

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14 May 2013
5.00 - 6.40 pm

Present: Councillors Kightley (Chair), Saunders (Vice-Chair), Brierley, Herbert, Johnson, Marchant-Daisley, Owers and Reiner

Executive Councillor for Planning and Climate Change: Tim Ward

Leader of the Council: Tim Bick

Officers:

Director of Environment: Simon Payne

Head of Planning Services: Patsy Dell

Committee Manager: James Goddard

Other Officers Present:

Service Director (Growth & Infrastructure) – County Council: Graham Hughes

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

13/30/Env Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Reid.

Councillor Brierley attended as an alternate member.

13/31/Env Declarations of Interest

Name	Item	Interest
Councillor Saunders	13/33/Env	Personal: Member of Cambridge Cycling Campaign.

13/32/Env Public Questions

No public questions were received.

13/33/Env Upgrade to A14

Matter for Decision

On 3 April 2013 Members requested a special Environment Scrutiny Committee meeting to discuss the latest proposals for improvements to the A14 Scheme.

On 18 April 2013 Full Council debated a request from Cambridgeshire County Council for a financial contribution towards the cost of the proposed A14 Upgrade Scheme. It was resolved to abstain from making a funding contribution to the A14; and to continue contributing what funds the Council could make available for public transport and cycling within the city to help mitigate the impact of commuting into the city, in particular by starting a "Keep Cambridge Moving Fund".

The Officer's report set out the background to the debate at Full Council and also identified key issues that would need to be taken forward through formal processes for consideration of the upgrade scheme and establishment of a 'Keep Cambridge Moving' Fund.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Planning and Climate Change

- (i) Noted the decision of Full Council on the scheme.
- (ii) Noted the following amendment as Labour's position statement:

The Executive Councillor is asked to

- 1) restate that the City Council is committed to a major A14 upgrade and will work jointly with the County Council to ensure all essential additional local Cambridge measures are implemented, to maximise diversion of ongoing journeys within Cambridge to non-car
- 2) organise an all-party meeting with the new county council, reflecting recent political changes, inviting all Cambridgeshire councils to negotiate a single 25 year 'Keep Cambridgeshire Moving Fund', as an integral part of any scheme negotiated with Government. This should not rule out options before ensuring the best achievable scheme is developed for Cambridge and Cambridgeshire residents
- 3) undertake a consultation with residents and businesses, and report whether responses support the upgrade
- 4) bring a further report to Committee after the meeting, including on the further detailed traffic impact analysis and the list of new non-car measures needed for Cambridge. This should assess a new NW Cambridge park and ride, public transport interchanges and new

cycleways, which will need to be fully integrated in any overall A14 scheme and a revised County Transport Strategy, not separate.

Reason for the Decision

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations

The Committee received a report from the Director of Environment regarding the Upgrade to A14.

The Committee made the following comments in response to the report:

- (i) Sought clarification regarding accuracy and reliability of transport modelling data.
- (ii) Noted that some housing developments outside the city boundary were dependent on A14 improvements going ahead. Councillors asked for traffic modelling data to show the impact on city traffic; showing all effects/contingencies from A14 improvements going ahead or not.
- (iii) Sought clarification regarding the benefits to Cambridge from A14 improvements.

Labour Councillors felt the A14 upgrade was a big issue and expressed surprise that a decision had been taken without the opportunity to scrutinise it. They welcomed the opportunity to do so now. The Leader of the Council said that the County Council had pressurised the City Council for a response, so it seemed expedient to take the proposal to Full Council.

In response to Councillor Herbert's questions the Executive Councillor for Planning and Climate Change, Director of Environment and Service Director (Strategy and Development) said the following:

- (i) The Local Plan does not have a specific policy on the A14 and none of the allocations within city limits in the Local Plan are directly contingent on an upgrade of the road. Two developments outside of the city limits (Northstowe and Waterbeach) were dependent on the A14 improvement and could not go ahead without it. Alconbury was not dependent on the A14 upgrade, but was related to it. Bearscroft Farm was not dependent on, or related to the upgrade.

- (ii) Modelling of transport needs had been undertaken and Officers were confident of its reliability. One of the most sophisticated modelling systems in the country had been used.
- (iii) Modelling suggested transport impacts on the city from the A14 upgrade was an overall reduction in traffic levels. City traffic levels may increase from housing developments, but this was a separate issue. City traffic levels would be affected by housing growth/developments rather than A14 improvements.
- (iv) The County Council had provided all transport modelling data to the City Council to factor it into the Local Plan.
- (v) Referred to the Transport Strategy for figures on housing growth impact on traffic levels.
- (vi) The City and County Councils had been discussing integrated infrastructure arrangements and links to Local Plan housing developments. These discussions were put on hold due to local election results; but would resume after the new County Leader was confirmed.

In response to Councillor Kightley's questions the Service Director (Strategy and Development) said the following:

- (i) Transport modelling had been undertaken on several occasions.
- (ii) The model was periodically updated to validate it. The last occasion was in 2010, but traffic volumes had changed little over the last few years.
- (iii) The model was a reliable tool, albeit with a margin of error.
- (iv) The A14 was principally a strategic road, so traffic was more likely to go around the city than enter.

