

Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 9 July 2019 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Martin Kerin (Chair), John Allen (Vice-Chair), Alex Anderson, Oliver Gerrish and David Van Day

Apologies: Councillors Andrew Jefferies

In attendance:
Andrew Millard, Interim Director of Place
Leigh Nicholson, Interim Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection
Mat Kiely, Transportation Services Strategic Lead
Peter Wright, Strategic Lead of Highways and Infrastructure
Wendy Le, Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting may be filmed and was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

1. Minutes

The minutes of the Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 12 March 2019 was approved as a true and correct record.

2. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

3. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Integrated Transport Block Capital Programme 2019/20

Andrew Millard, Interim Director of Place, introduced the report which covered the Council's Integrated Transport Block (ITB) Capital allocation and the Maintenance Block (MB) allocation that was assigned to the Council through the Department for Transport's (DfT) annual settlement of £971,000 (for ITB) and £1.938 million (for MB). He highlighted the key drivers as the bullet points at the top of page 12 of the agenda.

Mat Kiely, Transportation Services Strategic Lead, highlighted the areas of spending in appendix 1 of the report and pointed out that the priority areas

included congestion, road safety and tackling air quality issues in the borough. Table 1 on pages 13 and 14 of the report identified the funding allocation of £971,000 spread across 7 areas of the ITB works programme. The service was looking to identify a long term programme particularly in Safer Routes to Schools (SRTS)

Peter Wright, Strategic Lead of Highways and Infrastructure, highlighted the MB programme in appendix 4.

Councillor Gerrish questioned how the ITB and MB Capital allocations fitted in with other funding allocations that related to Highways. Mat Kiely explained that other funds could be made available and gave the example of section 106 (s106) funding (under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 that was processed through planning obligations). S106 funding could be used to mitigate some of the highway works and programmes. There were also internal capital bids that could be used for traffic congestion issues and the surplus funding from capital programmes could be used to apply to other works.

Adding to this, Peter Wright said that the MB had been successful in acquiring bids which had been allocated to schemes such as 'Tidy Up' and to areas such as Stonehouse Lane. DfT had also provided a funding allocation, with a figure around £100,000, for fixing potholes and the service had recently run jet patching programmes to fix potholes.

Councillor Gerrish commented that a broader set of works was likely to be a part of the capital programmes indicated in the appendixes and that what was provided was a general overview. He went on to say that £971,000 sounded like a lot of money but did not stretch very far. Councillor Gerrish mentioned discussions in previous years regarding the deficit in bringing highways up to date and asked for an update. Peter Wright replied that nationally there was a deficit on highways judging from reports from organisations such as RAC and so far, 1.7% of carriageways works had been undertaken and 2.5% of footways works had been undertaken. He went on to say that the service had been successful in demonstrating the need for funding of Stonehouse Lane through capital bids.

Councillor Gerrish thought that bids could be pursued in certain areas and asked what the sufficiency of funding and capital bids were. From a maintenance perspective, Peter Wright said there were discussions on how funding and bids to services could be allocated. Adding to this, Andrew Millard said that from a capital perspective, the funds were drawn in from capital funds and allocated to schemes such as the A13 Widening and the Stanford-le-Hope Interchange Hub and other big capital allocations. Andrew Millard went on to agree that Councillor Gerrish made a good point on how bids could be pursued and that if the Committee wanted a particular avenue pursued, the service could consider this.

Referring to appendix 1, Councillor Gerrish thought that the schemes mentioned looked sensible but felt that the report did not provide details on

what schemes had not met the criteria of the fund allocations. He questioned the processes that were in place for decision making on funding allocations for the schemes indicated and whether these were made in consultation with the Portfolio Holder. In answer, Mat Kiely explained that a protocol led approach was used and discussions were held with the Portfolio Holder on how each scheme aligned with the plans of the borough or area. If there was an underspend in an area, a lower scheme could be brought forward if it was identified that it fitted in with the plan of the area.

