

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
HIGHWAYS FORUM FOR MELTON HELD IN THE FERNELEY ROOM AT THE MELTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL OFFICES ON MONDAY 20TH FEBRUARY AT 4.30PM

PRESENT

County Councillors	BOROUGH COUNCILLORS
Cllr A Pearson (Chairman)	Cllr P M Chandler
Cllr P Posnett	Cllr J Wyatt
Cllr J T Orson	Cllr S Lumley
Cllr B Rhodes	Cllr E Holmes

The following also attended the meeting:

County officers present: P Crossland and S Dann

Borough officer present: None.

001. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed Members and officers, together with members of the public to the meeting. He also welcomed Cllr G Botterill BC and Mr Maurice P Bell who were also in attendance.

002. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

003. URGENT ITEMS

There were 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 11th October 2016 were confirmed and signed as a true record of the meeting.

006. CHAIRMAN'S UPDATES

007. A) ACCIDENT REPORT FOR CROXTON KERRIAL

The Forum considered an update by the Director of Environment and Transport on the accident data for the village of Croxton Kerrial. This update was introduced by Mr Crossland with a copy filed with the minutes.

The Chairman advised Members that the report highlighted that there had been a number of serious accidents, potential accidents and slight accidents in that area and that Leicestershire was unusual in that most of its road traffic accidents happen in the rural areas and not the built up areas, which is different from other Counties.

Mr Crossland went through the report and highlighted paras 1-5 which show the accident history of the area up to May 2016 and advised that there had been 3 fatal accidents in that area in the last 18 months. He stated that in para 6 onwards it details the action that has been taken.

Mr Crossland explained that a VAS which had recently been installed had the trigger speed set at the National Speed limit, this has now been lowered to 45mph to alert drivers to slow down before approaching the bend. He also highlighted para 7 which details the addition of the area of vegetation to the safety critical vegetation cutting programme to maintain visibility. He also highlighted para 8 which states that the bends have been added to the surface dressing programme to have a higher skid resistance surface installed and this will take place when the weather improves, although in the meantime 'slippery road' signs will be placed on site.

Mr Crossland highlighted para 10 and stated that the site of the fatal accident of November 2016 will continue to be monitored.

Mr Crossland referenced the recent Scrutiny Review Panel report which highlights the fact that the rural roads are more of a problem in Leicestershire. He went on to say that the County Council are launching a campaign on the usage of average speed cameras in Leicestershire. He also stated that the Department for Transport have confirmed it is the choice of the Local Authority whether to follow the Government guidance on this or not.

Mr Crossland stated that Cabinet had decided to agree to a wider use of speed cameras due to the resource difficulties that the Police face in trying to deal with community requests for speed enforcement.

Cllr E Holmes BC stated that she was concerned about the speeding traffic down from the A1 towards Waltham. She asked that as this is traffic coming from the A1 is there any funding available from the Highways Agency? Mr Crossland answered that as it is traffic coming from an A road onto another A road there would be no additional funding. Cllr Holmes went on to say that the A1 is a National Road and the A607 is a County Road. Mr Crossland stated that the 2 networks have to work together, Highways England support network resilience but will not upgrade roads just because they are used as a diversionary route.

Cllr S Lumley stated that he though the flashing VASs were a good idea and asked if he could have a VAS on Thorpe Road.

Cllr B Rhodes stated that he has a large number of complaints about speeding traffic at Thorpe Arnold and a significant number of complaints about Waltham and Croxton Kerrial, and pointed out that this area does seem to stand out with its accident history and asked whether it crossed the threshold for further capital funding. Mr Crossland stated that it was an issue that needed to be looked at and compared with other sites. He also stated that VASs may work but certain accidents are due to driver behaviour and the fact that local motorists know the area and the bends.

Cllr J T Orson stated that as money is tight, the solution is to put the anti-skid surface down but not communicate this to motorists. Mr Crossland advised that this is the normal surface dressing which reinstates the surface texture and helps with the grip and is not advertised.

Mr Crossland asked Members to bear in mind driver capability issues, often vehicles are capable of negotiating bends unfortunately motorists sometimes aren't and in that case enforcement is the only solution.

The Chair asked if this could be an item on the next Forum agenda. Mr Crossland stated that there was no real point as no valid conclusions could be drawn, it would need to be after 3 years but he confirmed that this area would be included in the current review of all roads in the County.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- i) That the update of the Director of Environment and Transport be noted; and
- ii) That this area be included in the current review of all roads in the County.

008. B) NETHER BROUGHTON HILL A606 – PROPOSED HILL CLIMB EVENT

The Forum considered an update by the Director of Environment and Transport on the proposed re-enactment of the Kettleby Hill Climb. This update was introduced by Mr Crossland with a copy filed with the minutes.

The Chairman informed Members of the recent news article in the Melton Times dated 16th February about the historical hill climb event in 1910 and the proposed future re-enactment.

Cllr Orson explained that following the land slide on Nottingham Road, Mr David Groom had an idea of a re-enactment of the historic hill climb and presented his proposals to Members at the last Forum where it was suggested that he meet with County Council officers to go through his initial proposal.

Mr Crossland took Members through the report produced following that meeting and highlighted that officers had confirmed that they were open to having a road closure, subject to meeting certain conditions.

Members agreed it was a great idea and advised Mr Groom to take this forward.

A concern was raised about the public that would view the event and it was suggested that advice be sought as to what would be needed for this to be signed off as safe for the general public. Mr Crossland suggested contacting the RAC as they are the experts for this kind of event.

The Chair advised that Mr Groom will also need to liaise with Melton Borough Council officers as this will have a tourist impact with an increase in visitors to Melton.

