Present: Councillors Gittings (Chair); Carnell, Challenger, Cross,

Griffith, Hornsby-Smith, Keeping, Leng, McGonigle,

Page, Robinson, Terry and Yeo.

Apologies: Councillors McElroy and Moore.

MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 14 March 2022 and 25 May 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. MINUTES OF THE TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the meetings of Traffic Management Sub-Committee held on 3 March 2022 and 15 June 2022 were received.

4. MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES

The Minutes of the following meetings were received:

- Joint Waste Disposal Board 3 March 2022
- AWE Local Liaison Committee 16 March 2022
- Reading Climate Change Partnership 25 January 2022

5. QUESTIONS

Questions on the following matters was asked in accordance with Standing Order 36.

Questioner	Subject
Caroline Langdon	The Rising Sun
Councillor McElroy	Parking on Green Verges

(The full text of the questions and replies were made available on the Reading Borough Council website).

6. CITYFIBRE AND GRAIN CONNECT OPERATIONS IN READING

CityFibre were a telecommunications service provider that was rolling out a new gigabit speed Fibre-to-the-Premises (FTTP) broadband Internet Service Provider network across Reading and into Wokingham and West Berkshire. The project had started at the beginning of 2021 and the company had hired Instalcom to carry out the civil engineering work/installation works. Once installed CityFibre would rent their fibre lines to telecommunications companies so that they didn't have to install new fibre themselves. Grain Connect Limited were also looking to provide a similar service in Reading, but on a smaller scale than CityFibre.

Stacey King, Regional Partnership Director CityFibre, and Paul Wilson, Head of Area Build CityFibre, attended the meeting and gave a presentation on CityFibre's operations in Reading. Roy Griffin, Regional Partnership Director City Fibre, joined the meeting online.

The presentation explained that CityFibre had been running a national programme to deploy a new generation of future-proofed digital infrastructure for the UK, were the second largest internet provider in the UK and their mission was to bring first class, state of the art broadband infrastructure services to Reading, including Wokingham and West Berkshire. The company were in 285 locations nationally and were building in 75 of those locations currently. The places the company was looking to deploy in were part of the Government's Levelling Up agenda. £4 billion was being invested nationally and within Reading this equated to a £58m investment. The technology being deployed would serve everybody; domestic consumers, businesses, particularly smaller businesses and the public sector. The company was building a once in generation upgrade of digital infrastructure in Reading by building brand new networks for the future. CityFibre aimed to use existing access where they could, such as poles and ducts, and would rent space from Openreach and therefore the would be much less disruptive where that infrastructure was appropriate for them to use with work being completed more quickly. The company was delivering to 100,000 properties across Reading.

The network was a wholesale network which meant that CityFibre did not sell to end users instead they had 35 Internet Service Provider partners within the network, although not all of them served every town or city and in Reading there were five ISPs in the network providing a range of choice for different budgets and requirements.

Finally, research had shown that the £58m being invested in Reading would result in £1bn of economic growth over 15 year.

The Committee discussed the presentation, asked questions and raised a number of points including the following:

- Issues with the work in Caversham had included spoil and barriers being left on site when work had finished and traffic lights also remaining in place after the work had been completed;
- The company acknowledged that there were lessons to be learnt from their work in Caversham such as, making sure they went out and pre-warned residents of work that was going to take place and making use of radio and local newspapers to ensure people were as aware as possible of what was happening;
- Problems endured by some residents, particularly in Coley Ward, had included spoil left in driveways, barriers left in front of people's properties and a lack/absence of notification Some of these issues were also reoccurring and had resulted in residents not just being inconvenienced, but being upset and damaging the reputation of the company. There was also a mismatch in what CityFibre said would happen and what had taken place;

