

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 TUESDAY 18TH OCTOBER 2016 AT 4.30PM

PRESENT

County Councillors	District Councillors
Cllr J G Coxon (Chairman)	Cllr R Ashman
Cllr T Eynon	Cllr D Harrison
Cllr M B Wyatt	Cllr G Houlton
Cllr T J Pendleton	Cllr V Richichi.
Cllr S D Sheahan	Cllr J Legrys
	Cllr J Cotterill

The following also attended the meeting:

County officers present: A Carruthers, F Blockley, and L Bennett

District officers present: T Beirne

196. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed Members and officers to the meeting.

197. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from District Councillor M Specht

198. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

199. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

200. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 14th July 2016 were confirmed and signed as a true record of the meeting.

201. CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

a) UPDATE FIVE LANES END JUNCTION

The Forum considered the verbal update by Ms Blockley on the review of the effectiveness of the junction at Five Lanes End Packington / Ashby de la Zouch.

Ms Blockley confirmed that a meeting had taken place with the residents and that a number of measures to increase the effectiveness of the junction were discussed. Including the use of studs, blue rumble strips and a decrease in the speed limit, the proposals suggested will now go out for further consultation.

Cllr S D Sheahan commented that he had observed at least 5 school buses taking the turn to Packington highlighted the potential serious nature of any accident that should occur, he therefore welcome the measures proposed.

b) RESPONSIBILITIES UNDERTAKEN BY LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL AS THE LEAD LOCAL FLOOD AUTHORITY

The Forum considered a report by the Director of Environment and Transport providing an update of the responsibilities undertaken by Leicestershire County Council (LCC) as the Lead Local Flood Authority. The update was introduced by Ms Carruthers.

Ms Carruthers stated that the purpose of the report was to provide an update on the roles and responsibilities of the LLFA and the water utility companies (Severn Trent Water & Anglian Water) and in some cases the Environment Agency (EA).

Ms Carruthers highlighted that flooding is a complex area. The LLFA is responsible for the investigation of incidents for ordinary watercourses not main rivers which are the EA's responsibility. As part of the investigation the LLFA should identify the reason for the incident, who the responsible parties are and work with all those responsible to develop and implement a resolution. The LLFA however does not have the statutory duty or the money to enforce and deliver the solution, it must work with the responsible parties to bid for money where appropriate from the EA and to negotiate / facilitate implementation.

Ms Carruthers also stated that the LLFA has the responsibility of commenting on Highways drainage designs in all new building developments over 10 house and responds to the planning authority regarding this as part of the planning application process.

Cllr Harrison asked whether LLFA had any enforcement powers over the other parties.

Ms Carruthers responded that whilst the LLFA had enforcement powers over "Riparian Owners", e.g. owners of properties that have a watercourse flowing through it, it does not have any jurisdiction over the larger water companies (Severn Trent).

Cllr Harrison asked for clarification on who, as members, they could approach to help them enforce actions on Severn Trent.

Ms Carruthers advised that the only organisation to enforce powers on Seven Trent would be Central Government as they are responsible for the legislation that regulates this type of agency / private company. Ms Carruthers stressed that as the LLFA we were currently working with Seven Trent as well as other agencies to address issues that have arisen.

Cllr Richichi asked who was responsible for gulley emptying as he had concerns about the state of the gulleys in Whitwick and Breedon.

Ms Carruthers advised the LCC are responsible for the maintenance of gulleys and that she had recently presented a report to Breedon Parish Council regarding the water drainage within the village and that a copy of the draft report can be supplied on request. Ms Carruthers recognised the issues in Beedon regarding the multiple flooding incidents but stated that weather conditions were unprecedented and that a highways drainage system would never be designed to have the capacity required to withstand that level of water.

Cllr Richichi recognised the issues with regard to capacity but restated his view that as a Highways Authority we should carry out basic maintenance to alleviate some of the issues.

