

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL HIGHWAYS FORUM FOR CHARNWOOD HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2 AT THE BOROUGH COUNCIL OFFICES ON TUESDAY 10TH JANUARY 2017 AT 4.30PM

PRESENT

County Councillors	Borough Councillors
Cllr D Snartt (Chairman)	Cllr K Pacey
Cllr S Hampson	Cllr G Parsons
Cllr M J Hunt	Cllr J Sutherland
Cllr A M Kershaw	Cllr W Bebbington
Cllr P G Lewis	Cllr J Capleton
Cllr J Miah	Cllr A Paling
Cllr M E Newton	Cllr T Parton
Cllr R Sharp	Cllr B Seaton
Cllr R Shepherd	Cllr M Smidowicz
	Cllr D Taylor

The following also attended the meeting:

County officers present: I Vears and S Dann

Borough officers present: P Gilding

001. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed Members and officers to the meeting and wished everyone a Happy New Year. He also welcomed Cllr David Hayes BC who was in attendance. The Chair advised that he had agreed that Cllr Hayes could present an item regarding on street parking later in the meeting. The Chair also advised that he had agreed for Cllr M Smidowicz to present an item on cycling in Loughborough Town Centre. The Chair advised that these items will be presented but officer responses will be brought back to the next meeting.

002. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from County Cllrs Bentley, Houseman, Radford and Knaggs and Borough Cllr Williams.

003. URGENT ITEMS

There are no urgent items.

004. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

005. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 13th September 2016 were confirmed and signed as a true record of the meeting.

The Chair informed Members that following a report to the last meeting regarding flooding, a leaflet had been produced with emergency flood advice and who to contact. A copy of this leaflet will be attached to these minutes. Mr Vears emphasised that members of the public should be advised that the emergency services should be called in the event of a flood. If they have concerns about the possibility of flooding and they are in any doubt about who to call they can contact the County Council's Customer Services on 0116 305

0001. He also asked if Members could disseminate this information in their areas and add it to their local Newsletters and information sheets where possible.

006. CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE – GRASS CUTTING

The Forum considered an update by the Director of Environment and Transport regarding grass cutting. This update was introduced by Mr Vears with a copy filed with the minutes.

Mr Vears took Members through the update and highlighted the key areas of the report. He advised that the number of customer contacts with regard to grass cutting had reduced in 2016 following a number of changes including a renewed proactive approach to customer care. Mr Vears emphasised that the County Council cut the grass for safety purposes and not for amenity and he asked Members to use their roles to assist with the public's expectations of this. He added that there would be no change in cutting visibility splays (as per para 7f of the report).

Mr Vears went on to say that this was all good news but if Members are aware of any issues they must contact the Customer Service Centre. This will ensure that all issues are logged and responded to quickly and efficiently, this will also allow us to see the hot spots which in turn will help us to continue to improve our services. He also added that a real-time dashboard technology is used now which ensures quicker responses.

Cllr P Lewis CC thanked officers for their assistance and support during the recent Loughborough in Bloom event.

RECOMMENDATION

That the update of the Director of Environment and Transport be noted.

007. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 36

There are no current petitions.

A petition was received by officers after the deadline so didn't make it onto this agenda. The petition was from M Lee asking for the removal of the mini roundabout at junction of Barrow Road and Loughborough Road, Quorn. This petition will be formally presented at the next meeting.

008. HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE STRATEGY AND POLICY REVIEW

The Forum considered a report by the Director of Environment and Transport with regard to the Highway Maintenance Strategy and Policy Review. The report was introduced by Mr Vears with a copy filed with the minutes.

Mr Vears took Members through the report and advised that this followed on from the report to the meeting on 4th July 2016 on the A-Roads to Zebras – A Comprehensive Maintenance Review which detailed the reasons for the review and the current extreme financial challenges and the changes in the way that funding is provided, together with the changes that will need to occur to comply with reducing budgets.

Mr Vears went on to say that the responses to the consultation were mixed but gave a good steer as to what services the public think are important. A detailed analysis of the responses was presented to the Cabinet on 13th December 2016. Following Cabinet approval, a draft Highway Asset Management Policy and Strategy have been produced and are attached to the report for information.

