

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
HIGHWAYS FORUM FOR NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE
HELD AT THE NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES
ON THURSDAY 9TH FEBRUARY 2017 AT 4.30PM

PRESENT

| County Councillors | District Councillors |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Cllr J G Coxon (Chairman) | Cllr R Ashman |
| Cllr M B Wyatt | Cllr D Harrison |
| Cllr S D Sheahan | Cllr G Hoult |
| | Cllr J Legrys |
| | Cllr J Cotterill |
| | Cllr M Specht |

The following also attended the meeting:

County officers present: A Carruthers, F Blockley, E Knight and S Dann

District officers present: None.

001. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed Members and officers to the meeting.

002. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors J Eynon and T J Pendleton

003. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

004. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

005. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of the previous meeting held on Wednesday 18th October 2016 were confirmed and signed as a true record of the meeting.

006. CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE – GRASS CUTTING

The Forum considered an update by the Director of Environment and Transport on grass cutting. This update was introduced by Ms Carruthers with a copy filed with the minutes.

Ms Carruthers took Members through the details of the update and highlighted the key areas on performance after last season and proposals for next season. She advised that the number of customer contacts with regard to grass cutting issues had reduced in 2016, which followed a number of changes to the service which had moved in-house at the end of 2014. The frequency of the cutting was reduced from 6 cuts to 5 in 2015 following a public consultation on the MTFs budget where the public fed back that they felt grass cutting was not a high priority and could be reduced. In reality, there was 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 at Cabinet in October 2015 to increase urban cuts to 6 a year along with introducing a new responsive approach to customer care better reflecting the growth of

the grass thereby having more frequent cuts earlier in the season. She added that rural cuts remained the same at two per year.

Ms Carruthers explained that the graph of the performance monitoring information showed that 2016 had the lowest number of customer contacts since 2013 when 7 cuts were carried out per year, and substantially lower than 2014 and 2015. Ms Carruthers went on to say that a number of further improvements were being made which will again enable a more proactive and responsive level of service. She informed Members that the level of information available will allow officers to understand why areas are missed, for example when cars are parked across grassed areas and this will ensure that works are reprogrammed more efficiently.

Cllr M Wyatt CC admitted that he was the biggest critic of this initially but thanked officers for the massive positive impact to the local area with increasing the cuts to 6 and he stated that he hopes it stays at 6. The Chair thanked Cllr Wyatt for his positive comments.

RECOMMENDATION

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

CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE – COALVILLE GROWTH AREA OF STRATEGY (VERBAL UPDATE)

The Forum considered a verbal update by the Director of Environment and Transport regarding the Coalville Growth Area of Strategy. This update was a presentation by Ms Carruthers.

Ms Carruthers took Members through the presentation on the A511 study works and highlighted the key areas. The presentation covered the following:

- Development Scenario – based on Core Strategy all known growth and regeneration;
- Junction Mitigation Scenario – considers mitigation at key junctions within study area
- Junction Mitigation With Bardon Link Road

Ms Carruthers showed Members a plan detailing the proposed location of the junction improvement works and went through the data that had been collected during the study works. Ms Carruthers stated that the results showed that the package of mitigation measures including the Bardon Link Road offers the best overall benefits for the local area.

Ms Carruthers explained to Members that this work is necessary to ensure the County Council can take advantage of funding opportunities when these arise. She went on to say that further work will be carried out on this and an update will be brought to the next Forum.

Cllr Wyatt said that he sees this as a step forward and is happy that progress is being made and will be pleased when the link road is in.

Cllr J Legrys DC asked whether Hugglescote Crossroads had been removed from these works. Ms Carruthers answered that improvements there have been modelled but due to the strong community feeling, further work will be carried out that will not include improvements at this junction..

Cllr Legrys asked whether the model will be complete for the Local Plan Inquiry. Ms Carruthers answered that the current work modelling different scenarios for this contributions strategy is separate to the transport work supporting the local plan.

Cllr Legrys asked if Members could have a copy of the presentation. Ms Carruthers advised that as this was only half a piece of work, she suggested that they wait for a more complete update which will be coming to the next Forum.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- i) That the update of the Director of Environment and Transport be noted; and
- ii) that a further update be brought to the next Forum meeting.

CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE – GRANGE ROAD, COALVILLE

The Forum considered a verbal update by the Director of Environment and Transport regarding the progress on the Grange Road, Hugglescote access and Traffic Regulation Order. 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. She advised Members that a progress meeting had now taken place on 8th February and work was now underway on site.

Cllr Legrys informed Members that Cllr T Eynon CC who couldn't attend the meeting due to a clash in meetings had asked him to inform officers that she was disappointed by the decision made on the TRO detailed in this report.

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.

008. RESPONSE TO PETITION: FLOODING AT JUNCTION OF BATH LANE AND VIA DEVANA, MOIRA

The Forum considered a report by the Director of Environment and Transport in response to the petition requesting immediate action to resolve the flooding at the junction of Bath Lane and Via Devana, Moira.

Ms Carruthers took Members through the report and the investigation which was carried out leading to the report, following the presentation of the petition to Members at the last Highway Forum.

Ms Carruthers advised Members that as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) the County Council are already aware of the problems in this area and are working with partners to rectify the issues. Officers are also working with the local landowners as there is an investigation ongoing as to whether there are some issues with blocked drainage pipes under the adjacent playing fields which are in private ownership.