- There had also been issues with work on the Oxford Road with vans parking on double yellow lines and it was acknowledged that this had been a challenging area with work staring in the middle of the pandemic, as a result the number of gangs at individual sites had been reduced;
- With regard to the Oxford Road Conservation Area, the company had tried to use existing poles as much as possible and, in respect of Houses in Multiple Occupancy a single cable would be connected to the building and then split for each residence rather than multiple cables going from the pole to the building;
- Despite having thought work had been completed some areas were to be subject
 to further work and road closures, such as Jessie Terrace in Abbey Ward, and
 assurance was sought that a full briefing would be given before work started and
 that residents would be informed in advance and not just by letter;
- All work was carried out under a permit and in the majority of cases was completed within the agreed time scale, occasionally this was not achieved due to the complexity of the work, which is what had happened, for example, in Caversham;
- CityFibre concurred that the nature of their work was disruptive, but that they
 assured the Committee that they were very responsive when problems arose and
 issues were taken up with residents individually, if need be They also aimed to
 work collaboratively and to be as accommodating as they could be;
- The company had worked closely with the Council's Highways team and in November 2021 had presented an option to carry out the work in Caversham as quickly as possible and this had resulted in equipment being kept in place during peak times;
- When there had been issues previously an improvement plan had been agreed
 with officers and as a result there have been improvements, however recently
 performance had reverted back to how it had been before the plan had been
 implemented and it was suggested that it should be reinstated;
- A specialist traffic management company was employed to oversee the work and a team of engineers dealt with issues on site;
- It was agreed that signage and communication could be improved to notify residents of work that was going to take place, of ongoing work and to apologise if there were problems; CityFibre confirmed they were working on changing signage on their sites and contact details should be available and visible on all sites;
- Instalcom were independently audited on the quality of their work and that there was zero tolerance on defects; individual issues were taken very seriously and were discussed at executive level on a weekly basis;

- Letters to residents could be tracked through an app and photographic evidence provided when they were delivered, although it had been discovered that one contractor had not delivered letters. It was also acknowledged that the letters put through people's doors could be mistaken for junk mail and other methods of communicating with residents would be investigated;
- CityFibre confirmed that work gangs that had caused problems for residents, such as leaving barriers outside their properties, had been removed from the job and no longer worked in Reading;
- Finally, it was confirmed that it was unlikely that any other company would carry out such a large scale deployment in the town.

The Committee thanked CityFibre for taking part in the meeting and agreed that the situation would be monitored going forward.

Peter Murphy, Head of National FTTP Operations, Grain Connect Limited, also addressed the Committee remotely and explained that Grain Connect were the cheapest ISP in the UK and were not looking at covering the entirety of Reading, but only around 10 to 20 thousand properties. Work would be carried out in phases, usually in blocks of a thousand properties, with the company using its own duct network. Sites would be small and once completed the company would then sell the service to residents, therefore the aim was to not upset communities too much during the installation stage. Residents would be told of forthcoming work in-person by the company with representatives going door to door. Contractors and supervisors would be employed on-site to oversee the work and overruns were usually rare as the company only worked on two or three streets at a time. However, there was no guarantee that there wouldn't be complaints, but it was a smaller scale operation and the company had already been liaising with the Council's Highways Team prior to work starting.

Resolved -

- (1) That the presentation be noted;
- (2) That Roy Griffin, Stacey King, Paul Wilson and Peter Murphy be thanked for taking part in the meeting;
- (3) That ongoing work in the Borough by CityFibre be monitored.

7. IMPLICATIONS OF THE ENVIRONMENT ACT 2021

The Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report that set out the key implications of the Environment Act 2021 as they related to the Council, its policies and functions. The report also set out the timescales over which key provisions of the Act came into force, summarised the resource implications of these provisions and invited the Committee to consider and advise on how some of these implications might be addressed going forward. A summary of Environment Act provisions and implications for local authorities was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report explained that the Environment Act had passed into law in November 2021 and had created new obligations and powers, or had amended the existing framework of obligations and powers, for protection and enhancement of the natural environment. The Act gave statutory force to some of the policy aspirations that had been set out in the Government's 25-year Environment Plan. While some of the provisions within the Act had some implications for local authorities, either as regulator, public body or a decision maker, the following were likely to be among the most important implications for the Council:

- Waste and Resource Efficiency;
- Air Quality;
- Restoring Nature.

