



Minutes of the special meeting of the **Cabinet** held in the Committee Rooms at East Pallant House East Pallant Chichester West Sussex on Friday 8 June 2018 at 09:30

**Members Present** Mr A Dignum (Chairman), Mr R Barrow, Mr J Connor, Mrs J Kilby and Mr P Wilding

**Members Absent** Mrs E Lintill and Mrs S Taylor

**Officers Present** Mr N Bennett (Divisional Manager for Democratic Services), Mr A Frost (Director of Planning and Environment), Mr P E Over (Executive Director), Mrs D Shepherd (Chief Executive), Mr G Thrussell (Senior Member Services Officer) and Mr J Ward (Director of Corporate Services)

### 537 Chairman's Announcements

Mr Dignum greeted the members of the public, the press representatives and Chichester District Council (CDC) members and officers who were present for this special meeting of the Cabinet. He summarised the emergency evacuation procedure.

There were apologies for absence from Mrs Lintill and Mrs Taylor.

All other members of the Cabinet were present.

There were no late items for consideration.

[**Note** Hereinafter in these minutes CDC denotes Chichester District Council]

[**Note** Minute paras 538 to 543 below summarise the Cabinet's discussion of and decision on agenda items 2 to 7 inclusive but for full details of the items considered please refer to the audio recording facility via this link:

<http://chichester.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=979&Ver=4>

### 538 Approval of Minutes

There were no minutes for approval by the Cabinet at this special meeting.

As stated in the agenda, the minutes of the Cabinet's ordinary meeting on Tuesday 5 June 2018 would, together with the minutes of this special meeting, be presented for approval at the Cabinet's next ordinary meeting on Tuesday 3 July 2018.

### 539 **Declarations of Interests**

No declarations of interests were made at this meeting by Cabinet members or by any CDC members who were present as observers.

Mr Dignum alluded briefly to the dispensation which had been granted by the Monitoring Officer to all CDC members to enable them to participate fully in the debate and decisions at the special meetings of the Cabinet and the Council on Friday 8 June 2018 (the dispensation was confined to that day only).

### 540 **Public Question Time**

Three public questions had been submitted for this special meeting, details of which appear below.

The text of the three public questions had been circulated to CDC members, the public and the press immediately prior to the start of this meeting. Mr Dignum invited each person in turn to come to the designated microphone in order to read out the question before he provided an oral response.

The questions (with the date of submission shown within [ ] at the end of the text) and the answers given by Mr Dignum were as follows.

#### *Question by Mr Phil Ladds*

'Would the Cabinet accept that:

- A. Recent analysis by SYSTRA and various public consultations and surveys conclude that there is a greater overall level of community support for making improvements to the existing A27 by-pass than constructing a new off-line road? Specifically that underpasses and flyovers are well supported as improvements to our current by-pass?
- B. That the much publicised support for a "mitigated" northern option is in the context of which off-line route would be the better rather than a preference for an off-line vs an improved A27 solution?'

[Saturday 2 June 2018]

#### *Response by Mr Tony Dignum, the Leader of the Council*

'Systra's analysis of the feedback received from almost 4000 responses to the WSCC led community surveys indicates that for the on-line suggestions, flyovers and underpasses were the most well supported suggested improvements. Support for other on-line junction improvements were more mixed and general comments about current route suggestions were largely negative. The responses to questions

concerning new (off-line) routes indicate that there was marginally more support for a multi-purpose or strategic route to the north of the city compared to other off line options. The surveys enable key themes to be identified rather than which suggestion might be the best one.'

*Question by Mr Stephen Holcroft*

'Please can you provide details of local parish councils recommendations in regard to promoting a scheme for inclusion in RIS2, specifically the number of councils that are in favour of the mitigated north route, the full southern route, both or no preference as I believe this gives a good indication of public opinion on the matter.'

[Tuesday 5 June 2018]

*Response by Mr Tony Dignum, the Leader of the Council*

'The approach taken by Systra to the analysis of the feedback received from almost 4000 responses to the WSCC led community surveys enable key themes to be identified arising from the various on-line, off-line and modal suggestions. Their analysis states the number of respondents expressing support for each suggestion but they advise that the engagement process cannot be seen as a 'vote' and they have not attempted to draw conclusions about what the 'best' suggestion might be or the way in which particular sectors of the community, including PC's responded.

Although I am aware that some parish councils have made representations, nowhere near 100% of the District's parish councils have done so. I therefore cannot provide the analysis you request.'

*Question by Mr Gavin Barrett*

'Unlike WSCC at its sub-committee meeting on Monday 4th June, will the deliberations and conclusions of CDC now demonstrate a full and proper respect for the unequivocal findings of the various BABA27 surveys, namely that there is, across the whole Chichester community, a no-better-than 50/50 split on options, together with a clear majority preference for an underpass-based solution on the existing A27 route in its submission to Highways England?'

[Thursday 7 June 2018]

*Response by Mr Tony Dignum, the Leader of the Council*

'The approach taken by Systra to the analysis of the feedback received from almost 4000 responses to the WSCC led community surveys enabled key themes to be identified arising from the various on-line, off-line and modal suggestions. The results indicate that for the on-line suggestions, flyovers and underpasses were the most well supported suggested improvements. Support for other on-line junction improvements were more mixed and general comments about current route suggestions were largely negative. The responses to questions concerning new (off-line) routes indicate that there was marginally more support for a multi-purpose or strategic route to the north of the city compared to other off line options. Systra's

analysis states the number of respondents expressing support for each suggestion but they advise that the engagement process cannot be seen as a 'vote' and they have not attempted to draw conclusions about what the 'best' suggestion might be.'

