



**HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**  
**COMMITTEE – 6 JUNE 2024**

**QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER STANDING ORDER 34**

**Question asked by Ms Rachael Wigginton (Better Biking for Blaby District)**

“I write on behalf of Better Biking for Blaby District, a Cycling UK partner group that represents the interests of those in Blaby and many throughout Leicestershire who wish to travel short distances by active means - cycling, walking or using mobility chairs.

We are very worried about the lack of concern for safety in the infrastructure being designed and developed in Leicestershire. We do not yet see safety being at the top of the agenda for the increasing numbers of those wishing to walk, wheel or cycle local journeys being fully addressed in new developments.

I recently visited the new marketplace development in Shepshed and was shocked to see how safety for those on bicycles or eBikes has been completely overlooked. I struggle to understand how this can have happened when these are local shops for local people who mostly live within an easy short walking or cycling distance.

There is zero provision for those shoppers using a bike to access the new marketplace, apart from a few token cycle stands, and no provision for a safe route through the marketplace.

Whilst I was there for a few minutes only, I observed a number of people using their bicycles. I talked to a father and son who highlighted the safety issues for those choosing to ride a bike there. Another cyclist had to use the pedestrian crossing.

This was a fantastic opportunity to create an environment that encourages more local active travel, so why have those people riding bikes been overlooked? It's a huge disappointment and frankly, dangerous.

This is a question for scrutiny regarding how we develop highways infrastructure in Leicestershire. This was a Charnwood led development, but this will have had Leicestershire Highways oversight and therefore the responsibility falls to Leicestershire County Council to scrutinize these developments effectively.

How will you ensure overlooking a key group of highways users never happens again in our county? What measures do you have in place to ensure the safety of all

road users is considered and that we do not continue to consider car users as the only people that travel?

In this era of high vehicle transport costs, congestion, air quality, environmental and health concerns, Leicestershire should be doing everything it can to help people switch local journeys to active ones. I'm afraid this development has fallen far short of what is required in 2024 and beyond."

### **Reply by the Chairman**

The project was designed and implemented by Charnwood Borough Council, working alongside Shepshed Town Council, using funding obtained from various external sources.

The main driver for such projects is town centre regeneration as set out in Charnwood Borough Council's Shepshed Town Centre masterplan -

[https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/files/documents/shepshed\\_master\\_plan\\_and\\_delivery\\_framework/Shepshed%20Master%20Plan%20and%20Delivery%20Framework.pdf](https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/files/documents/shepshed_master_plan_and_delivery_framework/Shepshed%20Master%20Plan%20and%20Delivery%20Framework.pdf)

In order to proceed with the project, Charnwood Borough Council was required to submit its design proposals to Leicestershire County Council for approval as all third parties looking to make amendments to the public highway are required to.

These designs were assessed against the relevant policies and design principles in place at the time the submissions were made. This scheme was developed prior to the LTN 1/20 guidance and was not contrary to the Council's adopted Highways Design Guide at the time of submission. In light of this it was not within the scope of the Leicestershire County Council's role to request additional cycle infrastructure. The proposal was supplemented by independent stage 1 and 2 road safety audits which are required to be provided as part of a design submission. These audits did not highlight any specific concerns regarding safety for cyclists.

When the project is complete and operational, Charnwood Borough Council will be required to undertake a stage 3 road safety audit which will assess the overall safety of the project and highlight any causes for concern. In the event that a serious safety issue is highlighted, the Council will require the works' promotor, Charnwood Borough Council, to address the matter and propose a satisfactory solution.

The Council is in the process of updating its Highways Design Guide to reflect national policy and design guidance. Schemes proposed in future will be assessed against this updated guidance subject to approval by the Cabinet which is scheduled for October 2024.

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**Question asked by Mr John Mclelland**

“The underpass at the north end of Main Street, Lockington, where the road passes below the A50, was built during the construction of the new rail line to the Rail Freight Interchange, part of the East Midlands Gateway development.

The original access from Lockington to the A50 was closed, to make room for the new freight railway line, the road now links to Hemlock Way, north of the underpass, leading to the Hilton Hotel and Junction 24 of the M1.

The design of the underpass is built into the concrete casting of the underpass framework. The road dips below the underpass and is drained from a single drain point, leading to a pump system at the southwest corner of the underpass. From here the water is pumped to the north side of the A50 towards the M1.

The design was agreed between Roxhill (the developer at the time) and LCC Highways and we believe would not comply with the existing LCC highway design rules.

Since the implementation of the new road there have been annual, if not more frequent - incidents of flooding at the underpass. After regular requests by the Parish Council remedial work was completed in early 2023. Other actions were put in place to improve the management of the drain system. The frequency for routine cleaning of the gullies was changed from 20 months to 10 months. The pumps were put onto an annual maintenance schedule.

On 28 April 2024, the underpass flooded to such a depth that it became hazardous for vehicles to pass through it. This was reported online to Leicestershire County Council as Enquiry Reference 952218. On 9 May 2024, a complaint was submitted online to LCC because of the lack of update to the original report. On 10 May 2024, the Highway Control Manager replied, saying that a number of enquiries had been received and that works had been raised to resolve the issue.

Tankers attended the site on 16 May 2024; the water was cleared and road was finally re-opened some 19 days after the start of the incident.

As a Parish Council we are concerned that this latest issue did not receive the priority that it deserved. If the problem had been addressed sooner and more effectively, the road could've been cleared quickly and damage to vehicles and personal distress could have been avoided, as well as the obvious inconvenience to regular users of the route.

If flooding does occur in future and the road has to be closed, more effective measures should be put in place to prevent vehicles from attempting to drive through the underpass. We are also concerned that, despite the remedial work last year, this underpass remains vulnerable to flooding and we feel that more active measures could be put in place to address this.

Given the weakness of the design and the resulting regular flooding of this new road since constructed, what additional steps will LCC Highways take to further improve and resolve this situation and its impact on the amenity and safety of the local community?"

### **Reply by the Chairman**

A combination of the drainage design and pump failure has led to flooding issues at this location. The 'gully' in question, which is located at the lowest point on the road, is not a conventional highway gully, as conventional highway gullies have a sump at the base of the pot which retains any silt and debris. This gully has been 'pipe formed' in the concrete structure of the under bridge and, as such, does not have a sump, therefore, due to the build-up of silt, is prone to blocking.

Currently, two pumps operate daily to manage the surface water and groundwater runoff from the surrounding area. The operation of the pumps and gully under the bridge are the main concerns at this location. When there is considerable and prolonged rainfall pump failure (overheating) can occur due to the sheer volume of water coming into the system. Therefore, when the pumps do fail (which happens occasionally) and the gully becomes blocked with silt, there is no way of clearing the blockage which then leads to flooding.

In 2023, the Council installed additional gullies on either side of the bridge with the purpose of collecting the silt, thus reducing the risk of blockages in the drainage system. At the same time, the Council investigated the pipe gully to determine if a sump or more gullies could be added at that location. Due to the concrete construction neither of these options were possible.

The frequency for servicing the two pumps has been increased from annually to a six-monthly service schedule to ensure they are fully operational. The gullies at this location are on the Priority 1 schedule, meaning they are attended every 10 months.

It is worth noting that this site did not flood during Storm Henk in January 2024 when many other areas across the county unfortunately did.

In conclusion, while further civils works are not feasible as a precautionary measure, the Council has installed advance flood warning signs and will further consider adding water depth gauges as it has at other locations.

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**Question asked by Ms Jackson and Ms Perry on behalf of residents of Mountsorrel Cottages**

“We are getting in touch regarding the number and severity of crashes along the B5118 Station Road, Stoney Stanton.

Please see attached graph, photos and a video of some of the crashes which have occurred in less than two years. Also attached is a statement prepared and presented to the Parish Council following the accident of 5th May 2024 by one of the residents of Mountsorrel Cottages.

This will help you to understand that not only the severity of the damage caused but also that the accident of 5th May 2024 was not an isolated incident.

In our opinion it is a miracle that to date no one has been killed.

From the information submitted you will understand the concerns of the residents of Mountsorrel Cottages.

The residents would like to know what immediate action Highways will take to resolve this situation before there is a fatality!”

Reply by the Chairman:

Following the most recent accident, a site visit was conducted to assess the existing highway conditions and the Council can confirm that there are village gateway signs, speed limit roundels and dragon teeth markings when entering into the village from Elmesthorpe. There is also a set of carriageway ‘SLOW’ markings and a junction warning sign opposite the private access road to Mountsorrel Cottages to make drivers aware of the change in surroundings and the start of village built up area. All these signs and road markings are in good and visible condition.

Appropriate records were checked which confirmed that a speed survey was conducted outside No. 9 Mountsorrel Cottages (Station Road) from 27<sup>th</sup> November to 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023. The survey results are as follows:

Direction	Mean Speed	85th Percentile
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Both Directions	27.1mph	32.2mph
South East Bound	26.5mph	31.4mph
North West Bound	27.6mph	33.1mph

When assessing if a road would be considered an area of concern, the police would normally advise that the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile of speed should be above the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) threshold for prosecution which is 35mph (speed limit + 10% + 2mph) in a 30mph speed limit. The results of the survey confirm that the mean and 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds are within the threshold of speed enforcement and are in very good compliance of the speed limit.

Leicestershire County Council as the local Highway Authority is responsible for the implementation of speed limits; however, enforcement of speed limits remains a matter for Leicestershire Police to undertake if drivers are not travelling at the posted limit. Residents can raise their concerns direct to the police and request to add Station Road into their community concern site list for mobile speed camera enforcement. Further information is available at <https://www.speedorsafety.com/community>.

A review of the most recent traffic collision data for last five years shows that no personal injury collisions have been recorded within a 50m radius of this collision. Any collision which does not result in injury is not recorded by the police; consequently, these are not passed to the County Council. The reportable injury collisions are the nationally agreed criteria and is the only set of comparable data that can be used to prioritise resources for road safety improvements.

The recent serious collision on Station Road is currently being investigated by the police and the preliminary enquiries suggest that the vehicle was being driven at speed in the night whilst entering into the village and hit the parked cars outside Mountsorrel Cottages (Station Road). The police investigation is currently ongoing, therefore, it is too early to draw any definite conclusions surrounding this collision.

Observations on site noted that there is rear access to Mountsorrel Cottages through the private access road, which, if the residents are mindful, could be utilised to park their vehicles off-street behind their houses.

It is appreciated that this is a very emotive subject for the residents, however, in this case the Highway Authority is satisfied there is nothing further that would alleviate the anti-social behaviour of a minority of motorists on the County Roads.

Reports of speeding/racing/anti-social behaviour should all be reported to the police.