Mr Vears encouraged Members to feed into this process and their thoughts and feedback would be welcome. The results will be rolled into the 2018/19 programme.

Mr Vears highlighted para 7.3 of the report which details the 78% reduction in spending power.

Cllr K Pacey BC advised that he had observed that quite frequently, almost weekly the red bricks at the end of some roads in his area get damaged and need replacing and asked would it be more cost effective and efficient to get these removed and replace them with tarmac. Mr Vears responded that we do need to think about what can be changed to improve the network in an efficient way and Members need to keep us informed of any issues.

Cllr M E Newton CC agreed that this was a difficult budget to manage, especially with the public's expectations being so high. She asked if a public relations exercise was needed to alleviate fears with regard to the link with part-night street lighting and recent burglaries in Loughborough. Mr Vears responded that this was part of the process and that if residents do have any issues that these need to be raised with officers who can then discuss these with the police. Mr Vears asked if this issue had been raised, Cllr Newton replied that it had been raised with the police, Mr Vears asked her to raise this with both the police and officers.

Cllr R Shepherd CC asked how Members can help officers and help with public expectations. Mr Vears stated that it was about how we communicate and let the public self-help and if officers can't assist, we need to look at how we facilitate i.e. third party funding. Mr Vears went on to say that improvements are being looked at as to how to allow the public to self-track issues without officer involvement.

The Chair highlighted para 12 on page 49 which talks about the importance of two-way communication.

Cllr Shepherd stated that we didn't communicate to the public when the decision was made for the grass verges not to be cut and the number of complaints that were received due to this. He advised that lessons could be learned from this. Mr Vears agreed although stated that even when leaflet drops are carried out the public don't always read them. He went on to say in Northampton County Council their budget is much less than ours but the public satisfaction appears to be better, we can learn from what they have done.

Cllr M Smidowicz BC raised an issue about reinstatements following work by a utility e.g. Epinal Way corner with Beacon Road, a utility has dug up a green area which was previously used by dog walkers and as a play area for young children. The area is now is a total mess.

Cllr Smidowicz also stated that there is a roundabout in the same area that has cracks appearing due to speeding traffic.

Cllr Smidowicz advised that she was disappointed that Councillors seem to get a different response from that given to members of the public and she recently had this proved when she got a different response to an issue that a disabled resident had also raised.

Cllr Smidowicz stated that she had recently raised an issue on Snells Nook Lane where she couldn't see where the footpath was, she was advised that a surveyor would be coming out but this hasn't happened and she has not heard anything. Mr Vears advised that this will be chased up and Cllr Smidowicz updated.

Mr Vears advised that issues need reporting in the correct way which is through the Customer Service Centre; this is to ensure that they get logged and processed correctly. It also helps as if Members email an officer that officer could be on leave or out of the office and the issue would not be dealt with as quickly. He added that if a response is not received, raise the query again. If a number of residents raise the same thing in the same way it gives greater detail of the issue.

Cllr G Parsons BC asked if Members could propose ideas for efficiencies. He had heard of a scheme in Devon whereby the public were being trained on repairing pot holes. Mr Vears said that he had heard of this being carried out in Cornwall and that Parish Wardens were involved and agreed that if Members had any proposals or ideas he would encourage them to send them to officers to investigate.

Cllr D Taylor BC raised an issue with on-line forms through the LCC website, she stated that she had completed a few of these recently and had received no acknowledgement or confirmation back. Mr Vears stated that there had been a recent IT problem and asked if Members had had any problems with the system to resend their query/form. Mr Vears asked Cllr Taylor to send her issue through to Mrs Dann who could chase this up for her. Cllr J Sutherland BC stated that if you are trying to get through on the CSC number you need to stay on the line, as he had got through but had waited over 8 minutes.

Cllr Sutherland advised that on his road there were only street lights lit at one end and following a recent accident in the night the ambulance drivers were concerned as this continually hampered their work.

Cllr Sutherland asked for further details on the reduction of 78% in real terms as stated in the report. Mr Vears confirmed that the details for this can be found in the previous Highway Forum report but page 38 shows the risks that have been identified. Mr Vears went on to say that a large amount of data is being analysed and models being produced for the strategic development of plans.

The Chair asked that as some Parish Councils pay for their street lighting, there are some issues about how the cost of the transition to LEDs will be covered. He asked if there was a way they could get funding for this. Mr Vears agreed that officers will look into this and bring an update to the next meeting.

Cllr Taylor asked if this information could be shared with Borough Councils as they will be in a similar position.

Cllr Seaton stated that there was a water leak from a collapsed water main on the junction of Melton Road and Canal Street, near the print shop in Thurmaston that had been leaking for some time causing problems with the speed cushions which are now crumbling. Severn Trent cannot guarantee when it will be fixed and Cllr Seaton asked who would be responsible for repairing this. Mr Vears stated that Severn Trent should reinstate any damage to match what was there previously. He went on to say that he would check this out immediately as he felt it could develop into an emergency situation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- i) That the update of the Director of Environment and Transport be noted,
- ii) that officers will investigate the status of the footpath on Snails Nook Lane and contact Cllr Smidowicz; and
- iii) that Cllr Taylor send her issue through to Mrs Dann to chase up and respond back to Cllr Taylor; and
- iv) that officers look into the issue with funding for Parish Councils for their LED transition and an update be brought to the next meeting; and
- v) that officers will investigate the Severn Trent collapsed main and problems this has caused to the speed cushions and the road.

009. 2016/17 MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAMMES - INFORMATION ITEM

Members noted the report.

010. PROGRAMME OF TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT WORK - CURRENT POSITION - INFORMATION ITEM

Members noted the report.

011. ON-GOING ACTION STATEMENT

There are no on-going actions.

012. ITEMS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

Cllr Hayes and Cllr Smidowicz were asked to present their items:

Cllr Smidowicz has had several requests from the Nanpantan Residents Group about a big problem with cyclists riding through Loughborough Town Centre, particularly Beech Yard and Wards End. Cllr Smidowicz would like more 'No cycling' signs erected if possible or painted signs on the road to ask cyclists to dismount. Mr Vears agreed to ask officers to investigate and an update be brought to the next meeting.

Cllr David Hayes BC introduced himself as the Cabinet Member for Regulatory Services which includes car parking and he has attended a couple of Scrutiny meetings where they have discussed the Car Parking Strategy and how this affects the on-street car parking in Charnwood. Cllr Hayes would like better communication with LCC and does not understand why this is difficult, he has requested a simple guide for Members to know and understanding about CPZ, what they are and the process of requesting one in their area if on street parking is a problem. Mr Vears agreed that an update would be brought back to the next meeting.

Cllr Hayes raised an issue about the danger of cyclists riding through Loughborough Market and asked that this be looked at. Mr Vears agreed that an update be brought back to the next meeting.

Cllr Hayes also raised concern about the delays following the successful pedestrianisation of Market Street. A TRO was agreed to extend the Market area so the stalls can spread out away from the shops near Lloyds Bank. Mr Vears agreed that officers will look into this and an update be brought back to the next meeting.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- i) That officers look into having more 'No Cycling' signs erected or painted through the Loughborough Town Centre, particularly Beech Yard and Wards End; and
- ii) that officers investigate how the car parking strategy will affect the on-street car parking in Charnwood and provide a simple guide for Members to know and understanding about CPZ; and
- iii) that officers look into the danger of cyclists riding through Loughborough Market.; and
- iv) that officers investigate the delays following the TRO agreed for the pedestrianisation of Market Street, Loughborough.

The Chairman asked Members to let officers have in writing any items for consideration for future agendas within 10 days of the date of the meeting. These items can be sent to Sue Dann, e-mail sue.dann@leics.gov.uk

013. ANY OTHER ITEMS THE CHAIRMAN HAS DECIDED IS URGENT

There are no urgent items.

014. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The Chairman confirmed that the date of the next meeting has now been arranged and will be on **Tuesday 20th June 2017 at 4.30pm in CR2**

015. CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING REMARKS

The Chairman thanked Members and officers for their attendance at the meeting. He stated that he is not standing for re-election as a County Councillor and that this will be his and Cllr T Kershaw's last meeting. The Chairman thanked Members for the work that the Forum has achieved. The Members thanked Cllr Snartt for his time as Chair.

10th January 2017
16:30 – 17:15 hrs

Chairman
Date