Cllr Legrys agreed with Cllr Richichi and commented that with predicted budget cuts it was likely that there will be little money for proactive maintenance work and the provision will be mainly reactive.

RECOMMENDATION

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

202. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 36

A petition with 34 signatures from Mr S Sheahan will be presented. The petition requests immediate action to permanently solve the capacity issue of the sewer and water systems of Via Devena / Bath Lane and Moira Village.

The Chairman presented the petition and asked Mr S Bassford to speak in support of his petition.

Mr Bassford stated he was presenting the petition on behalf of the local residents who have been experiencing flooding incidents over the last 6 years from surface water issues. Mr Bassford detailed the nature of the flooding incidents, giving examples of accidents, road closures, raw sewage and people being stuck in their houses for three days. The latter incident being particularly stressful as it prevented individuals from working or carrying out any caring responsibilities that they had.

Mr Bassford explained the actions that had been taken over the previous years including residents meetings with both Severn Trent and the County Council. A number of issues have been identified including collapsed pipes, blocked pipes and blocked culverts. Many of these issues have been addressed however some subsequently reoccurred and they are containment measures only as opposed to a longer term resolution.

Mr Bassford stated that the Highways Authority had come up with a proposal that cost approximately £40,000 and he requested confirmation of when this would be carried out and expressed frustration that as it was a relatively small amount of money that the work had not already been carried out.

Mr Bassford expressed his extreme disappointment in Severn Trent's failure to clean up the raw sewage and its apparent disregard to resident's situation; and advised the Forum as to how frustrated, angry, powerless and distressed he and other residents within the village are.

Mr Bassford also raised concerns with regard to new developments, particularly an increase in the number of houses in Moira and the potential impact that they will have on the drainage system. Suggestions were made that the planning authority ought to be made aware of potential flooding issues when granting permissions and require that items such as water capture tanks should be included within the proposed designs.

Cllr Sheahan commented that permanent improvements were needed and confirming the distress of the residents who had been trapped in their houses for three days. He reiterated that meetings had been held with Severn Trent and that the Council Officer Josh Wilce has come up with some suggestions regarding the straightening of some pipes which should improve the situation.

Cllr Sheahan stated that he believed pressure should be exerted on Severn Trent to deliver a long term strategy to solve the underlying issues of the capacity of the infrastructure that exists in the village. Considerations should also be given to the potential impact of new developments and that all those involved should acknowledge the distress of the residents who affected by these incidents.

Cllr Sheahan thanked Josh Wilce for the work he has carried out on the investigation of the issues.

Ms Carruthers stated that issues such as these highlighted the complexity and difficulties involved in flooding incidents. Ms Carruthers explained that there were many elements to consider as part of this investigation and the Officer Josh Wilce will come back with a response.

Cllr Wyatt left the meeting at 17:05.

Cllr Richichi asked how those responsible for the situation could be made accountable.

Ms Carruthers reiterated the position that the LLFA had no powers to take enforcement action on Severn Trent, but they would continue to work with all parties to broker a resolution.

Cllr Harrison stated that after listening to the comments he believed that the pumping station was not being adequately maintained and working at the pace required for the number of residents in the village. Cllr Harrison stated that Severn Trent should be made to rectify this and asked whether the Forum or the Council could write to them stating this, as something needed to be done due to the impact it was having on people's lives.

Ms Carruthers stated that she hoped the petitioner recognised the work that was being undertaken to move the situation forward and that the responsibility for the issues in Moira did not lay solely with Severn Trent. The next steps for the Council will be to apply for the funding to make the changes and continue working with Severn Trent on a number of issues across the County. Ms Carruthers stated that whilst the Council will not write formally to Severn Trent the Forum could do so independently if they wished.

The proposal that the Forum would write to Severn Trent was Proposed by Cllr Harrison, Seconded by Cllr Legrys and agreed by the Forum.

Cllr Ashman stated that it was important to concentrate on regular maintenance activities to prevent recurring funding as opposed to focusing on singular flash flooding incidents and to find different ways of putting pressure on those that are responsible.

