

DELEGATED DECISIONS BY CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT

MINUTES of the meeting held on Thursday, 10 February 2011 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 10.30 am.

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Rodney Rose – in the Chair

Other Members in Attendance: Councillor Roy Darke (Item 2)
Councillor John Sanders (Item 2)
Councillor Altaf-Khan (Item 2)
Councillor David Turner (Item 4)

Officers:

Whole of meeting G. Warrington (Law & Governance); S. Howell and K. Haines (Environment & Economy)

The Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting, together with a schedule of addenda tabled at the meeting, and decided as set out below. Except insofar as otherwise specified, the reasons for the decisions are contained in the agenda, reports and schedule, copies of which are attached to the signed Minutes.

4/11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Agenda Item.)

Councillor David Turner declared a personal interest in Item 4 the item to which he had requested to speak insofar as he had submitted a claim to the County Council regarding damage to a vehicle.

5/11 QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

(Agenda Item. 2)

Councillor Roy Darke

“Can the Cabinet Member for Transport confirm that S106 funding (from Rectory Homes development) is still available for needed road safety measures in Jack Straw’s Lane?”

Councillor Rodney Rose replied

“We currently hold £74,986 of S106 funds, from two separate developments in Jack Straw’s Lane. However neither of the developers concerned is Rectory Homes. The S106 agreements state that the monies must be used on traffic calming measures in Jack Straw’s Lane or any alternatives which

achieve similar benefits. Officers have investigated the feasibility of traffic calming measures and are now looking at other improvements in Jack Straw's Lane which achieve similar benefits. Residents will be consulted in due course."

Supplementary question from Councillor Roy Darke

"As local residents had identified simple measures to relieve problems would the Cabinet Member for Transport consider those as part of the investigation into improvements in Jack Straw's Lane?"

Councillor Rose replied

"I haven't yet seen all options but if residents were proposing something then those would be looked at."

Councillor John Sanders

"In the light of the draconian cuts that the County Council's Cabinet says it is compelled to impose on libraries, youth centres and older people, why does the Cabinet Member for Transport not offer to postpone major road works like the Cogges Link and the resurfacing of Iffley Road for three or four years until, according to the Government, the financial crisis will have been resolved and, presumably, Oxfordshire will then be able to afford such projects and in the meanwhile be able to maintain essential services? "

Councillor Rodney Rose replied

"The County Council's Cabinet is enforcing cuts necessitated by the Labour Government's ineptitude at controlling the country's finances in recent years, as highlighted in Treasury Reports since 2001.

The Cabinet takes the view that a suitable road infrastructure is also an essential service in Oxfordshire, but actual spending will be decided at the Council next week."

Supplementary question from Councillor Sanders

"Is the Cabinet Member for Transport suggesting that roads take priority over libraries, youth centres and care for the elderly?"

Councillor Rose replied

"I am surprised to hear a member for a City Division suggesting that resurfacing work of a major route into the City be postponed particularly as the Iffley Road was in need of repair. Decisions regarding spending issues would be taken at the County Council's budget meeting on 15 February 2011 and not at this meeting."

Councillor Mohammed Altaf-Khan

"As you know Cllr Rodney Rose, the Highfield Residents Association (Headington Oxford) has worked closely with County officers and members for the past four years to deliver a traffic management scheme for Highfield.

In doing so the residents have acted entirely in accordance with the aims of the Big Society as embraced by the Council. Despite the Council's stated commitment to the scheme the scheme budget was halved in December 2010 without prior discussion or consultation with residents. Will the Cabinet Member for Transport and officers meet representatives of Highfield residents and their local councillors and MP to explain and discuss the funding arrangements for this essential community scheme?"

Councillor Rodney Rose replied

"The Section 106 funding for Highfield is not restricted and can be spent on other strategic transport aims in the city that are deemed appropriate. Given that the capital budget for transport schemes has been very significantly reduced, we have had to carefully consider how we prioritise 'flexible' developer funds. For this reason the scheme budget has been halved. As a result, and from the results of informal consultation conducted in May 2010, the most popular parts of the scheme were retained. The elements that have been retained also reflect the areas where most accidents have been reported, i.e. the side road junctions.

Interestingly, we had more than 250 responses to the first consultation exercise and only 30 responses from residents in the most recent consultation in December 2010/January 2011. Every household (more than 700) affected by the scheme received a consultation letter so the assumption is that many people were happy with the proposals so did not feel the need to respond. "

"Bearing this in mind, I do not feel it is necessary to meet representatives of Highfield residents. However, if they so wish they can make representations to me at my Cabinet Member for Transport Delegated Decisions meeting on 24 March when these issues are scheduled to be considered."

Supplementary question from Councillor Altaf Khan

The residents will inevitably be disappointed that funding has been halved. Will the Cabinet Member for Transport reconsider the request from the Highfield Residents association and meet with them to take this forward?

Councillor Rose replied

"Given the reductions we face as a County Council S106 funding needs to be carefully prioritised. Proposals for the Highfield area are scheduled to come to me for decision on 24 March and I will not meet with residents before then to avoid any risk of fettering my discretion to take a decision at that time."

6/11 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item. 3)

Speaker

Item

Councillor David Turner
(Shadow Cabinet)

4. Highway Safety Inspections Policy

7/11 HIGHWAY SAFETY INSPECTIONS POLICY

(Agenda Item. 4)

The Cabinet Member considered a revised policy for Statutory Safety Inspections noting the following amendments to the report:

Paragraph 16 to read "By aligning the response times to the relevant categories, the more urgent work can be prioritised and the less urgent work more efficiently programmed. Although the response times have been reviewed, there is no justification for changing them other than to withdraw the 7 day response to facilitate more effective works programming. It is the aim to implement all these policy changes from April 2011."

Paragraph 18, line 5 amend "in excess of £700K" to read "approximately £70K".

Councillor Turner:

- asked whether the cost of highway repairs against costs arising from claims had been analysed;
- asked whether consideration had been given to reducing the 3 month inspection period for some routes to 2 and whether or not the costs of such a reduction had been compared against the costs of claims. He submitted that although there might well be a negative cost implication a 2 month period would be more acceptable to the general public than 3;
- considered that the modified network hierarchy discriminated against rural roads even though the inconvenience from damage to a vehicle was the same;
- asked for clarification regarding responsibility for inspection and maintenance of roadside gulleys.

Officers confirmed that some analyses had been carried out. However, inspection periods had been set in order to provide a robust claims policy by demonstrating that the frequency and type of inspection was appropriate to the route. Available resources had to be allocated in order to best meet the risk aspect. Roads would be inspected at the appropriate frequencies using this process, and defects reported by officers and other road users during intervening periods would also be investigated and acted on appropriately. The Council was responsible for inspecting, emptying and maintaining roadside gulleys on the county highway network. The Council could also

take action where highway drainage or flooding issues were caused by water from private land.

Councillor Rose stated that the County Council needed to provide a safe highway network supported by a robust claims policy but needed to be realistic in how it allocated its resources. He welcomed greater public participation in bringing potential problems to light.

Having regard to the arguments and options set out in the documentation before him, the representations made to him and the further considerations set out above the Cabinet Member for Transport confirmed his decision as follows:

- (a) approve the Highway Safety Inspections Policy as set out in Annex A to the report CMDT4;
- (b) approve the Highway Defect Investigatory Levels as set out in Annex B to the report CMDT4;
- (c) to authorise the Deputy Director for Environment & Economy - Highways and Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport to issue a written instruction to temporarily suspend service standards as set out in the Highway Safety Inspections Policy during or as a result of exceptional adverse weather conditions or other exceptional disruptive events.

8/11 PROPOSED NEW DISABLED PERSONS' PARKING PLACE (DPPP) IN HART STREET, JERICHO

(Agenda Item. 5)

The Cabinet Member for Transport considered a proposal to install a new disabled persons' parking place in Hart Street, Jericho.

Having regard to the arguments and options set out in the documentation before him the Cabinet Member for Transport authorised a variation to the Oxfordshire County Council (Disabled Persons' Parking Places - Oxford) Order 2010, to provide a new DPPP in Hart Street as shown on the plan annexed to the report CMDT5.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing 2009