The Council already had policies in place covering many of the areas that had been included in the Act, either in its Local Plan, Local Transport Plan, Air Quality Action Plan, Waste Strategy or the Reading Climate Emergency Strategy. Changes to these policies or their implementation might be required to take account of the new obligations and powers that had been created by the Act.

The report stated that one issue for the Council to consider was how best to take forward those obligations which either needed to be progressed jointly with neighbouring authorities, such as the duty to prepare a Local Nature Recovery Strategy at Berkshire scale, or which might benefit from being taken forward jointly. The report therefore set out proposals for such collaboration and for the pooling of resources where this would enable new obligations to be met more efficiently. This could include the pooling of 'additional burdens', funding received or the creation of joint roles where this would better enable the provision of the Act to be implemented more effectively.

The report explained that the Government was providing funding for local authorities in accordance with the 'additional burdens' principle and while some of this funding had been confirmed, for example, a sum of £20,094 in relation to new obligations on Biodiversity Net Gain, other funding was less clear, such as, for Local Nature Recovery Strategies which might be provided to the nominated 'responsible authority' (Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead in the case of Berkshire). Officers confirmed that it was expected that more funding would be received.

The Committee discussed the report, and it was reported that some residents wanted to see the end of the booking system at the Smallmead Recycling Centre and a return to the 'tip-and-go' approach that had been in place prior to the pandemic. Officers advised the Committee that any waste issues arising from the Act would generally be considered by Housing Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee.

Resolved -

- (1) That the new obligations and powers arising from the Environment Act 2021 as they apply to central and local government be noted;
- (2) That the Council's collaboration with the other Berkshire authorities, including the pooling of resources as required, to discharge the new

responsibilities in relation to the provisions of the Act on 'Restoring Nature', particularly in relation to the development of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Berkshire be approved.

8. UPDATE ON THE COUNCIL'S LOW CARBON CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

Further to Minute 13 of the meeting held on 30 June 2021, the Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report providing the Committee with an update on the Council's low carbon capital investment programme. A summary of the status of the low carbon investment programme was set out in Appendix 1 attached to the report.

The report set out key projects within the programme, which were as follows:

- Decarbonisation of the Bennet Road depot via installation of roof mounted and canopy mounted solar PV arrays and installation of EV charging infrastructure to power the Council's growing fleet of EVs, the vehicles themselves were being funded from a separate capital budget;
- Installation of heat pumps and solar PV as part of the leisure centre programme to raise their carbon performance further above and beyond the standards required in planning policy;
- Decarbonisation of the Hexagon Theatre including ground source heat pumps, solar PV arrays and LED lighting upgrades;
- Decarbonisation of heating/cooling systems at the Civic Centre via heat pumps;
- Development of a solar farm at Smallmead/Island Road.

Resolved - That the progress with the development and delivery of the Council's low carbon investment programme as summarised in Appendix 1, pursuant to the recommendations agreed at SEPT Committee in June 2021 be noted.

BUS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN - FUNDING UPDATE

The Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report that provided an update on progress with developments of the schemes and initiatives that had been included in the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), following the announcement by the Department for Transport (DfT) on 4 April 2022 of indicative funding allocations for selected authorities, including up to £26.3m for Reading for the three year period from 2022/23 to 2024/25.