Regarding s106 funding, the Vice-Chair said that there had been a lot of s106 contributions through projects in Tilbury such as Amazon. Speaking on behalf of the residents of his ward, Tilbury St Chads, he questioned what and how s106 contributions were spent and that this detail be provided through a breakdown of the spend. He went on to say that Amazon had provided half a million pounds towards Tilbury and that half of that contribution had been used towards the operations of the ferry in Tilbury and the rest was to be used towards cycling and walking paths.

Continuing on, the Vice-Chair referred to jet patching around Tilbury and said that there were still loose bits of debris despite the use of jet patching. He thought jet patching was a quick fix for repairs of potholes and questioned the longevity of jet patch repairs.

In answer to the Vice-Chair's query on s106 contributions, Andrew Millard said that s106 itself was a separate report to the ITB Capital Programme report. He explained that s106 contributions were allocated to a specific programme and that a tariff based report would not be allowed. Adding to this, Leigh Nicholson, Interim Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection, said that there was transparency around s106 contributions which was accessible online so the information could be pulled and provided to the Committee. The Vice-Chair asked that the s106 contributions regarding Gloriana (now known as Thurrock Regeneration Limited) at the former Tilbury St Chads site also be included in the information.

Answering the Vice-Chair's query on jet patching, Peter Wright said that jet patching was not a quick answer and was part of a variety of repairs that the service could undertake. The right repair had to be used for the right situation. In terms of longevity of jet patching, some repairs had lasted a long time and there were some that only lasted 6 months so was dependent on road and area conditions. With some jet patched roads, these were temporary and were scheduled for resurfacing at a later date. Jet patching was cheaper and quicker than undertaking an inlay repair and Peter Wright offered to take Members out to show how and why certain repairs were carried out.

Councillor Anderson asked whether there was a process in place to scrutinise the spending of s106 contributions. Referring to the Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee that was held on 12 March 2019, Leigh Nicholson, replied that a report on Planning Obligations had detailed s106 contributions and could be circulated to Members again for information.

On SRTS, Councillor Gerrish asked how routes were prioritised. He went on to mention the new Harris Primary Academy which was not listed in appendix 2 along with other schools that were relevant. He sought reassurance around the process of identifying SRTS. Mat Kiely answered that this information would be fed back to the team and explained that measures and mitigations were part of the improvements to be made. He went on to say that SRTS were identified through accident data around school areas and a travel provision plan was sought from schools. Some schools required waiting areas whereas some did not have this.

On air quality and congestion, the Chair questioned how the success of reduced air quality and traffic congestion could be measured and what this should look like in 5 years' time. He referred specifically to his ward, Grays Riverside. Mat Kiely explained that many programmes would give an indication of improved air quality and with SRTS, there were cycling routes that would reduce traffic congestion. The most congested areas were caused by freight vehicles and the plan was to take freight vehicles out of certain areas in the borough. In 5 years, the idea was to have more walking and cycling route or other sustainable modes of transport.

The Chair asked how the 5 year time scale would fit in with the Local Plan. Mat Kiely replied that the service would be able to identify where potential new development could be built and would give an indication of where vehicle movements would be through consideration of the new air quality management model and this could be applied to where the Local Plan would be. This would highlight which areas needed air quality management and could identify better sustainable provisions.

Referring to Aveley, Councillor Van Day mentioned the amount of HGV movements throughout the area and asked how this could be resolved. Explaining that the service had been in consultations with Aveley, Mat Kiely said that Aveley had been identified as a potential area for development and it was a matter of what schemes could be delivered in the area. Over time, there may be other funding opportunities such as s106 funding. He reiterated that the service only had £971,000 to deliver the programme of works identified within the borough and that the delivery would be over a period of time.

Councillor Van Day sought clarification on the number of years the delivery of works could and also who requested s106 funding. Mat Kiely explained that s106 was sought through the Planning process if a need for it was identified. From the Aveley consultation, Mat Kiely said that the s106 funding had been considered. Councillor Van Day followed up by asking if there were other priorities in Aveley through s106 funding. In response, Mat Kiely said that there were many areas identified through the s106 funding and the priority in Aveley was freight management and that s106 would be added to this if the opportunity arose.

