (Mayor and Chairman), Councillors Ian Bates, Peter Hiller, Nicky Massey, Jon Neish, Chris Seaton, Joshua Schumann and Aidan Van de Weyer

Apologies: None

83. APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None received.

84. MINUTES – 29TH APRIL 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 29th April 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

85. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

None received.

86. LANCASTER WAY: FURTHER COST OVERRUN

Prior to the introduction of the report Councillor Bates, seconded by Councillor Van de Weyer proposed an amendment to the recommendation to withdraw the report in order for it to be reviewed and revisions made so that it could be presented at the next meeting of the Combined Authority Board on 3rd June 2020.

The Mayor invited the Head of Transport to present the report in advance of debating the amendment. The report sought to address the further cost overrun report by the Lancaster Way and A142 project since the Transport and Infrastructure Committee held on 6 March. Additional costs to the project had been identified immediately prior to the Combined Authority Board on 29 April at which the project was to be considered. Upon receipt of the additional information the Board delegated authority to the Transport and Infrastructure Committee to approve additional budget for the scheme subject to a full account from the Highways Authority of the reasons for the budget and an assessment of the risks for COVID-19. Attention was drawn to the allowance of £500k against the risk posed by COVID-19 which included changed working patterns and adherence to social distancing guidance.

Following the conclusion of the introduction of the report Councillor Bates, explained the rationale for his proposed amendment. He explained that he proposed the amendment in order for an accurate report to be produced in partnership with Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) and the Combined Authority to be considered at the next meeting of the Combined Authority Board. The report was unsound for a decision to be taken and the recommendations were based on inaccuracies and misrepresentations. Councillor Bates expressed concern and disappointment that the report had not been shared with CCC, as the Highway Authority in advance of publication.

Councillor Van de Weyer in seconding the amendment noted the urgency of ensuring the scheme progressed without further delay however, expressed concern regarding the inadequate consultation with CCC. He also expressed concern regarding recommendation c) of the report that represented a significant change to the decision making arrangements of the Combined Authority. Attention was drawn to active travel and explained that the proposed scheme would provide a barrier to cyclist and pedestrians and sever links to several villages. Councillor Van de Weyer concluded by suggesting that the deferral of the report could be used as an opportunity to form a plan that could address those issues in the future.

Councillor Schumann, representing East Cambridgeshire District Council sought clarity regarding the impact of a deferral on the securing of funding for the scheme as the primary concern was to ensure funding for the project. Officers drew attention to the design phase of the project which had begun in 2016 and the strong steer provided by Members for the project to move forward. The schedule was for the scheme to be mobilised and on site in June. East Cambridgeshire District Council and local Members agreed that the reduced traffic levels provided a good opportunity to make substantial progress. The funding provided by the former Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) was due to expire in March 2021.

Councillor Massey shared concerns expressed regarding the design of the scheme however, accepted that the design phase had passed. Councillor Massey expressed concern regarding recommendation c), commenting that the report did not address the proposal or implications.

Councillor Neish expressed concern regarding introducing further delay to the scheme by deferring the report and drew attention to the considerable risk regarding the funding for the project.

Speaking in support of the amendment, Councillor Hiller expressed concern regarding recommendation c) of the report and questioned the impact of the report being deferred to the next Combined Authority Board meeting on the timescales for the project. Officers explained that risks were currently being managed jointly with CCC and would increase if there was further delay. The current proposal was for mobilisations to begin June for work to commence in July. The works were estimated to take 6 months to complete. However the timescales did not account for requirements for social distancing as it was currently unknown what they would be in July. There would also be a shutdown for the Christmas period. COVID-19 presented a significant risk of delay to the project.

Councillor Seaton sought clarity regarding the inaccuracies mentioned within the report. In response Councillor Bates commented that CCC had not seen the report prior to its publication. There had been several discussions between officers regarding inaccuracies within the report. It was essential that public bodies based their decisions on accurate information.

On being put to the vote the amendment was lost [4votes in favour, 4 against and 0 abstentions].

Following the defeat of the amendment, Councillor Schumann, seconded by Councillor Seaton, proposed an amendment to the recommendations as follows:

The Transport and Infrastructure Committee is recommended to:

- a) Approve an additional contribution of £222,527 (making a revised total contribution of £1,390,770) payable as capital grant to the County Council in respect of these projects;
- b) Approve the establishment of a Covid 19 contingency fund of up to £500,000 to be held by the Combined Authority and applied to genuine additional costs arising as a consequence of Covid 19;
- c) Authorise completion of a Grant Funding Agreement following the ratification of this budget by the Board to enable the scheme to commence in June 2020;
- d) Instruct officers, in consultation with the Chair of the TIC, to consider the implications of the above recommendations on the capital programme and make consequential recommendations to a future TIC meeting; and
- e) Refer this project to the CPCA Audit & Governance Committee for a value for money review of the costs and timetable related to this project

In presenting the amendment, Councillor Schumann commented that he did not vote for the initial amendment due to the potential risks to the funding of the project. However, the recommendations set out in the report caused concern for Members and the amendment tabled sought to address those concerns. – didn't vote for deferral because of the risk to the delay of the funding.

Members of the Committee welcomed the amendment and voiced their support for the proposed recommendations.

The Monitoring Officer advised the Committee that recommendations a) and b) would require the approval of two thirds of the membership of the Committee, including Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council as Highways Authorities.

It was unanimously resolved to:

- a) Approve an additional contribution of £222,527 (making a revised total contribution of £1,390,770) payable as capital grant to the County Council in respect of these projects;
- b) Approve the establishment of a Covid 19 contingency fund of up to £500,000 to be held by the Combined Authority and applied to genuine additional costs arising as a consequence of Covid 19;
- c) Authorise completion of a Grant Funding Agreement following the ratification of this budget by the Board to enable the scheme to commence in June 2020;
- d) Instruct officers, in consultation with the Chair of the TIC, to consider the implications of the above recommendations on the capital programme and make consequential recommendations to a future TIC meeting; and
- e) Refer this project to the CPCA Audit & Governance Committee for a value for money review of the costs and timetable related to this project.

87. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The committee was due to meet next in July (date to be confirmed) and the arrangements for the meeting would be confirmed nearer the time.

Chairman