Cllr Orson said that he was very excited by the prospect of this event and suggested that Mr Groom also contact the Melton Tourist Board.

Mr Crossland suggested that Mr Groom has a further meeting with officers and then take advice from other third parties such as the Fire Authority, Highways England and Nottingham County Council before contacting Melton Borough Council and the Melton Tourist Board. He also suggested that Mr Groom discuss this with the organisational group he mentioned when he presented the idea at the last Highways Forum as they may have further advice. The Chair asked for himself and Cllr Orson to be kept updated on progress. The Chair thanked officers and Members for responding in such a positive way.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- i) That the update of the Director of Environment and Transport be noted;
- ii) That a further meeting be held between County officers and Mr Groom; and
- iii) That Cllr Orson and Cllr Pearson be kept informed of progress.

009. C) GRASS CUTTING

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

The Chairman stated that as the season was very warm and wet, this was exactly the type of weather for the grass to grow.

Mr Crossland took Members through the details of the update and highlighted the key areas on performance after last season and proposals for next season. He 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 MTF 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 in the main growing part of the season. He added that rural cuts remained the same at twice a year and will be carried out by SMEs.

Cllr J Wyatt CC praised officers for the quality of the cutting, he was concerned at the start but after the second cut the quality had improved.

Cllr P Chandler BC stated that she had some concerns about the grass cutting that Highways England carry out on the A52. She met them on site and felt concerned as they didn't seem to know who the contractors were that carried out the work. Mr Crossland advised Cllr Chandler to contact the Chief Exec of Highways England and he agreed to send her the email address.

The Chair thanked officers for the report and praised them on the positive action taken.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- i) That the update of the Director of Environment and Transport be noted; and
- ii) Mr Crossland send the email address of the Chief Exec of Highways England to Cllr Chandler.

010. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 36

There were no petitions to present.

The Chair informed Members that he had been on a drive round the Borough with Maurice Bell where he had informed him of several issues. Mr Bell had produced a list of these issues and had presented copies of the list to Members.

Mr Bell took Members through the issues. These issues will be passed to officers to investigate and to respond back to Mr Bell.

Cllr Lumley advised that he had already advised officers of some of these issues and had emailed Sue Dann. He also advised that following a conversation with Matt Reedman he was aware of a more reactive system for monitoring blocked drains which was being brought in that will be more efficient and save money.

Cllr Lumley raised his concerns about recent works on an area between A6006 and Six Hills where the road was closed for 5 days and when the road was re-opened the drains had not been cleared, the pot holes not fixed and the signs not cleaned. He also reported problem paving stones that should have been repaired in October 2016. Mr Crossland stated that he could not comment without seeing the closure information but he felt the work should have been completed. Mr Crossland stated that the budget reduction of 78% to £16m in 2020/21 will reduce the amount of this work that happens in the future with safety as the priority.

Cllr Wyatt advised that he had some concerns about the signage at the roundabout at Swallowdale School on Valley Road which he felt was dangerous due to motorists refusing to give way, compounded by bad driving. Mr Crossland agreed to investigate this and report back to Cllr Wyatt.

The Chair thanked Mr Bell and Cllr Lumley for the list of issues and Mr Crossland agreed to bring a report to the next meeting which will address the issues listed. Mr Crossland advised that in future issues of this nature can be reported through the Customer Service Centre.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- i) That the update of the Director of Environment and Transport be noted;
- ii) that the list of issues be investigated and report back to Mr Bell and Cllr Lumley; and
- iii) the signage on the mini roundabout at Swallowdale school on Valley Road be investigated and reported back to Cllr Wyatt.

011. RESPONSE TO PETITION – REQUEST FOR PARKING RESTRICTIONS ON NORTHFIELD CLOSE, MELTON MOWBRAY, LEICESTERSHIRE

The Forum considered a report by the Director of Environment and Transport in response to the petition – request for parking restrictions on Northfield Close, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire.

Mr Crossland 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.

Mr Crossland concluded that the problem was not significant enough for parking restrictions to be justified at this time. He did agree that parking on Market day could be a problem but not at a level where we would intervene.

Mr Crossland did however, highlight para 22 and informed Members that this would be included in the wider transport strategy which is being undertaken in Melton which would try to solve some of the parking issues in Melton.

Cllr Orson advised that when the Cattle Market moves this will make further parking available. The Chair confirmed that when the Cattle Market has moved this will be reassessed.

RECOMMENDATION

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

012. HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE STRATEGY AND POLICY UPDATE

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 Crossland with a copy filed with the minutes.

Mr Crossland 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.

Mr Crossland 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. Mr Crossland encouraged Members to feed into the current consultation on the draft policy and strategy that is open until 26th 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.

RECOMMENDATION

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

013. 2016/17 MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAMMES – INFORMATION ITEM

Members noted the report.

014. PROGRAMME OF TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT WORK – CURRENT POSITION

Members noted the report.

015. ON-GOING ACTION STATEMENT

The ongoing action statement was noted.

016. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

The Chairman asked Members to submit any items for consideration for future agendas in writing within 10 days of the date of the meeting. Such items should be sent to Sue Dann by e-mail: sue.dann@leics.gov.uk

017. ANY OTHER ITEMS THE CHAIRMAN DECIDED WERE URGENT

There were none.

018. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chairman confirmed that the date and time of the next meeting will be **Monday 10th July 2017 at 4.30pm at the Melton Borough Council offices.**

019. CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING REMARKS

The Chairman thanked Members and officers and also members of the public for their attendance.

The Chairman asked Members to take a copy of the Flooding – Contact information leaflet which was made available to them.

20th February 2017

Chairman

4.30pm – 5.35pm

Date