

**STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE  
21 NOVEMBER 2018**

**Present:** Councillors Debs Absolom (Chair), David Absolom, Ayub, Ballsdon, Barnett-Ward, Brock, Gittings, Hopper, Khan, O'Connell, Page, Robinson, Stanford-Beale and Josh Williams.

**Apologies:** Councillor Maskell.

**16. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to the addition of Councillor Ballsdon as being in attendance and that Councillor Robinson had not been in attendance and had submitted apologies.

**17. MINUTES OF THE TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE**

The Minutes of the meetings of Traffic Management Sub-Committee held on 13 June and 12 September 2018 were received.

**18. MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES**

The Minutes of the following meetings were submitted:

- Joint Waste Disposal Board of 6 July 2018

**Resolved - That the Minutes be noted.**

**19. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

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

<b>Questioner</b>	<b>Subject</b>
Councillor J Williams	Road Pricing
Councillor J Williams	Working with the Local Community
John Booth	Climate Change Emissions
John Booth	Clean Air

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

**20. REVISED HOSIER STREET AREA DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK**

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report seeking approval of the revised development framework for the Hosier Street Area.

It was reported at the meeting that due to an error a number of the consultation responses had not been properly considered. Historic England had also made late

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representations on the revised draft framework that deserved further consideration. Therefore, the item was deferred to a special meeting of the Committee on 12 December 2018 to allow for all consultation responses and the late representations from Historic England to be fully considered and the framework to be amended as appropriate.

**21. DRAFT ST PETERS CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL**

Further to Minute 6 of the previous meeting, the Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report seeking the Committee's approval of the revised draft Conservation Area Appraisal for the St Peters Area.

The report explained that the St Peters Conservation Area had been designated in 1988 under the Town & Country Planning Act 1971 (as amended) and a full conservation area appraisal had been adopted in 2009. Following discussions over the Council's approach to the historic environment, the Council had agreed to support the setting up of a Reading Conservation Areas Advisory Committee (CAAC). The report stated that one of the primary concerns of the CAAC was the long length of time since many conservation area appraisals had been prepared and adopted. According to best practice, appraisals should be updated every 5-10 years and many of these appraisals were now in need of review. It had subsequently been agreed that the CAAC would lead on reviews of conservation area appraisals in consultation with local communities. The report explained that the Appraisal of the St Peter's Conservation Area was the first review to be completed.

A public consultation had taken place between 11 July and 14 September 2018. A summary of the comments received, as well as a response from the CAAC/CADRA and the Council were attached to the report at Appendix 1. There had been no substantive changes made to the draft Conservation Area Appraisal. The final draft of the Conservation Area Appraisal was attached to the report at Appendix 2.

At the invitation of the Chair, Kim Pearce addressed the Committee on behalf of the Conservation Area Advisory Committee.

**Resolved -**

- (1) That the draft St Peters Conservation Area Appraisal be approved;**
- (2) That the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services be authorised to make any minor amendments necessary to the draft St Peters Conservation Area Appraisal in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport, prior to final publication.**

**22. DRAFT PALMER PARK DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK**

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report seeking approval of a draft development framework for Palmer Park.

The area included the land within the area of Palmer Park defined by the railway line, London Road, St Bartholomews Road, Wokingham Road and Palmer Park Avenue.

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It had been decided that a draft framework should be produced to provide a blue print for the future enhancement of the park incorporating the Council's ambition to provide a new swimming pool as part of the formal leisure offer. The draft framework had been produced by the Council (with the assistance of an urban design consultancy) and was attached at Appendix 3.

A map showing the extent of the Palmer Park framework area was attached to the report at Appendix 1 and an Equalities Impact Assessment was attached to the report at Appendix 2.

The report explained that, subject to the Committee's approval, the draft framework would be published and would be the subject of a formal consultation exercise, led by the Council. The consultation was expected to begin in mid-December 2018 and would last for a period of ten weeks (to allow for the Christmas holiday period) until late February 2019. Responses received would be considered in preparing a final draft framework for adoption.

**Resolved -**

- (1) That the draft Palmer Park Development Framework, as set out in Appendix 3, be approved for community involvement;**
- (2) That the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services be authorised to make any minor amendments necessary to the Framework in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport, prior to the start of community involvement on the draft document.**

**23. LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION**

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report that updated the Committee on the progress with the Local Plan examination, which had included public hearings that had closed on 5 October 2018.

