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Name of meeting	SOLENT TRANSPORT JOINT COMMITTEE
Date and Time	THURSDAY 4 MARCH 2021 COMMENCING AT 2.30 PM
Venue	VIRTUAL
Present	Cllrs I Ward (Chairman), Humby, Leggett and Stagg
Also Present (Non voting)	C Haigh, R Pemberton, J Wadham, S Lowe, C Hillcoat, K Willcox, D McGrath, P Turton, J Dando, P Boustred, S Valentine, P Darnton

8. **Minutes**

RESOLVED:

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2020 were approved as a true record.

9. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

10. **Solent Transport 2021/22 Business Plan**

The Solent Transport Manager gave an overview of activities carried out in the 2020/21 year and presented the plan for activities in the coming year. Solent Transport had started 2020/21 having obtained £28.7m of funds from the DfT just prior to lockdown for the Future Transport Zone (FTZ) programme. It had been an exceptionally busy year and the team had needed to be flexible due to the impacts of COVID in addition to the challenges of initiating the FTZ programme. It would be important to rebuild confidence in using public transport and avoid a rebound to car use by promoting the continuation of cycling and walking and their benefits. The report had also considered the impact of Brexit and the local authorities' declarations of climate emergency.

Three major bids had been won for the area – the Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) funding for Portsmouth and Southampton including elements for the IOW, and the Future Transport Zone which compliments and enhances the TCF programmes.

Delivery of these projects would be key. The drones pilot project was “fast tracked” in May 2020 and had achieved five aviation ‘firsts’. An interim team had been put in place quickly and good progress was being made on early stages of the other FTZ projects.

Clarification was requested on the measures to avoid the rebound to car use. A campaign had been undertaken on the benefits of lockdown including working from home, and the benefits of walking/cycling. Some other measures which would have a role to play included the development of the FTZ MaaS app, e-scooter hire and the bike/ e-bike hire projects, providing new and innovative alternatives to driving for many parts of the Solent area.

A question was raised as to the possibility of working together as a group to provide a possible week of discounted rates on buses, in order to encourage more people to use the bus. Clarification was given that although the bus companies were open to promotional ideas it was difficult at the current time due to COVID restriction, issues around social distancing and reduced numbers, and limits on bus operators freedoms to launch promotions at present, although such an initiative may be possible in the future once restrictions are lifted. There were a number of measures included in the FTZ project for after lockdown concerning ticketing, which may be useful.

The remainder of the paper was taken as read, including the workplan.

RESOLVED:

That the Joint Committee approves the Solent Transport Business Plan for 2021/22.

That Hampshire County Council, Isle of Wight Council, Portsmouth City Council and Southampton City Council note this Business Plan through their own decision-making processes.

11. **Solent Transport Finance Update**

A summary of the report was presented and it was explained that actions had been taken to try to reduce or remove all except necessary expenditure. There had been a small staffing underspend achieved by removing the marketing officer post.

There was a budget pressure requiring £20,000 to be taken from the general reserve to supplement contributions from partners and fully fund the net expenditure. The revenue reserves balance was expected to reduce to £43,000 by the end of the financial year. Finances in general were being tightly controlled and managed.

The main risks for the next 1-2 years were that there was not much money available for marketing and research unless more funding was forthcoming. Commercial ways of raising additional funds to fulfil the shortfall were being explored. The money for the FTZ was ring-fenced to this programme only. It was agreed that this had to be a priority for delivery.

In response to a question, clarification was given on the cost benefits of the drone trials project, in particular their use in healthcare, delivery of medicines, transport of

specimens. It was stated that the trial was speculative but had received positive results so far and aims, in the medium/long term, to develop an approach to technology, management of air space etc that could enable aerial drones to be utilised in ways which are forecast to achieve cost savings for some activities compared to present.

RESOLVED:

- a) To note the draft outturn for the 2020/21 revenue budget
- b) To approve the proposed revenue budget for 2021/22
- c) To note the forecast balance in reserves.

12. Future Transport Zone Steering Group

13. Solent Future Transport Zone Progress Report

A brief outline was given. Solent Transport had just under £29 million to implement a project looking at personal mobility and logistics. Some marketing and behavioural change funding was also included within it.

The Mobility as a Service (MaaS) app was central to the programme. The app that is being developed would be able to provide any form of ticketing and would be adapted to local requirements. Whilst MaaS apps are starting to be widely used in parts of Europe and elsewhere, the Solent FTZ programme, as well as a several other FTZ areas, would be the first places in the UK to implement such an app.