Cllr Pendleton expressed sympathy with Mr Bassford and the residents involved. Cllr Pendleton requested that LCC in its role as the LLFA ensure that the planning authority is made aware of any known issues with regard to flooding in areas of proposed developments. Specifically with regard to ensure that planning authority officers have evidence to challenge companies such as Severn Trent if they state that there are no known problems.

Ms Carruthers responded that the Environment Agency had all the flooding maps and that the planning authority should take this into account when they are making their decision. Mrs Carruthers stated that the key issue was to identify where there were existing or potential issues with the drainage infrastructure in the medium to long terms and that this was being taken into account through the requirement to comment on planning applications as the LLFA.

Cllr Pendleton requested that the LLFA should act as an honest broker and as part of their role as a consultee ensure that the planning authority is made aware of where there are existing or potential problems with the infrastructure.

Ms Carruthers gave an undertaking to ensure that the planning authority is made aware if there are potential flooding issues with any planning application.

Cllr Legrys expressed his anger that in the past when there have been applications for Moira, despite local knowledge of flooding, developments have been approved. Cllrs were advised at the time that there were no grounds for turning the application down and that if they did it would be challenged and they would lose.

Cllr Legrys stated that Officers in the County needed to build up their knowledge of local areas as this was lost as part of reorganisations and changes to how rivers and watercourses were managed and that as members actions should be taken to make those in authority address the ability to enforce the correct actions at development stage or undertake remedial work when required.

Cllr Sheahan thanks everyone for their comments and requested that the proposal put forward by LCC be included in the 17/18 programme.

Cllr Richichi highlighted the fact that there had always been flooding issues and that these have been made worse through land owners filling in ditches and dewponds and that over a period of time we have forgotten the way of directing water.

Mr Bassford thanked everyone for their support and stated that he did not now feel alone. However there remains a concern around the future and the impact that new developments will have on the village. The need to be more proactive in preventing these issues in the future should be made a priority.

The Chairman thanked Mr Bassford for his comments and stated that a response to this petition will be given at the next meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

- i) That a response to the petition should be brought back to the next meeting
- ii) That a letter should be sent from the Forum to Severn Trent regarding the situation in Moira
- iii) That the LLFA should ensure that the planning authority is made aware of any medium or long term potential flooding issues.

203. COALVILLE GROWTH AREA OF STRATEGY

The Forum considered a report by the Director of Environment and Transport to provide an update on progress with the Coalville Growth Area Strategy (Infrastructure) project.

Cllr Pendleton left the meeting at 17:35.

Ms Carruthers took Members through the report and provided an update on the fact that the next phase of modelling would be taking place towards the end of the year and that output of this would be brought to the next Forum meeting.

Cllr Enyon requested that more information be provided on access from Grange Road and also enquired as to the update of finances associated with the Coalville contribution strategy from North West Leicestershire District Council (NWL) as detailed within the report.

Ms Carruthers responded that an update on Grange Road would be brought back to the next meeting. Ms Carruthers apologised that the report had been misleading and clarified that an update on the financial position was not expected from NWL. The report should have specified that financial details were available from NWL.

Cllr Sheahan stated that he was very pleased with the work that had taken place at junction 22, but would like to have further discussions around the A42 roundabout as there were some issues regarding safety and the use of the lanes.

Ms Carruthers stated that she did not know enough about the individual location but that the proposal was that going forward the roundabouts would be signalised which would necessitate a review of how the lanes are working in order to encourage better discipline. Ms Carruthers undertook to speak to the designers and request that they contact Cllr Sheahan with an update.

Cllr Sheahan requested that he could see the proposals.

Ms Blockley stated that as part of the design process the required capacity of the junction should have been looked at and any development would have been designed to improve traffic flow.

Cllr Pendleton returned to the meeting at 17:45.