The report explained that the Council was replacing its existing development plans (the Core Strategy, Reading Central Area Action Plan and Sites and Detailed Policies Document) with a new single Local Plan to set out how Reading would develop up to 2036. Three consultations had been undertaken on the Local Plan between 2016 and 2018. The Local Plan had been submitted to the Secretary of State on 29 March 2018, which marked the beginning of a public examination held by an independent Planning Inspector.

The report explained that the Inspector had requested, and received, additional information from the Council and other participants, and was in the process of considering if modifications would be needed to make sure that the plan was 'sound' and legally compliant. Once this was known, consultation on these modifications would be required before a final inspector's report could be issued.

**Resolved - That the progress on the public examination into the Reading Borough Local Plan be noted.**

**24. AIR QUALITY UPDATE**

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The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report that updated the Committee on air quality matters following the Council's submission of the Targeted Feasibility Study to the Government. The report also provided an update on vehicle idling, electric vehicle charge points in residential streets with no off street parking and Electrify Reading.

The report stated that the Government, via a Ministerial Direction, required Reading and 32 other 'third wave' councils to complete a Targeted Feasibility Study, considering all options to identify additional measures that could bring forward compliance with Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) limits on specific roads as soon as possible. A short list of measures that had been considered to be the most realistically achievable in the timeframe had been drawn up. No measures were able to bring forward compliance at Caversham Road and Census ID 6924 due to the short timescales involved. For the other road links, bus retrofit had been identified as being the most effective single measure able to bring forward compliance. Following a detailed submission, the Government had directed the Council to implement the bus retrofit as soon as possible and at the latest, in time to bring forward compliance, as set out below. The scheme was estimated to involve retrofitting up to 137 buses to Euro 6 standard. It was estimated that this could be implemented by the end of 2019. Local modelling set out that bus retrofit could have the following impact:

- Bring forward compliance on Friar Street from 2021 to 2019;
- Bring forward compliance on London Road from 2022 to 2021;
- Bring forward compliance on Kings Road/Wokingham Road from 2022 to 2020;
- Bring forward compliance on Chatham Street from 2022 to 2021;

Following the outcome of the Targeted Feasibility Study it was proposed to update the Council's Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) to reflect the findings.

The report stated that officers proposed to review the possibility of producing a Low Emissions Strategy which would help to provide better integration of transport, air quality, planning, public health, sustainability and other relevant Council departments and drive policy thinking. It was proposed to put in a bid for one of DEFRA's Air Quality Grants in order to fund this.

With regards to vehicle idling, the report explained that the powers adopted under the Road Traffic (Vehicle Emissions) (Fixed Penalty) (England) Regulations 2002 to issue fixed penalty notices (FPNs), could only be used after a driver had been warned. Therefore, licensing officers had been speaking to taxi drivers on the rank over the past 18 months to bring the need to reduce idling to their attention, 60 no idling signs had been put up in idling hotspots, and officers had run three idling action events during 2018.

The report explained that Go Electric Reading was a Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) funded project run by the Council to look at providing electric car charging for people living in homes without a drive. The charge points

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would be installed using the existing supply to street furniture such as lamp columns along streets to enable residents to charge their vehicles. An expression of interest had recently been published to test market interest for installing the EV charge points. The response to this would aid the decision as to whether a formal procurement process would be required.

The report stated that in 2019, Electric Blue were scheduled to carry out a campaign raising the awareness with the residential and business community about the benefits of electric vehicles in Reading and encourage local support for having electric taxis.

**Resolved -**

- (1) That the actions taken be noted;**
- (2) That the proposal to review the Air Quality Action Plan be noted;**
- (3) That the proposal to bid for funding to commission a Low Emissions Strategy be approved.**

**25. ANNUAL CARBON FOOTPRINT REPORT, 2017/2018**

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the Council's progress towards reducing its emissions of greenhouse gases by 50% by 2020 and to zero carbon by 2050. The report showed that the Council has continued to make reductions of carbon emissions and had exceeded its 2020 target three years early, with a 16.1% reduction in corporate emissions and a 13.1% reduction in emissions within the wider influence of the Council against the previous year's levels (2016/17).

The report explained that the 2017/18 carbon footprint for the Council's corporate activities was 53.9% lower than the baseline emissions in 2008/09, exceeding the 2020 target. The total renewably generated energy in 2017/18 had been equivalent to 6.1% of energy used in buildings. The slow progress had primarily been due to national policy changes but also due to the challenges associated with providing renewable heat. In addition, Reading Transport Ltd continued to invest in its bus fleet to reduce the impact on the environment and improve its efficiency.

The report stated that on-going and new initiatives would support further reductions; these included investments in energy efficient technologies in buildings programmes such as the town hall, leisure sites and the Bennet Road depot. A coordinated energy awareness and training programme and sustained improvements in data capture and analysis would also play an important part. A number of renewable energy and storage technologies would be tested in a new EU match funded project for which the Council was awaiting confirmation of funding.

