

CABINET

MINUTES of the meeting held on Friday, 30 July 2021 commencing at 12.00 pm and finishing at 12.20 pm

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Liz Leffman – in the Chair
Councillor Liz Brighthouse OBE (Deputy Chair)
Councillor Glynis Phillips
Councillor Tim Bearder
Councillor Calum Miller
Councillor Mark Lygo

Other Members in Attendance:

Officers:

Whole of meeting Yvonne Rees, Chief Executive; Bill Cotton, Corporate Director Environment and Place; Lorna Baxter, Director for Finance; Sukdave Ghuman, Head of Legal; Colm Ó Caomhánaigh, Committee Secretary

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.

79/21 DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT TRANCHE 3 ACTIVE TRAVEL BID
(Agenda Item. 1)

Cabinet considered this item from the adjourned meeting on 20 July 2021 having seen the list of schemes being considered for the bid as attached in Annex B.

Councillor Eddie Reeves, Leader of the Opposition, while noting the absence of an apology for remarks made by the Cabinet Member for Highway Management at Full Council, welcomed the press release the previous day announcing the deferral of the East Oxford Low Traffic Neighbourhood proposal in order to take stock and have a wider consultation on the impacts.

Councillor Reeves noted the concerns about the consultation which had been overseen by the previous administration. He reminded Members that these were trial consultations and the new administration could improve them. He was happy for the Recommendation to be adopted and for a bid to be as high as possible but asked that schemes not be implemented until the objectors are heard. There was a need to include other interests such as businesses and religious organisations. He hoped that this administration would do better than the last.

Councillor Michael O'Connor, Deputy Chair, Performance Scrutiny Committee, gave the comments from that committee's discussions on the Tranche 3 proposal as follows:

- Strongly supportive of the bid and that it should be for significantly bigger than previous allocation of £3m
- Concerns that cycling was getting more attention than walking. Designs should ensure that they are not in conflict.
- While design of cycle paths was generally good there had been situations where they meet roads that the design had not been satisfactory for cyclists.
- Schemes should be in compliance with LTN 1/20 design notes.
- There has been a focus on the city and larger towns but all of the county needed to be considered.
- Consultations should include all stakeholders and all those affected, including across county boundaries.
- There were concerns about how responses from different stakeholders were weighted.
- We should look at consultations conducted by some London Boroughs as exemplars.
- Consultations should not be solely online.
- Where schemes are trials, objections should be addressed as far as possible.
- Local representatives at all levels, who know their areas very well, should be involved from the beginning.

Councillor Tim Bearder responded that he had not intended his remarks at Council to be offensive and he apologised to anyone who was offended by them.

He agreed with most of the comments from the scrutiny meeting. Some of the difficulties were caused by the very short deadlines imposed by the Government. However, he very much welcomed the Government's announcement of a £338m package for Active Travel and changes to the Highway Code giving walking and cycling great priority. The Council wanted to work in harmony with the Government on this.

Councillor Bearder noted that the Government wanted proper assessment of schemes and it was in that light that he had deferred a decision on the East Oxford Low Traffic Neighbourhood to allow more consideration of the impact on blue-badge holders and traders for example.

Councillor Bearder described this proposal as a step-change from the previous bids. The schemes added up to between £10-15m compared to £4m for the last bid. He would have liked to have more consultation and he thanked Members, officers and representatives of cycling groups for their input in the short time that was available. He moved the Recommendation.

Councillor Glynis Phillips proposed an amendment so that it reads "to authorise officers, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highway Management, to finalise ...". This was seconded by Councillor Mark Lygo.

Cabinet Members raised other issues as follows:

- Had any new schemes been proposed as part of the request to Members for ideas which only closed yesterday?
- How will schemes be prioritised if the Council was awarded less than the full amount being requested?
- The emphasis on best practice designs was very welcome
- We should see more social prescribing of walking and cycling from this.
- Members should champion the schemes in their localities.
- It was unfortunately that Government did not trust local authorities to spend money on this themselves but they have to bid against each other. The Council was becoming just a delivery arm of Government.

Councillor Bearder agreed that schemes would have to be prioritised and as part of that officers were working with the Department of Transport to see which schemes most closely met the criteria for the bids. New ideas had come in and could be added to some existing schemes or in some cases would be added to a list for the longer-term. He agreed to keep all Members up to date on the bidding process.

The Recommendation was agreed as amended.

RESOLVED to authorise officers, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highway Management, to finalise and submit Oxfordshire

County Council's bid to the Department for Transport Active Travel Fund Tranche 3 submission.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing