

**MINUTES** of a meeting of the **CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE** held on 10 September 2020

**PRESENT**

Cabinet Member - Councillor S Spencer

Also in attendance – Councillors T Ainsworth, G Hickton and M Wall

**47/20**      **PETITIONS**      **RESOLVED** (1) to receive the under-mentioned petitions: -

<b>Location/Subject</b>	<b>Signatures</b>	<b>Local Member</b>
Chesterfield, Walton Road – Request for Programme of Tree Pruning	75	Councillor R Mihaly
Swanwick, Nether Close – Parking Issues	12	Councillors S Marshall-Clarke and P Smith

(2) that the Director – Economy, Transport and Environment be asked to investigate and consider the matters raised.

**48/20**      **MINUTES**      **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Infrastructure held on 30 July 2020 be confirmed as a correct record.

**49/20**      **PETITION – REQUEST THAT THE COUNCIL OFFERS COMPANION PASSES FOR DISABLED GOLD CARD HOLDERS**      A petition signed by 407 persons requesting the addition of a companion entitlement for certain categories of disabled Gold Card holders had been received and investigated.

The Derbyshire Gold Card forms part of the statutory English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS). Additional, discretionary, local concessions for use within the Council’s own scheme area could be offered however, the full funding cost of these would have to be met by the individual authority. Derbyshire Gold Cards did not currently offer any additional concessions. The Council has for many years, offered reduced fares for young people through the separate b\_line concessionary scheme, although the Council’s budget savings for 2020-21 currently included a proposal to end the b\_line scheme.

Of the nine Travel Concession Authorities in the East Midlands, only two authorities offer companion passes and of the other neighbouring authorities only two offer companion passes. Companion passes did not form part of the national scheme therefore companion element would only be valid for use within the boundary of that Authority providing the concession. The limitation of a companion element to only those journeys starting in Derbyshire would restrict the usefulness of this concession as the companion element would not, for example, be valid for use to travel back from destinations in neighbouring authority areas such as Burton, Derby, Macclesfield, Manchester, Nottingham or Sheffield, nor would it be valid for use anywhere else in England.

In view of the petition request, the potential for transport savings to offset the cost of operating a companion pass scheme has been considered and details were contained in the report. It was considered that there would be very limited, if any, opportunities to deliver savings from specialised transport budgets if a companion entitlement for disabled Gold Card holders was available.

The Council fully understood the positive impact that access to travel could have on personal wellbeing and independence, and was committed to maximising opportunities to achieve this. However, at this time, the benefits arising from the introduction of a companion pass scheme for the card holder and their companion must be considered within the context of significant financial constraints and against the additional, ongoing revenue cost needed to support such a scheme.

There were also a number of other potential discretionary enhancements available for the Gold Card Scheme supplementing the statutory minimum currently offered and all have their own relative merits arising from the benefits to those who would be eligible. It was therefore difficult to prioritise one potential Gold Card enhancement over another. The Council has prioritised maintaining existing services with its available discretionary public transport budget, including funding a countywide bus network, ensuring bus services remain available for use by both disabled Gold Card holders and other service users.

The Council would continue to review its approach to supported public transport, and the concessionary fare scheme, as appropriate to ensure opportunities for sustainable and accessible travel were maximised for all Derbyshire residents.

**RESOLVED** that (1) the request to offer companion bus passes be refused;

(2) the lead petitioner be informed accordingly; and

(3) a review of the concessionary fare scheme be undertaken at an appropriate time in the future and the findings reported to the Cabinet member meeting.

**50/20 PETITION – REQUEST THAT THE COUNTY COUNCIL KEEPS B-LINE CARDS AND TRAVEL DISCOUNTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN DERBYSHIRE**

A petition signed by 355 persons requesting the retention of the b\_line travel discount scheme for young people in Derbyshire was received at the Cabinet member meeting on 9 July 2020.

The Council currently offered two concessionary travel schemes for Derbyshire residents, b\_line and Gold Card and withdrawal of b\_line was included in the Council's budget saving proposals for 2020-21. However, since the time the budget was set, the UK has been subject to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic which has impacted significantly on the local economy and specifically, access to employment and training opportunities for young people.

The Council's COVID-19 economic recovery work has identified 16 – 25 year olds as being specifically vulnerable to unemployment as a result of COVID-19 and within the emerging Economic Recovery Strategy, action to ensure bus and rail services are maintained has been taken by the Council as part of the early 'rescue and recover' phase (0-6 months), including continued payments to bus operators for contracted services. As the Council moved into the 'revive' phase of the Recovery Strategy, improved access to jobs and learning has been prioritised and this included targeted support for young people.

The Council was working closely with bus and rail operators to encourage a return to pre COVID-19 levels of public transport use in Derbyshire, and critically to help support 'return to learn' and return to work programmes for all residents, especially those young people who were disproportionately at risk of unemployment.

In view of the current circumstances, it would be counterproductive to withdraw a travel scheme primarily designed to encourage greater use of public transport by young people at a time when access to jobs and learning was paramount.

**RESOLVED** that (1) the Council should not proceed with the proposed withdrawal of the b\_line scheme; and

(2) the lead petitioner be informed accordingly.

#### **51/20 REPORT ON THE COMPLETION OF A FLOOD AND WATER MANAGEMENT ACT 2010 SECTION 19 FLOODING INVESTIGATION**

The report provided an update on the completion and outcomes of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 Section 19 Flooding Investigation, following the November 2019 flooding events which affected large areas of the County. The County Council was the "Lead Local Flood Authority" (LLFA) undertaking this investigation.

Extensive investigations have been undertaken to obtain as much information on the flooding event as possible, including questionnaires to residents and businesses affected, site visits, numerous meetings with parish and town councils and liaising with all of the relevant authorities (Environment Agency, Water Authorities, District/Borough Councils etc.), all of which have been formally consulted as part of this investigation. This also provided an opportunity to identify and engage with communities who have been affected, ascertain if further support and advice could be

offered in the immediate aftermath of the flooding event, and also identify opportunities to develop flood mitigation projects.

The Investigation has concluded that all Risk Management Authorities (Environment Agency, Water Authorities, Canals and Rivers Trust and District/Borough Councils) have exercised, or were proposing to exercise, their respective functions, in response to this flood event. A copy of the report with the results of the investigation, which was being published by the Council as LLFA, was attached as appendix to the report.

The LLFA would continue to work with all of the Risk Management Authorities, to try and reduce the flood risk to properties and infrastructure, together with trying to ensure that the community was even more resilient and prepared. Work was underway implementing the property flood resilience recovery support scheme, however some districts/boroughs within the County did not qualify for the property flood resilience recovery support scheme, as the threshold set by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) was 25 or more flooded properties in any one district/borough. This was despite rigorous lobbying to DEFRA by Derbyshire County Council, to try and get them to amend this. It was noted at the meeting that the scheme had been extended by a further 9 months.

Derbyshire County Council, as the LLFA, would strive to implement and monitor the recommended actions within the report, to reduce the impacts of future flood events.

**RESOLVED** to note and welcome the delivery of the completed Flood and Water Management Act 2010 Section 19 Flooding Investigation, including the outcomes and recommendations, following the November 2019 events.

**52/20 REQUEST FOR CREATION OF TEMPORARY POST OF ENGINEER IN THE FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT TEAM** The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) had previously awarded £169,904.90 to the Council in respect of its lead Local Flood Authority function, but, to date, no expenditure of these grant funds has been necessary.

The funding has been held as a contingency in case of the Council being subject to legal challenge through the Local Lead Flood Authority role as statutory consultee for planning applications. However, to date, no legal challenge has been made and, following a review of this budget, including consultation with the Director of Legal Services and a risk assessment, it has been determined that the risk is sufficiently low to warrant this funding being utilised for another purpose.

Government has recently announced investment of £5.2 billion to create around 2,000 new flood and coastal defences to better protect 336,000 properties in England by 2027. The Flood Risk Management Team has put forward a number of additional schemes to be delivered by this date, and in order to ensure success in both obtaining Government grant funding and delivery of these schemes, additional resource within the team was required.

It was proposed that £109,904.90 of the grant funding, which was currently held in the Sustainable Drainage revenue budget, be moved into the existing Flood Management reserve and drawn down to fund an additional temporary engineer within the Flood Risk Team. The remaining £60,000 from the grant funding would remain in the Sustainable Drainage revenue budget and has already been utilised to support Agency staff within the Flood Risk Team.

**RESOLVED** to approve the transfer of funding from the Sustainable Drainage Budget to an existing Flood Management reserve, as detailed in the report, to fund an additional temporary post of Engineer within the Flood Risk Management Team at grade 11 for a period of two years.

**53/20**      **BUDGET MONITORING 2020-21 – PERIOD 2**      The net controllable budget for the Highways, Transport and Infrastructure portfolio was £74.789m. The Revenue Budget Monitoring Statement, prepared at Period 2, indicated that there was a projected year-end overspend of £6.009m. The portfolio has, or was forecast to spend, additional costs from April 2020 to the end of June 2020 of £6.933m due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. It was expected that these costs would be met corporately. If the Portfolio was not incurring these additional costs then the year end position would be an underspend of £0.924m.

Since the period 2 figures were produced, further information regarding COVID-19 costs has become available, and it was currently expected that any underspend on Waste Management would not be realised. This means that the forecast outturn position would be £82.598m, an overspend of £7.809m, reduced to £0.876m if the COVID-19 costs were met corporately.

The key variances included Waste Management (underspend £1.840m however, as noted, was not likely to be realised due to increased costs associated with COVID-19), Winter Maintenance (overspend £1.327m), and Highway Maintenance and Land Reclamation (overspend £1.155m).

Budget reductions totalling £1.426m were allocated for the year, with a brought forward figure from previous years of £5.234m. This has resulted in total reductions to be achieved of £6.660m at the start of the year. It was forecast that £0.408m of savings would have been achieved by the year-end. Delivery of the Countryside, Waste and Public Transport savings has been delayed due to COVID-19.

Growth items and one-off funding in the 2020-21 budget included Ash Dieback (£0.270m one-off) and Elvaston Castle Masterplan (£0.200m one-off.),

Earmarked reserves relating to this portfolio, totalling £17.238m, were currently held to support future expenditure. Risks and the debt position were also detailed in the report.

**RESOLVED** to note the report.

**54/20**      **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**      **RESOLVED** that the public, including the press, be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the remaining item on the agenda to avoid the disclosure of the kind of exempt information detailed in the following summary of proceedings: -

**SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS CONDUCTED AFTER THE PUBLIC, INCLUDING THE PRESS, WERE EXCLUDED FROM THE MEETING**

1. To confirm the exempt Minutes of the meeting held on 30 July 2020.

**55/20**      **EXEMPT MINUTES**      **RESOLVED** that the exempt minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Infrastructure held on 30 July 2020 be confirmed as a correct record.