

CABINET

MONDAY, 3 OCTOBER 2022 - 2.00 PM



PRESENT: Councillor C Boden (Chairman), Councillor Mrs J French (Vice-Chairman), Councillor I Benney, Councillor S Clark, Councillor Miss S Hoy, Councillor P Murphy, Councillor C Seaton and Councillor S Tierney

APOLOGIES: Councillor S Count and Councillor Mrs D Laws

The meeting commenced with Cabinet reflecting on recent national events and a minute's silence was held in memory of HM Queen Elizabeth II. A further minute's silence was also held for former Councillor Ralph Butcher, who had sadly also recently passed away.

CAB30/22 PREVIOUS MINUTES

The public minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2022 were confirmed and signed as an accurate record.

CAB31/22 FENLAND WALKING, CYCLING & MOBILITY AID STRATEGY

Councillor Boden stated that since publication of the agenda, revised versions of the Fenland Walking, Cycling & Mobility Aid Strategy report and Appendix 4 had been produced. The changes had been highlighted and two additional pages circulated to Cabinet and published online. All members agreed to the alterations.

Councillor Seaton presented the report and thanked the Hereward Community Rail Partnership for their assistance with funding in helping to develop this important policy approach for Fenland.

Councillor Mrs French said that although this is welcome, she is disappointed about the mixture of who is responsible for what. She stated that County Council has a legal responsibility to replace faded white lines, but she has been asking for over 12 months for the 'keep clear' signs outside the fire station to be repainted as well as the zebra crossing on the High Street. She asked why these now appear in this document when County has a statutory duty to replace them. Furthermore, there is nothing in the document regarding cycle paths from Peas Hill to Mill Hill using the grass verge and not the road space. When she spoke to county council officers at a MATs meeting last week, they knew nothing about it, and she would like an explanation from officers as to why this has been missed out.

Councillor Seaton responded that firstly there is mention within the document of the cycle path from Peas Hill to Mill Hill and it is part of the policy going forward. Regarding the lines outside the fire station, it states in the report that this has been passed to the County Council as it falls under the responsibility of Highways; no part of the policy strategy document can therefore address that. Councillor Boden said it is important to point out for clarification that, in respect of the use of the grass verge on the Isle of Ely way between Peas Hill and Mill Hill, we should not merely state that we want to use it for the cycle path but that it needs to be a segregated cycle way and not conjoined to the highway. Councillor Seaton advised he would note that and forward the information to officers.

Councillor Boden commented that in respect of NCN63 the situation in respect of wet and dry routes is unsatisfactory and there needs to be more discussion with Sustrans regarding this. Councillor Seaton agreed that he would take this matter up further with Sustrans.

Proposed by Councillor Seaton, seconded by Councillor Mrs French and Cabinet AGREED to:

- **Note the progress relating to the approved schemes and the March Area Transport Strategy Walking and Cycling Projects**
- **To note the outcome of the public consultation on version 1 of the strategy**
- **To note the action plans of schemes**
- **To review the proposed Cycling, Walking & Mobility Aid Improvement Strategy following the above and adopt this as Version 2.**

CAB32/22 BIDDING FOR EXTERNAL FUNDING & PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Members considered the Bidding for External Funding and Project Management report presented by Councillor Boden.

Councillor Boden said that although this report did not need to come to Cabinet as it is an internal matter about the way in which projects are funded, bid for, and managed, he felt that given the importance of the subject and this being a different environment from that of six months ago, it was important to bring this into the public arena. He added that the Council must be alert to and aware of the difficulties with capital projects in terms of funding them, keeping to budget, and managing them effectively and efficiently to achieve the best outcomes for our local communities.

Proposed by Councillor Boden, seconded by Councillor Seaton and Cabinet AGREED to note the changes in agreed processes.

CAB33/22 11-12 AND 24 HIGH STREET, WISBECH (VERBAL UPDATES)

Councillor Seaton gave a verbal update on progress with the Wisbech High Street projects.

Councillor Seaton advised that several bids had been submitted in respect of 24 High Street, one for £200k to the Brownfield Land Release Fund and one for £210k to the CPCA for a housing grant. He added that the Council will shortly be signing a pre-construction service agreement with the contractors and construction is due to start early next year.

In respect of 11-12 High Street, Councillor Seaton advised that discussion is ongoing with a housing provider and a cost consultant report has been received for a façade scheme, i.e., a frontage wall, with further cost information awaited in respect of party wall works. Due diligence is required on the offer of a freehold purchase from a company. Two developers approached informally have confirmed they have no interest in the site as they say the scheme is unviable even with a £1m grant and for a £1 purchase price. No formal market testing has been undertaken to date.

Councillor Tierney said that it is good to see some movement on this. He has heard it said in the public domain that this should have been completed by now but as nobody will take it on even with £1m off and a £1 purchase price then clearly there are problems with the site. His concern is that a frontage will make it look better, but once it is up, the project can be put to the back of the mind. Broadly, we would like to hear better news, but at least it is not a disaster.

Councillor Seaton pointed out that the façade would be dependent on the Lottery Grant funding allowing some of the monies to be used towards that and we are currently waiting for that confirmation should we go down that route. Councillor Hoy requested that if a façade is to be built

then it be built high enough to hide the scaffolding and general mess; to which Councillor Seaton gave his agreement.

Councillor Boden thanked Councillor Seaton for his update.

CAB34/22 CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

Members considered the Constitutional Amendments report presented by Councillor Boden.

Proposed by Councillor Boden, seconded by Councillor Mrs French and Cabinet AGREED a proposed amendment to paragraph 10.1 of the Standing Orders so that motions on notice are required to be submitted by 12 noon as opposed to 5pm and to recommend that change to Full Council for approval.

CAB35/22 DRAFT 6 MONTH CABINET FORWARD PLAN

Councillor Boden presented the draft 6-month Cabinet Forward Plan for information.

Councillor Mrs French said she was disappointed that no mention is made of Civil Parking Enforcement on the Forward Plan, but she understands why because this is not progressing as quickly as it should at County Council. Councillor Boden agreed it is disappointing but said as this matter is in the hands of County Council, unfortunately he cannot guarantee when it can go on the Plan.

CAB36/22 PREVIOUS MINUTES (CONFIDENTIAL)

The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2022 were confirmed and signed as an accurate record.

2.30 pm

Chairman