Cllr Legrys commented that the report reflected the modelling work that NWL had requested and is paying for. Cllr Legrys asked that the improvements to the Hugglescote cross roads be included within the proposals and requested that he be given the information / data that had been used in the modelling in order that he could make an informed assessment of what was being proposed.

Ms Carruthers stated that proposal regarding Hugglescote crossroads was in a Cabinet Report that was available upon request, however it was likely to be given a low priority due to the Community response.

Cllr Legrys stated that when he received the model he wanted to be able to understand the data that it have been based on and feel confident that it was clear what had been included in the model.

Cllr Legrys asked when the control box at the traffic lights in Hugglescote was going to come back after it had been destroyed as part of a traffic accident.

Ms Blockley responded that she would make enquiries and update Cllr Legrys.

Cllr Coxon requested that the Junction 13 Tesco roundabout be looked at as there are a number of houses being built as part of a new development and there is a concern that the traffic from these will have an impact on the traffic flow.

Ms Carruthers confirmed to check whether the Junction 13 roundabout has been included within the proposals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

204. A-ROADS TO ZEBRAS

The Forum considered a report by the Director of Environment and Transport provided in response to a request for further information on the year by year funding reductions.

Ms Carruthers took Members through the report and provided an explanation on how the incentive and challenge fund elements of the budgets in the future would mean that some elements were not guaranteed and would have to be effectively bid for.

Cllr Eynon thanked the Director for the report and asked whether it was likely that the competitive elements of the future funding model would mean an increased administrative / bureaucratic overhead.

Ms Carruthers stated that whilst this may be the case for the challenge fund element of the budget; the work required to maximise the amount available from the incentive fund is likely to benefit the service with regard to improved performance and efficiency, so on this basis it is worth doing.

Cllr Sheahan asked given the level of reductions and the impact that these will have on maintenance, has there been any work carried out on when the tipping point is likely to be reached with regard to when it is not feasible to continue to maintain a road.

Ms Carruthers responded that there had not been any detailed work undertaken on this as there are a lot of factors that would contribute to the longevity of the network, including the severity of weather conditions. Identifying the level of maintenance work required to support the network would be an element of the incentive fund bidding process. It is likely we will be perceived to be in a positive position within Leicestershire due to the quality of the current network; however this will only be a postponement as we are likely to be building up issues for the future.

Cllr Harrison thanked Ms Carruthers for the report and commented that the messages it gives are alarming. He stated however that it was positive that the perception of the public was that the service was improving.

Cllr Legrys stated that it was one of the most honest reports that he had seen. Cllr Legrys commented that all members now had to be mindful of what they ask for in the future and that we should be honest with the electorate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- i) That the report of the Director of Environment and Transport be noted.

205. MANAGEMENT OF HIGHWAY DRAINAGE

The Forum considered a report by the Director of Environment and Transport on the management of Highway Drainage.

Ms Carruthers took Members through the report and provided an overview of the current approach to the management of highway drainage across the county.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- i) That the report of the Director of Environment and Transport be noted.

206. NATIONAL HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT (NHT) PUBLIC AND PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVE SURVEYS

The Forum considered a report by the Director of Environment and Transport on the National Highways & Transport (NHT) Surveys.

Ms Carruthers took Members through the report and provided an overview of the results of the 2015 National Highways and Transport Survey of both public and members.

Ms Carruthers stated that the 2016 survey for members is due out soon and encouraged individuals to fill in the survey when it comes out.

207. 2015/16 MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAMMES – INFORMATION ITEM

Members noted the report.

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

Members noted the report.

209. ON-GOING ACTION STATEMENT

The ongoing action was noted.

210. 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.

211. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

212. DATE OF THE MEETINGS IN 2017

The Chairman confirmed the date of the next meeting is:

9^h February 2017 (changed from 14th February 2017)

All meetings are to start at 4.30pm and will be held in the Council Chamber at North West Leicestershire District Council offices.

The Chairman asked Members to make a note of the date.

213. CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING REMARKS

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

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