In response to Councillors Brierley, Owers and Saunder's questions the Service Director (Strategy and Development) said the following:

- (i) Transport modelling did not factor in accidents, traffic congestion etc.
- (ii) The modelling convention was to model a regular day, it would be inappropriate to model irregular events as they were unusual.

In response to Councillors Kightley and Saunder's questions the Executive Councillor for Planning and Climate Change plus Director of Environment and Service Director (Strategy and Development) said the following:

- (i) The key driver for A14 improvements is resilience, the road was operating above capacity at present.

- (ii) It was unusual, but not unprecedented for councils to give other councils financial contributions to strategic networks.
- (iii) The County Council was working with the Department for Transport (DfT) and Treasury. They informed the County Council that the A14 improvement scheme would not go ahead without local contributions.
- (iv) The DfT scheme was not open to amendment, so the Leader of the City Council had proposed a "Keep Cambridge Moving Fund". The City Council could not use council tax contributions, so instead would have to rely on Community Infrastructure Levy and s106. DfT set these specifications ie all contributions must be cash.
- (v) If A14 improvements went ahead, the city could expect an increase from business rates. These could contribute towards transport funding. The Council was asked to contribute £3m over 25 years together with neighbouring authorities.
- (vi) The Leader of the Council and the Director of Environment said the City Council collected £93m in business rates, but kept only £7m of these. It would need to increase the net amount of business rates (ie amount retained) to cover Central Government's infrastructure contribution requirements; this was hard to do. The link between business rate increase and A14 improvements was unclear. The committee was not in a position to revisit the Council decision for six months for reasons set out in the Officer's recommendation (ie legal and resource implications). Business rates were limited to a period of seven years, which did not allow the Council to commit to using these for a twenty five year work programme. Hence the Leader's "Keep Cambridge Moving Fund".
- (vii) The scale of infrastructure was unrelated to tolling. A toll road was proposed for strategic areas of the A14, parallel access routes would give access to Cambridge and be free.
- (viii) The Minister (Patrick McLoughlan) hoped to announce details of the A14 improvement scheme (including tolling) in September 2013. The County Council and Central Government would negotiate a funding package between June and September. Work should commence in 2018.

Labour Councillors requested a change to the recommendations. Councillor Herbert formally proposed to delete the Officer recommendations and replace with the following:

The Executive Councillor is asked to

- 1) restate that the City Council is committed to a major A14 upgrade and will work jointly with the County Council to ensure all essential additional local Cambridge measures are implemented, to maximise diversion of ongoing journeys within Cambridge to non-car
- 2) organise an all-party meeting with the new county council, reflecting recent political changes, inviting all Cambridgeshire councils to negotiate a single 25 year 'Keep Cambridgeshire Moving Fund', as an integral part of any scheme negotiated with Government. This should not rule out options before ensuring the best achievable scheme is developed for Cambridge and Cambridgeshire residents
- 3) undertake a consultation with residents and businesses, and report whether responses support the upgrade
- 4) bring a further report to Committee after the meeting, including on the further detailed traffic impact analysis and the list of new non-car measures needed for Cambridge. This should assess a new NW Cambridge park and ride, public transport interchanges and new cycleways, which will need to be fully integrated in any overall A14 scheme and a revised County Transport Strategy, not separate.

The amendments were **lost (by 4 votes to 4 and on the Chair's casting vote)**.

Councillors requested a change to the recommendation. Councillor Saunders formally proposed to withdraw the following recommendation from the Officer's report:

Executive Councillor is recommended to:

- 2) Agree the process set out in this report for future work in relation to the A14 Upgrade Scheme and the 'Keep Cambridge Moving Fund'.

The Committee **unanimously** approved withdrawing this recommendation.

The following recommendation was formally proposed:

The Executive Councillor is asked to note the following amendment as Labour's position statement:

The Executive Councillor is asked to

- 1) restate that the City Council is committed to a major A14 upgrade and will work jointly with the County Council to ensure all essential additional

local Cambridge measures are implemented, to maximise diversion of ongoing journeys within Cambridge to non-car

- 2) organise an all-party meeting with the new county council, reflecting recent political changes, inviting all Cambridgeshire councils to negotiate a single 25 year 'Keep Cambridgeshire Moving Fund', as an integral part of any scheme negotiated with Government. This should not rule out options before ensuring the best achievable scheme is developed for Cambridge and Cambridgeshire residents
- 3) Undertake a consultation with residents and businesses, and report whether responses support the upgrade
- 4) Bring a further report to Committee after the meeting, including on the further detailed traffic impact analysis and the list of new non-car measures needed for Cambridge. This should assess a new NW Cambridge park and ride, public transport interchanges and new cycleways, which will need to be fully integrated in any overall A14 scheme and a revised County Transport Strategy, not separate.

The Committee **unanimously** endorsed this recommendation.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendation.

Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

The meeting ended at 6.40 pm

CHAIR

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