The full Reading Borough Council Greenhouse Gas Protocol Report 2017-18 was provided in Appendix 1 of the report.

**Resolved -**

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- (1) That the continued reduction of carbon emissions for 2017/18, with the emissions from the Council's corporate activities 53.9% lower than the baseline emissions in 2008/09, exceeding the 2020 target by 3.9% three years ahead of scheduled be noted. The emissions from the Council's wider activities (including schools and managed services) being 38.1% lower than the baseline emissions in 2008/09;
- (2) That the total renewably generated energy in 2017/18 was equivalent to 4.5% of the total energy use of the Council, or 6.1% of energy used in buildings, be noted. In addition, it was recognised that the 2020 renewable energy target continued to be challenging following the significant changes to the 'Feed in Tariff' incentive scheme made by the government in 2015/16, and its forthcoming withdrawal in April 2019;
- (3) That the delivery of the carbon plan by resourcing ongoing investment in low carbon technologies and initiatives to recue energy costs and the carbon footprint of Council operations subject to budget approvals, continue to be supported.

**26. NATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY INVESTMENT FUND - CATTLE MARKET CAR PARK IMPROVEMENTS**

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report to inform the Committee of the intention to invest in Cattle Market car park. This investment would utilise the National Productivity Investment Fund grant already allocated to the Council by the Department for Transport (DfT) in January 2017. The investment would provide for a higher quality facility to meet the demand for parking in the town centre and Reading railway station.

The report stated that the grant allocated to the Council by the DfT as a part of the National Productivity Investment Fund was £523,000. Officers recommended investing the grant into improving the existing car parking facility at the Cattle Market car park due to its close proximity to Reading Station, the future delivery of Crossrail and the potential to attract further business into the Town. The scheme would involve improved drainage, lighting, security and carriageway surfaces to replace the very low quality facility currently offered at the car park. Subject to detailed design it was hoped that a new pedestrian crossing across the IDR could also be incorporated within the existing traffic signals at the junction of the IDR and Tudor Road. This would improve pedestrian access to the railway station area. Pedestrian facilities already existed at the junction of the IDR and Great Knollys Street for access to the town centre area.

**Resolved -**

- (1) That the report be noted;
- (2) That scheme and spend approval to improve the Cattle Market car park as detailed in paragraph 4.2, be granted;

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- (3) That the grant secured by the Council from the Department for Transport through the National Productivity Investment Fund in January 2017 be utilised for this project.

**27. WINTER SERVICE PLAN 2018/2019**

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report informing the Committee of the outputs of the Winter Service Plan 2017/18 and setting out details of the Winter Service Plan for 2018/19.

The report explained the main features of the Winter Service Plan for 2018/19 which had been produced by Transport and Streetcare Services following the review of the 2017/2018 Plan, and was available as a background paper. A summary of the main points of the review of the Winter Service Plan 2017/18 were set out in the report.

**Resolved -**

- (1) That the outputs delivered by the Winter Service Plan 2017/18, be noted;
- (2) That the outcome of the review carried out on the Winter Service Plan to ensure compliance with the Highways Act 1980 and the 'Well-managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice', be noted.
- (3) That the Winter Service Plan 2018/19 be approved.

**28. HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE POLICY UPDATE**

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report that updated the Committee on the highway policies that had been approved at the Committee meeting on 4 April 2017 (Minute 31 refers). The report also sought approval for changes to the 'A' Board policy and to proceed with a trial 'Short Frontage Agreement' for vehicle crossings where the minimum 4.8m depth requirement could not be met.

The report explained that a policy to control 'A' Boards on the public highway had been adopted in April 2017. The 'A' Board Policy had been working with measured success since its introduction; however, some minor issues had arisen. The proposal was to waive the cost of the application fee for all Council Departments and Political organisations. Each Council department would still need to apply for the 'A' Board licence and Councillor Services would apply on behalf of the Political Parties. For Community, Church & Charity Organisations it was proposed that they would still need to apply for the licence and pay the application fee, but would not then be charged for the annual renewal cost. There were some applicants whose business property fronts on to different roads, in this instance they could have more than one 'A' Board, but would need to make separate applications for each location. The revised 'A' Board Policy was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The Vehicle Crossing Policy had been adopted in April 2017. A review had been carried out of the vehicle crossing criteria/requirements. The vehicle crossing criteria included for a minimum 4.8m depth of property frontage to ensure that the

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vehicle could park perpendicular to the boundary and not overhang the public highway. There were numerous historic examples across the Borough where this minimum depth was not achieved, but a vehicle crossing installed. The assumption was that they were approved at a time when the obstruction of the public highway was not included in the approval process and presumably met the Council's criteria in place at that time. The Council continued to receive applications which were refused because the 4.8m depth criteria could not be met. The Council had carried out a benchmarking exercise and found that three London Borough Councils employed the use of 'Short Frontage Agreements', which reduced the minimum depth criteria to either 4.3m or 4.1m depth. The Agreement contained conditions to ensure that the vehicle was contained within the property frontage. The Council proposed to carry out a one-year trial of 'Short Frontage Agreements' for vehicle crossings where the minimum 4.8m depth requirement could not be met. The minimum property frontage depth would be reduced to 4.3m with a requirement for the applicant to prove that they could safely park a vehicle wholly within their property and not overhang the public highway causing an obstruction. Failure to comply would result in the vehicle crossing being removed and all costs recovered from the property owner. The Vehicle Crossing Policy was attached to the report at Appendix 2.

**Resolved -**

- (1) That the proposed changes to the 'A' Board Policy as set out in paragraph 4.5 of the report, be approved;**
- (2) That a one-year 'Short Frontage Agreement' trial for vehicle crossings be approved, and a report be submitted to the Committee on the findings of the trial, as set out in paragraph 4.6 of the report.**

**29. HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE CODE OF PRACTICE AND HIGHWAY ASSET MANAGEMENT UPDATE**

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report advising the Committee of the progress of the implementation of the 'Well Managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice', and also to report on progress of the Highway Asset Management programme.

The report explained that in October 2016 the UK Roads Liaison Group had released Well-managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice, which set out 36 recommendations for the implementation of Highway Asset Management. Local Authorities had been given two years (from the date of publishing) to adopt the new Code of Practice. One of the most significant changes in the Code of Practice was that Local Authorities had to have a risk based approach to their highway maintenance regimes rather than there being defined standards. It was therefore for each Local Authority to decide their own levels of maintenance and inspection regimes based on what they considered to be acceptable levels of risk.

The report stated that full implementation of all 36 recommendations within 2 years was unrealistic given the resources the Council had available. Therefore, the Council, following advice from the insurance industry, had been concentrating on key recommendations that had been advised should be prioritised to ensure highway safety compliance. These prioritised recommendations were:



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1. Consistency with other Authorities (recommendation 5)
2. Risked based approach (recommendation 7)
3. Competencies and training (recommendation 15)

The report explained that in May 2017 Reading Borough Council's Highway Asset Management Policy had been published following Committee approval. The Policy confirmed the Council's commitment to Highway Asset Management and outlined how assessment would be managed and how progress would be reported, including the establishment of a Highway Asset Management Board (HAM Board). The Council had produced a draft updated Highway Maintenance Manual, (HMM), which would be in line with the 'Well-managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice'. This policy document would be presented to the HAM Board and brought back to the Committee for formal approval.

The report stated that the Highway Asset Management Team would continue to update the Highway Maintenance Manual (HMM) and incorporate the full 36 recommendations on a priority basis and would report progress to the HAM Board on a quarterly basis and the Committee on an annual basis.

The report set out the Council's current highway safety inspection frequency regime, which was as follows:

Road Type	Current Frequency
Category A	3 Monthly
Category B & C	6 Monthly
Categories U	Every 18 Months

The report stated that there was a proposal to set a tolerance for completing the above inspections to allow some flexibility when inspections could not be carried out due to illness or leave. The following tolerances to inspection times were proposed:

<b>Carriageway: Routine Inspection Frequencies</b>			
<b>Carriageway Hierarchy</b>	<b>Inspection Frequency</b>	<b>Inspection Method</b>	<b>Tolerance #</b>
Strategic Route	3 Monthly	Walked	1 Week
Main Distributor	3 Monthly	Walked*	1 Week
Secondary Distributor	6 Monthly	Walked	2 Week

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Link Road	18 Months	Walked**	1 Month
Local Access Road	18 Months	Walked	1 Month

*\* With the exception of the Inner Distribution Road between Great Knollys Street and London Street which was driven because the road is subject to a 40mph speed limit and there was no safe walking route on this section.*

*\*\*With the exception of Burghfield Road between Underwood Road and the Borough Boundary which was driven because the road had no footways, visibility was restricted due to a hump back railway bridge and high level of goods vehicles.*

*# Where an inspection was carried out late but within the tolerance the next inspection shall still be carried out within the frequency interval of the original planned inspection date.*

**Resolved -**

- (1) That the progress made on the ‘Well Managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice’ be noted;**
- (2) That the progress of the Highway Asset Management programme be noted;**
- (3) That the clarification of the tolerance for the highway safety inspection regime frequency be approved.**

### **30. NATIONAL CYCLE NETWORK ROUTE 422 - PHASE 3**

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report that outlined the progress made in delivering Phases 1 and 2 of the new National Cycle Network route between Greenwood Road on the Bath Road and Watlington Street on London Road. The report also sought scheme and spend approval for improvements along London Road and Wokingham Road, from Watlington Street to Holmes Road, following feedback submitted earlier this year on the draft Phase 3 designs.