The report explained that the DfT had outlined a timetable for Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) to submit further information and updated Enhanced Partnership (EP) Schemes to them over the summer of 2022, in order that funding allocations could be confirmed by Government. The funding provisionally allocated to Reading was £15,939,000 capital and £10,324,600 revenue grant funding. The DfTs priorities for capital BSIP funding were bus priority measures, specifically bus lanes and other passenger improvements such as bus stops and information systems. The capital schemes which were currently being explored further for Reading were set out in the report. The core objectives of these schemes were to reduce overall network congestion, reduce journey times and support increased patronage on key parts of the

local bus network. Other capital enhancements that were being explored included traffic signal upgrade measures to assist buses, bus stop enhancements including green roofed shelters, town centre public transport infrastructure and a review of the locations or real time displays and upgrades to be DDA compliant equipment.

The DfT priorities for revenue funding included fare initiatives to make 'ambitious and eye-catching initiatives that reduced fares' and therefore increased passenger numbers, and increased service frequencies and new/expanded routes that served identified priorities such as employment sites.

The level of indicative revenue funding that had been allocated to Reading provided a significant opportunity to incentivise people to choose to travel by bus, alongside helping residents with the current rising costs of living. The objective was to deliver significant savings in travel costs for bus passenger, encourage increased bus travel and therefore support the local bus network. Discussions were on-going with the main bus operators in Reading regarding a proposed fares reduction scheme which would offer 'Greater Reading Day Tickets' at the prices to be agreed with the operators. In return, bus companies would receive compensation to the value of their commercial products. An important aspect of this initiative was to ensure compliance with Competition Law and therefore officers had been in correspondence with the Competition and Markets Authority and external legal advice had been sought to ensure the scheme accorded with all relevant legislation. In addition to the fares initiative the report set out further revenue schemes that were currently being explored.

Finally, the report explained that officers were continuing to work with all local operators and the DfT to develop the BSIP scheme proposals and to update the EP in line with Government requirements. The EP included details of on-going governance and partnership working arrangements with all stakeholders, including the establishment of an EP Board and EP Forum which were currently being developed. In additions, officers were continuing to work with the other Berkshire authorities to establish a Berkshire wide forum to discuss cross-boundary services.

Councillor Page told the Committee that although the £26m funding was welcomed the original bid had been close to £100m, however some other authorities had received nothing.

In answer to a question officers reported that the need for services north of the river had been recognised in the strategy, but with the short time scale focus had been on schemes that could be delivered. A scheme had been identified in Caversham, alongside the operators, so an application could be made for the scheme in the future.

Resolved -

(1) That the indicative funding allocation from Government of £26.3m for delivery of the Bus Service Improvement Plan, consisting of £15.9m capital and £10.3m revenue grant funding be noted;

(2) That the on-going discussions with Government and local bus operators to further develop the BSIP proposals in advance of an announcement on final funding allocations by the Department for Transport be noted.

10. STRATEGIC TRANSPORT SCHEMES UPDATE

The Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report providing an update on the progress with delivery of the current programme of major transport projects in Reading, which were as follows:

- South Reading Mass Rapid Transit
- Reading Green Park Station
- Reading West Station Upgrade
- Tilehurst Station Upgrade
- Active Travel Fund Tranche 2 Shinfield Road
- Active Travel Fund Tranche 3 Bath Road
- Active Travel Capability Fund
- School Streets Programme

Active Travel Tranche 3 - Bath Road Concept Design was attached to the report at Appendix A.

With regard to the Active Travel Fund Tranche 3 - Bath Road, the DfT had awarded the Council £1.3m from the third tranche of funding to deliver a segregated cycle infrastructure and pedestrian improvements on the Bath Road, between the town centre and the junction with Berkeley Avenue. The feedback that had been received from the initial consultation was being used to develop the designs prior to a further initial consultation that had started on 7 July 2022, including a public drop-in event at Reading Association for the Blind, Walford Hall, on 13 July 2022 and then a further public consultation that would be carried out on the detailed designs for the scheme. An indicative timeline for delivery of the scheme was set out in the report.

The current timeline for construction works at Reading Green Park Station had indicated that works would be completed in summer 2022 and once complete the station would go through a period of testing before the official opening and public use, probably at the end of 2022. The Council was working with Network Rail and GWR to ensure that the station was open as soon as possible after construction works were complete.