Ms Carruthers clarified that officers from Severn Trent are due to carry out a hydrological model and this may provide the key of how to resolve this issue, however to date Severn Trent have not committed to a timescale for this work. She also highlighted that there are similar challenging issues around the County of working with utility companies to seek action to resolve flooding and drainage issues.

Ms Carruthers reminded Members that as LLFA officers, their responsibility is to highlight the issues to partners and then work with them to achieve solutions. The LLFA however does not have the ability to enforce action from other utility companies.

Ms Carruthers confirmed that Severn Trent Water had agreed to attend a LCC Scrutiny Commission meeting on 8th March to discuss how they are planning to maintain and upgrade their systems in view of the significant growth agenda moving forward. She

confirmed that officers are frequently in contact with Severn Trent Water officers to ensure there is ongoing commitment on both sides.

Ms Carruthers stated that further work is being carried out by LCC Highways to alter the culverted watercourse alignment under Bath Lane to alleviate the frequency and severity of future flooding occurrences. This work will be carried out in the coming financial year.

Ms Carruthers stated that LLFA officers are proposing to undertake a further CCTV survey for the whole length of the field. Officers will then work with the Minors Welfare Society to ensure the necessary remedial action is taken.

Ms Carruthers concluded that residents may not be satisfied with the rate of progress on this matter however, as much as possible is being done to work with the relevant parties to try and sort out the issues at this location.

Cllr D Harrison DC raised his concerns about Severn Trent's response to the flooding issues and specifically the filling in of a dip in the road on the residential development and asked whether this would be a remedial way of resolving the issue. Ms Carruthers responded that all the options would need to be looked at as merely changing the level of the road is likely to simply move the flooding issue elsewhere rather than curing the issue for the community. It would also potentially be a costly option.

Cllr S Sheahan CC thanked officers for the report and stated that he was pleased with the proposed drainage improvement scheme for next year (financial year 2017/18). He raised concerns about the issues in para 8 of the report and asked how co-operative Severn Trent are being. He stated that there will be an opportunity to find out at Scrutiny Commission on 8th March, he also asked about the nature of the dialogue. Mr Knight answered that there were meetings with Severn Trent bi-monthly on a number of issues including Bath Lane.

The Chair agreed to bring a further update to a future meeting after 6 months or at an appropriate time.

RECOMMENDATION

- i) That the report of the Director of Environment and Transport be noted; and
- ii) that an update be brought back to an appropriate meeting in the future (after 6 months' time).

009. 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 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 last meeting entitled A-Roads to Zebras – A Comprehensive Maintenance Review. This detailed the reasons for the review and the current extreme financial challenges and the alteration in the way that funding is being processed by the Department for Transport, together with the changes that will need to occur to comply with the new Code of Practice. We need to alter our approach to Highway Maintenance to maximise the amount of funding available. It will need to be more of a risk based approach and at the same time operating with a considerably reduced budget.

Ms Carruthers reported that the views of the public on services and priorities were fed into the comprehensive report to Cabinet on 13th December 2016, which set out a draft Highway Asset Management Policy and Strategy which have been produced and are attached to the report for information. Ms Carruthers encouraged Members to feed into the current consultation on the draft policy and strategy that is open until on 24th March and to

also encourage others to take part. The results will be used to formulate the final policy and strategy which will determine future years work programmes.

Ms Carruthers highlighted that a pilot scheme is going to be set up whereby the Council will work with the community to give clarity on what they can get involved with. She advised that there is a whole spectrum of involvement from grass cutting to sign cleaning. Ms Carruthers stated that the pilot will be important to ensure we gain the knowledge of what it would be reasonable to enable communities to take on in terms of highway maintenance functions in future.

Cllr Sheahan advised that it may vary from parish to parish. Ms Carruthers agreed and stated that pilots will help shape what the service will look like in future. It is likely it will be very different and that knowing what the public's priorities are is therefore very important. Some services will be stopped, some will continue as now and some could be carried out by the community.

Cllr Harrison asked about how funding would be made for the Parish Council's carrying out these duties. Ms Carruthers clarified that there would be no funding for these works, the County Council would offer support, training, legal and insurance assistance only. There is the voluntary precept if the Parish Council wants to go down that line.

Cllr Legrys stated that he welcomed the honesty in this report and for officers bringing it to Members attention. He asked that the Comms team communicate this message as Councillors are constantly being asked for pot holes to be repaired and overhanging trees cut down and it is difficult for Councillors to continually be saying it won't be done. Ms Carruthers responded that the County Council still have their core services i.e. pot holes repair but this will be done on a more risk based approach.

There was a discussion about the Customer Service Centre and the poor level of service. Ms Carruthers advised that she would speak to the Manager as all urgent issues should be passed directly to operation control.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- i) That the report of the Director of Environment and Transport be noted; and
- ii) that Ms Carruthers will speak to the Manager of the CSC to ensure all urgent issues are passed to operation control.

010. 2015/16 MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAMMES – INFORMATION ITEM

Members noted the report.

011. PROGRAMME OF TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT WORK – CURRENT POSITION – INFORMATION ITEM

Members noted the report.

012. ON-GOING ACTION STATEMENT

The ongoing action was noted.

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.

014. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

015. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The Chairman confirmed the date of the next meeting will be 29th June 2017 at 4.30pm in the Council Chamber at North West Leicestershire District Council offices.

016. CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING REMARKS

The Chairman thanked Members and officers for their attendance and contribution at the meeting. The Chairman stated that due to the Elections in May there may be a set of new Members and a new Chairman for this Forum.