The following documents were attached to the report:

Appendix 1 - Detailed designs for NCN 422 Phase 3

Appendix 2 - Equality Impact Assessment for NCN 422 Phase 3

The report stated that Phase 1 works had commenced on-site along Bath Road in January 2017 and these works were now largely complete however the traffic signal upgrade at Circuit Lane was expected to be completed in November 2018. Phase 2 works had commenced on-site along Berkley Avenue in January 2018. Works including the installation of two tiger crossings, imprinting across junctions and crossing improvements had been completed. Outstanding works, including the widening of existing cycle lanes on Berkeley Avenue, a contra-flow cycle facility on Kennet Side and the installation of improved signing in the form of directional signs and those reminding users to ‘share with care’ were expected to be completed in Winter 2018.

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The Phase 3 programme would deliver off-carriageway cycle facilities along sections of Wokingham Road, between Eastern Avenue and Wilderness Road (the Borough boundary). This would be complemented by improvements to the existing on-carriageway route (local route R30), providing a mixture of routes that would cater for both experienced and less confident cyclists. The route would link to Phase 2 of the NCN 422 route to the west via existing off-carriageway cycle facilities at Cemetery Junction and along London Road, and would also connect to the Wokingham Borough section of the NCN 422 route to the east, once completed. The route will also link to local cycle routes and facilities, including the R20 and R3.

The detailed designs for Wokingham Road between Culver Road and Green Road were currently being reviewed following feedback from Traffic Management Sub-Committee. Subject to the outcome of the review, the delivery programme was likely to include changes to traffic calming measures including vertical deflections and raised informal pedestrian crossing points through the Wokingham Road local centre and improved crossing facilities east of College Road and west of Pitcroft Avenue, including dedicated cycle facilities.

**Resolved -**

- (1) That the progress in delivering the National Cycle Network (NCN) 422 scheme be noted;**
- (2) That scheme and spend approval for NCN 422 Phase 3 be granted;**
- (3) That the acting Head of Transportation and Streetcare, in consultation with the Lead Councillor and Ward Councillors, be delegated authority to proceed with the Phase 3 programme between Culver Road and Green Road, subject to a review of concerns raised at the Traffic Management Sub-Committee.**

**31. TRANSPORT CONSULTANCY SERVICES - PROCUREMENT OF NEW CONTRACT**

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report that highlighted the end of the existing Transport Consultancy Services Term Contract with Peter Brett Associates, on 31 August 2019, and set out the recommended procurement approach for a new Transport Consultancy Services Term Contract.

The report explained that the Transport Consultancy Services Contract with Peter Brett Associates, which was due to expire on 31 August 2019, provided valuable support and expertise in developing and delivering the Council's Local Transport Plan. The existing consultancy contract allowed the Council to call on expertise not available from within the organisation and to respond to peaks in workload and funding availability.

It was proposed that a new Transport Consultancy Services Term Contract was procured to ensure service continuity and a smooth transition between Contracts. It was recommended that the new contract was procured via a two-stage tendering process to ensure the Council was able to continue demonstrating best value for money and allow the Council and Contractor sufficient time to develop a successful partnership approach in the delivery of the transport strategy. The report set out

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the following anticipated timeframe for procuring a new Transport Consultancy Services Contract:

Issue Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) - January 2019

Shortlisting - February 2019

Issue Invitation to Tender (ITT) - March 2019

Tender evaluation - April 2019

Recommendation to appoint - May 2019

Mobilisation period commences - June 2019

New Contract commences - Sept 2019

**Resolved -**

- (1) That the existing Transport Consultancy Services Term Contract would expire on 31 August 2019, be noted;**
- (2) That the procurement approach and anticipated timeframe for securing a new Transport Consultancy Services Term Contract be noted;**
- (3) That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Head of Finance, be delegated authority to award the new Transport Consultancy Services Term Contract upon completion of the procurement process.**

(The meeting started at 6.30pm and closed at 8.28pm)