There were no supplementary questions asked by any of the aforementioned individuals.

541 **A27 Chichester Bypass Improvements: Submission to the Government's Roads Improvement Strategy**

The Cabinet considered the agenda report and its appendix.

An agenda supplement had also been published for online viewing only, which contained the second background paper listed in para 13.2 of the report and a letter dated 5 June 2018 from Jim O'Sullivan, Chief Executive of Highways England to Louise Goldsmith, Leader of the Council at West Sussex County Council.

The report was presented by Mr Dignum. He said that there was almost a complete consensus in favour of one thing: achieving improvements to the A27 to ease congestion etc issues for local and through traffic. Highways England (HE) had afforded the community the opportunity to put forward, on balance, the best route by choosing between the northern and southern concepts. The consultants, Systra Limited, had advocated an off-line mitigated northern route and an on-line full southern route, which sought to address the disadvantages of these options. HE had so far neither restricted the nature and extent of improvements of on-line nor ruled out off-line routes and was prepared to consider two alternatives. The report by officers recommended Approach A ie both northern and southern concepts advanced with no preference. West Sussex County Council's (WSCC) Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure had stated that the 'mitigated northern route' was WSCC's preferred option but the 'full southern route' should also be developed as a reasonable alternative. Mr Dignum had asked HE's Regional Sponsor for South East England, Paul Benham, if a different submission by CDC from WSCC would present any problem in terms of consensus and was advised: 'In response to your question, I do not see it as an issue at this stage. It will be more important to achieve a level of consensus once we have carried out our assessment of both options and arrived at our conclusions.' HE had recently been asked by WSCC and CDC leaders to evaluate both concepts as soon as possible and it had agreed to evaluate and report on the engineering feasibility and likely cost of both options by 'late autumn' 2018. Systra had identified advantages and disadvantages to both routes. The issue of affordability within the likely RIS 2 budget was relevant to both routes and HE had twice emphasised to the leaders that many other schemes across the country were competing for inclusion in RIS2 and their combined cost was far greater than the likely total RIS2 budget. Of the various local surveys of opinion, the Build A Better A27 (BABA27) showed the highest support (but not a majority) for one concept only – however, respondents had not been asked to specify a preferred concept and so the balance between north and south could not be ascertained. Thus the community had not been able to agree a single choice. As Leader of the Council he was proposing that CDC should not make a single choice at this stage since it did not have all the relevant facts (which only HE could provide) and there was a risk that in choosing a single option now, which was

not later accepted by HE, the A27 Chichester bypass would be excluded from RIS2. HE should fully evaluate both concepts equally and provide its analysis as soon as possible. If included within RIS2, HE would undertake detailed design work prior to a full public consultation. The eventual route announced by HE would be the subject of a development consent order for approval by a government inspector (the public would be entitled to comment). Construction would probably begin in 2023 or 2024. He acknowledged that there was a difference of opinion within even the Cabinet and obviously within the Council and a democratic debate would take place during the ensuing special meeting of the Council.

Mr Connor proposed an amendment to the recommendation to the Council set out in para 3.1 of the agenda report and in (1) on the agenda front sheet. He said that he did not believe that the Cabinet should suggest something ie Approach A 'as being desirable' and that those words should be deleted but otherwise leave the recommendation intact. The recommendation would, therefore, now read as follows:

'That in promoting a scheme to the government for inclusion in RIS2, Approach A be supported without indicating a preference for either option namely promoting both the 'mitigated northern route' and the 'full southern route'.'

Mr Wilding seconded Mr Connor's proposal.

Mr Barrow said that he agreed there should be no single choice made by CDC at this stage but he would be advocating during the ensuing Council special meeting a preference for the 'mitigated northern route' while exploring the 'full southern route' as a reasonable alternative. He would not, therefore, be supporting the proposed recommendation, as amended, by the Cabinet to the Council.

Mrs Kilby said that the issue to be determined at these special meetings of the Cabinet and the Council was one of the most difficult decisions she had faced in 30 years of local government. She sought a long-term solution to the A27 Chichester bypass rather than a short-term fix and accordingly favoured expressing a preference for the 'mitigated northern route'. She was unable, therefore, to support the proposed recommendation, as amended, to be made by the Cabinet to the Council.

Mr Wilding remarked that he could not see how it was possible to express a preference until both options had been fully costed and assessed by HE.

Mr Dignum read out the amended version of the recommendation to be made by the Cabinet to the Council.

#### *Decision*

The five members of the Cabinet who were present voted by a majority of three in favour to two (Mr Barrow and Mrs Kilby) against in respect of the amended recommendation to the Council which is set out below.

#### **RESOLVED**

That the outputs of the work by Systra and the BABA27 community group be noted.

## **RECOMMENDATION TO THE COUNCIL**

- (1) That in promoting a scheme to the government for inclusion in RIS2, Approach A be supported without indicating a preference for either option namely promoting both the 'mitigated northern route' and the 'full southern route'.
- (2) That the 'fall-back' position if no approach is selected be noted.

### **542 Late Items**

There were no late items for consideration at this special meeting.

### **543 Exclusion of the Press and Public**

There were no restricted matters for consideration at this special meeting.

**[Note** The meeting ended at 09:51]

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CHAIRMAN

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DATE