Finally, the Council had carried out a public consultation from 8 April to 20 May 2022 on acquiring powers from Government to be able to enforce 'moving traffic offences' in the Borough. This would enable the Council to expand the work it already did enforcing against unlawful and dangerous parking, and misuse of bus lanes, to improve safety and tackle congestion by enforcing moving traffic offences. Following the consultation, Reading had been one of only 12 authorities to apply for these powers through the first tranche of applications and at the end of July 2022 enforcement would be taken forward in the Borough based on a priority list that had been submitted to the DfT.

Resolved:

- (1) That the progress made on the delivery of the current programme of strategic transport schemes as outlined in this report be noted;
- (2) That the award of £1.3m capital grant funding from the Department for Transport for the Active Travel Fund Tranche 3, which will provide segregated cycle facilities and pedestrian enhancements on the Bath Road between the town centre and Berkeley Avenue be noted.

11. EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS PLANS - INFORMATION REPORT ON RECOVERY PROGRAMMES

Further to Minute 7 of the meeting held on 18 November 2020, the Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report providing an update on progress that had been made by Reading UK with the implementation of polices concerned with delivering Employment and Skills Plans in response to the local economic shocks of the Covid-19 pandemic. Delivery Supported Under the Economic Recovery Plan agreed in November 2020 was attached to the report at Appendix A, Employment and Skills Plans - Section 106 Financial Contributions by Development was attached at Appendix B and Employment and Skills Plans - Outputs from Specific Plans by Development were attached to the report at Appendix C.

The report explained that at its meeting on 18 November 2020 the Committee had agreed a programme of delivery funded by Section 106 financial contributions that had been specifically ringfenced for employment and skills. The programme had covered the following two years and had included working with developers and the end users of completed developments through Section 106 agreements. All employment and skills opportunities had been created to assist the local economy and Reading residents.

The report outlined Reading UK's delivery over the previous 20 months, including during ongoing pandemic conditions, to address specifically the challenges facing the town's economy following the impacts of multiple lockdowns. This was inl ine with the Powered by People Strategy that had been adopted at the meeting on Policy Committee on 28 September 2020, Minute 46 refers. Delivery had been shaped through specific employment plans, working mainly with the construction industry, and various employment and business support projects that had been targeted at those unemployed and facing barriers to employment, that had been delivered using financial contributions.

Resolved:

- (1) That the report be noted and the delivery of employment and skills outcomes by Reading UK as enabled by Section 106 Employment and Skills Plans (Appendix A) welcomed;
- (2) That a report be submitted to the next meeting on 16 November 2022, to cover what is to be delivered between July and November 2022, as

outlined in this report, together with a costed plan for a further 18 months of activity.

12. STREETLIGHTING MAINTENANCE TERM CONTRACT 2022/23 TENDER AND CONTRACT AWARD

The Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report that informed the Committee of the procurement process for the Streetlighting Maintenance Term Contract and sought authority to enter into an interim arrangement using the Peterborough Council Framework Contract for up to two years to deliver the essential maintenance of the Council's streetlighting assets and to enter into the interim contract with Peterborough Council's term maintenance contractor. The report also sought authority for the Council to tender the Streetlighting Maintenance Term Contract within the next two years in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and to submit the result to a future meeting to obtain authority to award the contract to the successful tenderer after the completion of the tendering process. A Financial Implications Report was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

Resolved:

- (1) That approval to enter into the Peterborough Council Maintenance Term Framework Contract be granted;
- (2) That approval to enter into a short term (up to two years) contract with Peterborough Council's term maintenance contractor, in accordance with the Council's Procurement Rules and Public Contract Regulations be granted;
- (3) That the Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport, the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services and the Director of Finance, be granted authority to enter into relevant contracts required to undertake the interim Streetlighting Maintenance Service Programme, as set out in section 4 of the report.

13. ALLOCATION OF SECTION 106 FUNDING FOR TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAY SCHEMES 2022/23

The Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report that set out a request of spend approval for new Transport and Highways capital schemes starting in 2022 to the value of £1,393,160. A summary of the Section 106 contributions and the capital schemes they were to fund was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report explained that it was anticipated that these schemes would be solely funded from Section 106 contributions, but some might require additional external funding from sources including the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), which had already been secured. The £1,393,160 allocated Section 106 contributions that had been received, but as yet were uncommitted and was an update to the figures that were detailed in the Council's Capital Programme.

Resolved:

- (1) That spending approval for the Capital schemes outlined in Appendix 1, attached to the report, be granted;
- (2) That the Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport and the Director of Finance, be granted authority to finalise details of individual schemes and programmes within the overall approval given.
- (3) That Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport, the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services and the Director of Finance, be granted authority to enter into relevant contracts required to undertake the approved Section 106 schemes and works programmes.

14. PAN BERKSHIRE INTELLIGENT TRANSPORT SYSTEMS (ITS) TERM CONTRACT 2023-2028 (PLUS FIVE YEAR EXTENSION) TENDER AND CONTRACT AWARD

The Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report informing the Committee of the joint Pan Berkshire Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) Term Contract 2023-2028 (plus up to a five year extension) procurement exercise led by the Council that included Bracknell Forest Borough Council, Slough Borough Council, West Berkshire District Council and Wokingham Borough Council. The report provided information on the procurement process of the Contract and sought authority to enter into a contract with the successful tenderer after the tendering process in accordance with Public Contracts Regulations 2015. A Financial Implications Report was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The Contract would include maintenance of the following assets:

- Traffic Signals:
- Automatic Traffic Counters;
- Journey Time Devices;
- CCTV Cameras;
- Variable Message Signs;
- Vehicle Activated Speed Signs;
- ITS associated minor civil engineering works.

Resolved:

- (1) That approval to tender the Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) Term Contract 2023-2028 with a possible five year extension, subject to performance, in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 be granted;
- (2) That Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy

and Transport, the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services and the Director of Finance, be granted authority to enter into relevant contracts required to undertake the Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) Programme, as set out in section 4 of the report.

15. TRAFFIC SERVICES CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2022/2023

The Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report the provided information on the Council's additional £0.4m two year (2022/23 to 2023/24) Traffic Signals Capital Investment Programme and asked for spend approval for this investment. The report also informed the Committee of the Council's additional £0.3m two year (2022/23 to 2023/24) Digitising of Traffic Regulation Orders Investment Programme and asked for spend approval for this investment. A Financial Implications Report was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report explained that the Council had carried out a Residents' Survey with its Citizen Panel in December 2021 as part of the Council's ongoing conversation with residents. The aim of the survey had been to gather information on service delivery and specifically about residents' views of their neighbourhoods and of Council services. Respondents had been asked what they thought needed improving and the number one consensus, 38% compared with 47% in 2020, had said the condition of roads and pavements needed improving.

The Council had continued to listen to residents and was investing £0.4m into the ageing traffic signal assets which would improve traffic flows, reduce congestion and pollution, modernise the traffic signal assets and future proof a rapidly changing environment. The Council was also investing £0.3m in Digitising Reading's Traffic Regulation Orders to modernise the process, to streamline TRO creation and the consultation processes, to significantly reduce costs.

Resolved:

- (1) That spend approval for the Council's £0.4m two year (2022/23 to 2023024) Traffic Signals Capital Investment Programme be granted;
- (2) That spend approval for the Council's £0.3m two year (2022/23 to 2023/24) Digitising of Traffic Regulation Orders Investment Programme be granted;
- (3) That the Assistant Director of Environmental and Commercial Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport, the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services and the Director of Finance, be granted authority to enter into relevant contracts required to undertake the proposed Capital Traffic Services Programme, as set out in section 4 of the report.

(The meeting started at 6.30pm and closed at 8.37 pm)