Andrew Millard added that s106 funding could be sought but if there was no potential development identified in an area, then s106 could not be gained. On a large scale locality, s106 could be obtained and in low levels of growth, there would be trickles of funding from other sources. In areas with low levels of growth, the borough would then be looked at as a whole to obtain s106 funding and potential development could be applied throughout the borough as a whole in terms of interrelationships and infrastructure.

The Vice-Chair said that the Council aspired to be a clear and green council but there were issues such as the Lower Thames Crossing (LTC) which he felt would be an ecological and environmental disaster. He went on to mention that most of the developments in the borough was in the west of the borough which was densely packed thus adding to the congestion in the area, particularly around Lakeside shopping centre. On air quality, the Vice-Chair said that where air quality was monitored in Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA), only Particulate Matter (PM) particles were monitored.

Continuing on, the Vice-Chair said the Local Plan identified a number of 32,000 homes to be built and this would increase the rate traffic and pollution in the borough. He went on to say that Highways England's intention was to open the LTC in 2027 with the presumption that electric vehicles would be in use by then but this may not be the case and thus the crossing would also add to the traffic and pollution. He questioned what strategies would Officers employ to minimise air quality problems to improve people's health.

Andrew Millard referred to the 'Update on Air Quality and Health' report that had been brought to the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 7 February 2019 which would address the Vice-Chair's concerns. This would be circulated to Committee Members. Currently, the service was reviewing consultation responses from the recent Issues and Options Stage 2 (IO2) Consultation for the Local Plan and air quality had been identified as one of the biggest concerns of Thurrock residents. He went on to explain that if development was placed in the right areas with the right infrastructure and investment was acquired in those areas, the result would be an increase in growth and an improvement in air quality.

The Vice-Chair felt that the identified areas for potential development were already densely populated and thought the Council should identify less populated areas. There were good plots of land in Thurrock suitable for development where new homes, schools and health facilities could be introduced. In response, Andrew Millard said that potential areas of development would be identified through the IO2 once the responses were reviewed. The current plan was to continue investment into existing areas and protecting the Green Belt. Housing options would be assessed in a number of areas and the IO2 had sought people's views and from that, the next stage of the Local Plan would be identified. Once the issue of the LTC was resolved, the Local Plan would also be able to identify where sites of potential development could be. The Vice-Chair stated that the importance of air quality had to be highlighted and ensure traffic continued to flow.

Looking at the report recommendations, the Committee referred bullet points 2 and 3 and asked that an update was fed back to the Committee after consultation was undertaken with the Portfolio Holder and once the process was completed.

RESOLVED:

1.1 That Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee commented on the report and the Cabinet recommendations:

- **Approves the Integrated Transport Block Capital Programme and the Highways Maintenance Capital Programme for 2019/20 (as detailed in Appendices 1 and 4).**
- **Note and approve the process by which the Safer Routes to School and Road Safety Engineering programme (as detailed in Appendix 2 & 3) is assessed and prioritised for implementation over the next 5 years through the delegated authority held by the Director of Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport**
- **Delegates the authority to the Director of Place and the Director of Environment and Highways, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, to review and make local changes to these programmes during the course of the year taking into account local views and priorities.**

5. Work Programme

The work programme was updated as follows:

- An updated air quality report that incorporated past actions and their outcomes (Andrew Millard stated that The Local Development Plan Task Force Update – Issues and Options 2 Consultation Report would incorporate air quality management).
- Freight Services report to be amended to Freight Strategy and to encompass how this was applied throughout the borough.
- Parking hotspots.
- An update on the modes of transport – identify what trends and changes there has been.
- c2c update.
- Delivering the Homes Thurrock Needs report – to include the case study of Belmont Road with detail on engagement strategies and protecting open and green spaces.

Voicing further concerns on air quality, the Vice-Chair said that Tilbury had a big issue of dust and through an independent survey, a magnetic substance had been identified. He went on to say that Tilbury was surrounded by industries and questioned how other particles in the air could be monitored

when monitoring equipment monitored pollution. In response, Andrew Millard said that he was aware that there may be new monitoring equipment for air quality and he could liaise with the Environment Team on the Committee's concerns. A note would be circulated to the Committee to address those concerns.

The meeting finished at 8.02 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk**