

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
HIGHWAYS FORUM FOR BLABY HELD AT THE BLABY DISTRICT COUNCIL
OFFICES ON TUESDAY 31ST JANUARY 2017 AT 4.30PM

PRESENT

County Councillors	District Councillors
Cllr D Jennings (Chairman)	Cllr A Clifford
Cllr J Dickinson	Cllr S Coar
Cllr T Richardson	Cllr A V Greenwood
Cllr E F White	Cllr C Merrill
	Cllr P Moitt
	Cllr L Phillimore
	Cllr A C Tanner

The following also attended the meeting:

County officers: A Carruthers, F Blockley and S Dann

Blaby officer: J Wells

001. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed Members and officers to the meeting. He also welcomed Cllr R Denney, Cllr M Fox and Cllr C J Frost who are in attendance with reference to the presentation of a petition regarding Barry Drive, Kirby Muxloe later on in the agenda. The Chairman advised that he will be taking Item 7 – Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 36 earlier on the agenda (after Item 4).

002. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors Blunt, Welsh and Yates.

003. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

004. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman invited Members who wished to do so to declare any interests in respect of items on the agenda for the meeting. The following declarations were made with regard to item 7 on the agenda, 'Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 36' - the presentation of a petition requesting a public consultation on traffic issues facing residents of the Barry Drive Estate, Kirby Muxloe. The Chairman explained that the Highway Forum has no decision making powers and the declarations of interest will be noted from the following Members:

Cllr A V Greenwood DC
Cllr C Merrill DC
Cllr L Phillimore DC
Cllr A C Tanner DC

005. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on Tuesday 21st September 2016 were confirmed and signed as a true record of the meeting.

006. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 36

The Chairman agreed to take the petition at this point on the agenda due to the lead petitioner and Councillors who were in attendance.

A petition containing 120 signatures from Peter and Rachel Aspinall on behalf of the Barry Drive residents was presented. The petition requests a public consultation on traffic issues facing residents of the Barry Drive Estate, Kirby Muxloe.

The Chairman asked Peter Aspinall if he would like to speak in support of his petition and Mr Aspinall agreed that he would.

Mr Aspinall confirmed that he had brought in a full copy of the petition, together with supporting letters and information. The Chairman formally accepted the petition and supporting information and advised Mr Aspinall that he could present his case and the information would then be investigated by officers and would be responded to at the next Highway Forum on 13th June 2017, or if there was any information available before this this would be sent to those involved.

Mr Aspinall stated that he was requested a full public consultation on the dangerous traffic issues around Barry Drive, Kirby Muxloe. He raised concerns about the new developments (residential and industrial) in the surrounding areas which will result in an increase in traffic in that area.

Cllr E F White DC stated that he felt that as a Councillor he felt he was being asked to do something he didn't think he had the power to do. The Chairman asked officers to check the legality of the petition as part of their investigations.

Mr Aspinall took Members through the background to this petition and discussed the findings of a Quantity Surveyor's report concerning the number of lorry movements per day through this junction.

Mr Aspinall discussed a previous request for traffic calming which he felt would have been funded from a S106 agreement with regard to the Lubbesthorpe development which was refused.

Mr Aspinall requested a full public consultation which would include the Police who had advised that they had not been previously consulted.

The Chairman stated that the three Councillors who had been named on the petition were Cllr Blunt who wasn't at the meeting, Cllr Greenwood and Cllr Frost and he asked if they would like to speak.

Cllr Greenwood stated that the first application was passed by Blaby District Council and was appealed against which eventually went to the High Court which was refused with costs awarded against the council. The second application concerned a rights of way issue and was under a separate application with a separate reference. Cllr Greenwood stated that he had very strong views about officers being referred to by name at meetings, especially those not in attendance.

Cllr Greenwood went on to explain the second application referred to was the removal of a double garage and had a separate application number.

Cllr Greenwood stated that as Members of the Kirby Muxloe Parish Council he understands why this has been raised by Mr Aspinall as his daughter lives in the area and has a lot of knowledge of the area.

Cllr Greenwood advised that he was going to take legal advice and follow the constitution guidance on whether the Kirby Muxloe Parish Council can be involved financially in supporting this Resident's Action Group.

Cllr Frost informed Members that in the petition it refers to the Barry Drive estate rat-run and went on to give details of the trap conflict at the T-junction with Barry Drive. He went on to say that the S106 monies for traffic calming was not wanted locally and proposed that the cheaper option would be to stop traffic coming onto Maytree Drive from Hinckley Road. He was concerned that this was being ignored and as traffic increases this will eventually be the only option. He felt that the local residents were getting frustrated thinking that the County Council are not acting in their best interests.

Cllr Frost stated that an elderly lady had recently been knocked down and is currently on crutches and had contacted the Parish Council asking what was going to be done about the situation. He is also aware of some near misses. He reiterated that residents do not want speed humps and he also feels they are not good for the environment and would like the County Council to offer another solution.

Cllr J Dickinson CC asked for further clarification on the Rights of Way application discussed by Cllr Greenwood. Cllr Greenwood gave further details on this application which was around the demolition of the bungalow and double garage and its interference with the public Rights of Way and stated that this had yet to be approved and the confusion was caused as this came in before the 1st application had been approved.

The Chairman thanked those who had spoken in support of the petition and formally accepted the petition, advising Members that officers will bring a report in response to this petition back to the next meeting but should a response be available before then this would be sent out.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- i) That the update of the Director of Environment and Transport be noted; and
- ii) that the petition will be formally presented and responded to at the next meeting, officers to check the legality of the petition as part of their investigations.

007. 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 Ms Carruthers with a copy filed with the minutes.

Ms Carruthers took Members through the update and highlighted the key areas of the report. She advised that the number of customer contacts with regard to grass cutting had reduced in 2016 which followed a number of changes to the service which moved in-

house at the end of 2014. The frequency of the cutting reduced from 6 cuts to 5 following a public consultation on the MTFFS budget where the public fed back that they felt this was not a high priority and could be reduced, although there were a high level of customer contacts regarding the grass cutting that same year. A review was held as a result of this and a decision made to increase urban cuts to 6 a year including the Council's new responsive approach to customer care. The revised approach focused around a more reactive approach the growth of the grass with more frequent cuts earlier in the season.

Ms Carruthers explained that the performance monitoring information which is being analysed showed that 2016 showed the lowest number of customer contacts since 2013 when 7 cuts were done per year, substantially lower than 2014 and 2015. Ms Carruthers went on to say that a number of improvements were being made i.e. trackers on mowers which will give a more responsive and better level of service than before.

Ms Carruthers asked Members to note the improvements made and the level of achievement detailed in the report.

The Chair informed Members that he had received comments from residents in Kirby Muxloe that they were very impressed with the grass cutting.

Cllr S Coar DC stated that there were possible cost savings to be made if they cut back on cutting right back in rural areas. He felt this would save on man hours and also wear and tear on the machinery. Ms Carruthers stated that only 2 rural cuts are made per year and were 1 metre width with a full cut at the end of the season.

RECOMMENDATION

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

008. CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE - HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE STRATEGY AND POLICY REVIEW

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

Ms Carruthers 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 being processed, together with the changes that will need to occur to comply with these changes. Ms Carruthers explained that due to the Department for Transport (DfT) Incentive fund, the department must change their processes to ensure they are maximising funding from Government for highway maintenance.

Ms Carruthers explained that the public's views from the recent consultation have now been collated and give a good idea of the public's views on priorities. 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 in line with Government guidance and these are attached to the report for information. The Cabinet approved a full public 3-month consultation on these documents and Ms Carruthers encouraged Members to feed into this process and their

thoughts and feedback would be very welcome. The results of this would be reported to Cabinet in June 2017.

Ms Carruthers highlighted para 13 of the report which states that the Cabinet also approved the development of a pilot scheme to provide Parish Councils with the option to take on Highway warden work. She stated that some Parish Councils will not be willing to take on this role but they could still provide the eyes and ears and be able to monitor and report issues to the Council. This is also an option for community groups and networks.

Cllr Richardson asked if there was going to be further liaison with Districts and Borough councils. He also asked about the situation with the red diesel as if the Parish Councils take on grass cutting they may break the law unless they drain their tanks and refill and he asked if there was a solution to this. Ms Carruthers explained that this is the type of issue she would expect to be addressed through the pilot project and that the proposal of devolving some tasks was not about paying Parish Councils to do the work of the Council, it was about liaising with them over things they could take easily take on and the County Council can provide information and advice on legal and insurance issues. Cllr Richardson asked when the pilot was due to start. Ms Carruthers advised that they have received a reasonable amount of interest and the pilot will follow shortly.

Cllr L Phillimore DC asked if this meant that the County Council would have land ownership transferred to Parish Councils where it was appropriate. Ms Carruthers explained that this was not about transferring land but it did include clearing, grass cutting, drainage etc. but the Council were open to discussions.