The logistics project was initially focusing on the drone logistics trials, some significant early work had been done already in summer 2020. The Macro - consolidation project would build on previous work done in Southampton to reduce numbers of HGVs driving into congested areas. Micro consolidation would break this down further, looking at the use of walking couriers, electric vehicles etc.

The process of recruiting a permanent (fixed term) team was continuing. There had been some success with the IW trials of e-scooters, with Southampton and Portsmouth to follow, the MaaS platform was in an advanced stage of procurement. The logistics part of the project was running slightly behind due to COVID, and plans had been adapted accordingly.

Lockdown had been a challenge, but considerable progress had still been made with the project. Work was underway with the Universities of Portsmouth and Southampton on various research studies. Next steps were to finalise the Monitoring & Evaluation plan and carry out some project-based logic maps and complete recruitment of the fixed term team.

In response to a question from the Committee, the Chairman reported that there had been a few initial complaints regarding the e-scooters, but that these had now reduced. There had been fairly limited feedback from the public. Hospital staff had been seen to use them which seemed to go fairly well. The main issues had been people not sticking to the rules and confusion arising between the hire scooters and private scooters.

14. **Mobility as a Service (MaaS) Project Briefing**

Chris Hillcoat shared a presentation and gave an overview of the MaaS project which was intended to enhance personal mobility within the region. An app was being developed which would allow journeys on various modes of transport to be planned, booked, paid for and undertaken via a single app/process. The three pillars of the project were explained in greater detail. COVID had made people consider changes to the way they travel. A research partnership with Portsmouth and Southampton Universities was an important part of the project and their work was explained in greater detail. The FTZ funding would run out in 2024, the aim is for the MaaS app to be self-supporting by then and alternative sources of funding were being explored to help with this. From an initial 30 expressions of interest, 5 providers had been invited to bid and a preferred provider selected.

It was hoped that every public transport ticket that could currently be purchased would eventually be available on the MaaS platform. There may be opportunities to investigate incentives and discounts and mobility credits targeted at those on a low income.

It was hoped to engage with organisers of major events and large employers to encourage people to try the platform.

15. **E-Scooter Trials Update**

A short overview was given of the E-Scooter trials to date. The trial had been ongoing on the IW since the end of November 2020, with 25 scooters initially in Newport. Over 700 journeys were undertaken in the first week. Other towns had followed and there were now 99 scooters on the IW, which would rise to 150. Over 7000 journeys totalling 40,000 miles had been taken to date. 95% of scooters had been returned to a Beryl bay. Some lessons had been learnt, including the need for more clarity over where the scooters could be ridden, and clearer definition of roles and responsibilities required between the IW Council and operator. It was explained that demographic data is collected by Beryl. Damage/loss numbers were low. Beryl would be asked to share the data with members of the group.

Philip Darnton reported on the stakeholder event in November 2020. It was currently legal to sell e-scooters privately but illegal to ride them in public, which was not a satisfactory position. The Bicycle Association had made suggestions for e-scooters as to their construction, weight, which did not appear to have been considered by government. The e-scooter market was unusual in that it is illegal in the UK, therefore hire schemes had become more popular. Hire scooters could be restricted on speed and area of operation and could be geo-fenced. Imports and sales indicated 360k were sold in 2020 to individuals. By the end of summer 2021 there was expected to be 450-500k personally owned e-scooters. The government would need to make decisions on the legalisation of owned and hired scooters. Stakeholders had put forward sensible practical questions, e.g. whether they would go into bus lanes. Local stakeholder groups' feedback would be useful for the next stakeholder meeting. Philip offered to facilitate further discussion. The Committee thanked Philip for his clear presentation. It was believed that this type of scheme

may evolve alongside other active travel schemes.

Updates were provided from local authorities:

Portsmouth were due to start the trial on 16 March. There was a city-wide focus on key worker journeys with around 75% discounts.

Southampton were planning to go live on 18 March and were currently working through the TRO. The focus area was on the city centre with the key destination of the universities and hospitals. Areas of expansion had been identified such as the more densely packed residential areas.

In Winchester the scheme had not progressed in its original form as it had not been possible to meet the inflexible deadlines set by DfT for launching trials. Alternative ways of delivery were being considered.

It was accepted that the scheme would not work in all areas which was why the trials were so important.

CHAIRMAN

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