Cllr Phillimore also stated that he thought the 'making good' of roads after development was appalling and wondered if there was something County could do to pass the cost of this maintenance onto the Developer. Ms Carruthers answered that this was an ongoing challenge for the department. Officers do check and monitor this and do get the Developer to put it right when necessary. Ms Carruthers stated that every time the road surface is opened it reduces its life by one third.

Ms Carruthers reminded Members of the budget situation and that in 2009/10 the budget was £32m and by 2020 this would be reduced to £16.5m which included street lighting and waste management and agreed this would be an ongoing challenge. She stated that a permit system is being investigated which could help to monitor and control what is happening in the carriageway with everything being recorded.

Cllr Greenwood raised concern about the flooding on the A47 (LFE) due to drainage (Beggars Lane to Braunstone Crossroads). Ms Carruthers highlighted the leaflet that had been passed round which gives contact details with regard to flooding issues. She asked Cllr Greenwood to give her the details which she will pass to officers to investigate its jetting history.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- i) That the update of the Director of Environment and Transport be noted; and
- ii) that officers investigate the flooding on the A47 (LFE) due to drainage (Beggars Lane to Braunstone Crossroads).

The Forum considered the 2016 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR) which was provided by Blaby District Council and available on their Website. This update was introduced by Mr Wells with a copy filed with the minutes.

Mr Wells took Members through a brief introduction of this report. The areas that have been assessed are around LFE, A47 and M1 junction and also other potentially congested areas. The areas are chosen using data on heavy traffic flow. He advised that Blaby District Council officers work with Highways England and also Leicestershire County Council on these issues.

Cllr E White CC raised a concern that in Sharnford the figures were due to idling cars and was concerned this may be fudging the figures. Mr Wells explained that they compare figures to a baseline.

Cllr S Coar DC raised concerns regarding M1 Junction 21 backing up to 22 where there are constant 4/5 lanes of traffic ticking over between 6.00am to 10.00am and asked if this could be monitored on the bridge. Mr Wells responded that the receptors are only placed at receptor points.

Cllr J Dickinson DC asked about the use of barriers and that these make an effective difference. Mr Wells responded that Highways England need to be encouraged to use barriers.

Cllr A Tanner DC asked Mr Wells about Croft Road, Cosby and his concern that there was going to be more development in that area and it was already border line. Mr Wells agreed that they will be keeping a watching brief on the area.

Cllr C Merrill DC asked whether District officers liaise with City officers on Air Quality issues, specifically on areas such as Glen Parva and Soar Valley Way and Lutterworth Road, which suffer congestion when Tigers are playing. Mr Wells agreed that they regularly discuss Air Quality issues with officers at the City Council and are aware of when these issues cross boundaries. He stated that a joint approach would be taken in these cases.

Cllr Phillimore gave his thanks to County officers as the traffic lights on Hospital Lane have had a massive positive effect.

Cllr Dickinson discussed the benefits from having barriers and asked if this could be requested at the time of development of a business or a housing estate. Cllr Phillimore asked if there was any way that S106 monies could be used for barriers. Ms Carruthers replied that S106 monies cannot currently be used in relation to air quality issues although it does cover an element of community representation but the only time this could be used is when a new road is being built, this is not about housing or employment.

Cllr White stated that as health can be impaired by air quality it is time to lobby the Government for changes as this can have a major impact on the health of residents. Ms Carruthers mentioned that in her previous role she had a similar situation at the Dartford Crossing where health statistics showed that it was causing problems but they could not get Highways England to make changes. Mr Wells offered Cllr White his help and support on this issue.

RECOMMENDATION

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

010. 2016/17 MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAMMES –
INFORMATION ITEM

Members noted the report.

011. PROGRAMME OF TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDERS AND SIGNING AND
LINING SCHEMES – INFORMATION ITEM

Members noted the report.

012. ON-GOING ACTION STATEMENT

There were no outstanding on-going actions.

013. ITEMS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

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, email sue.dann@leics.gov.uk. The Chairman reiterated the need for advanced warning for officers on items.

014. ANY OTHER ITEMS THE CHAIRMAN HAS DECIDED IS URGENT

There were no urgent items.

015. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The Chairman confirmed the date of the next meeting as Tuesday 13th June 2017 at 4.30pm.

016. CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING REMARKS

The Chairman thanked Members and officers for their attendance at the meeting.

31st January 2017

Chairman

4.30pm – 5.40pm

Date