



Community and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee

Date: 05/09/2007

Open Report

Report of: Rachel Booton, Scrutiny/Committee
Officer

HIGHWAYS ISSUES

1. Purpose of Briefing Paper

- 1.1 To note the responses from Councillors regarding Highways Issues and consider a way forward.

2. Introduction/ Background Information

- 2.1 At the Wyre Forest Highways Partnership Forum meeting held on 27th July 2007, Members requested that a letter be written to all District Councillors asking them to contact the Committee Section with details of highways issues in their wards so that these issues would be considered at the Community and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee's meeting on 5th September 2007 for consideration and to ascertain whether a Review Panel would need to be set up to give the matter further consideration.
- 2.2 The Committee Section received details from two Councillors and the details are outlined below.

3. Key Issues

- 3.1 The following issues were raised by Councillor Ms T L Onslow:
- 1) Tomkinson Drive - The footpath outside Nos 101 - 103 is in a bad state of repair
 - 2) Westville Avenue - Road surface in bad state especially outside No 12
 - 3) Chester Road South - Removal of Maple Tree outside No 55. Occupants were told that the tree was half dead and would be removed two years ago
 - 4) Comberton Road - At the junction with Borrington Road, temporary barrier has been in place for months and needs to be replaced.
 - 5) East Street - Potholes, especially at junction with Offmore Road
 - 6) Grays Close - Horrendous potholes at top in front of the garages

- 7) Linden Avenue - 7.5 Tonne weight restriction signs need to be turned so wagons coming along Birmingham Road can see the signs well before they commit to turning down Linden Avenue. (At present, signs face straight ahead, so lorries really only see them properly when they turn into Linden Avenue which is too late).
 - 8) Russell Road - Trees need to be cut back. Can the tree outside No 15 be cut right back, as homeowner has made several ongoing, long-term complaints.
 - 9) Shakespeare Drive - Whole road is in a terrible state with bad potholes. In addition, I have asked for some sort of signage to tell vehicles that, after the junction with Shaw Avenue, Shakespeare Drive is a 'no through road'. It would appear that some satellite navigation systems indicate that you can exit Shakespeare Drive via Offmore Lane, which you can't.
- 3.2 Councillor Miss S C Meekings raised the point that when pot holes are repaired, they should be repaired properly the first time as many pot holes are fixed and shortly after, they re-appear but in a worse condition.
 - 3.3 Councillor D J Millis submitted a document containing photographs and descriptions of poor road surfaces in Stourport-on-Severn. This document is attached at Appendix 2.

4. Appendices

- Minutes of the Wyre Forest Highways Partnership Forum meeting held on 27th July 2007.
- Document containing photographs and descriptions of poor road surfaces in Stourport-on-Severn.

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**Wyre Forest Highways Partnership Forum
Earl Baldwin Suite, Duke House, Kidderminster
2 pm Thursday 27th July 2007**

Members	Present:-	
	Councillor J Holden (Chairman)	WCC - WFDC
	Councillor J Aston	Wyre Forest District Council
	Councillor H J Martin	Wyre Forest District Council
Observers:	Councillor Mrs F M Oborski	Wyre Forest District Council
	Councillor J Baker	Wyre Forest District Council
	Councillor Mrs J Fairbrother-Millis	Wyre Forest District Council
	Councillor M A W Hazlewood	Wyre Forest District Council
Officers	Councillor D Knowles	Worcestershire County Council
	Councillor D Millis	Wyre Forest District Council
	Councillor G Yarranton	Wyre Forest District Council
	David Hunter	Liaison Engineer, WCC
	Tom Comerford	Senior Liaison Engineer, WCC
	Diana Glendenning	Senior Committee Officer

1. INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman introduced David Hunter, Liaison Engineer from Worcestershire County Council to the Committee. It was noted that Tom Comerford, Senior Liaison Engineer would be attending the meeting in place of John Fraser.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor S J M Clee and Ms R Mayman (Senior Planner, Forward Planning). Councillor G Yarranton was appointed as a substitute for Councillor S J M Clee.

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING - THURSDAY 5TH APRIL 2007

DECISION:

The minutes of the meeting held on 5th April 2007 be agreed.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

1. Website

Councillor Hazlewood queried whether the County Council's website was only available during office hours. He was informed by the Liaison Engineer that this was not the case.

Councillor Hazlewood wanted to know how he could track an issue that he had reported on the County Council's website could be tracked. The Liaison Engineer informed him that there was a system available through the website for tracking issues that had been reported. However he conceded that the information gained through the tracking system was scant and required further improvement. Councillor Mrs J Fairbrother-Millis informed Members that she had tried the tracking system and had found it to be time-consuming.

2. Detrunking of A456/A449

Councillor Mrs F M Oborski queried whether the detrunking of the A456 and A449 roads had occurred. The Liaison Engineer reported that the detrunking of these roads had been postponed until 1st October 2007.

3. Widening the Footway on Worcester Road, Kidderminster

It was queried whether there were any plans to widen the footway for children walking to school on the Worcester Road, Kidderminster. The Liaison Engineer stated that there were no plans at the moment and no budget had been identified for this. It was perceived that the amount of children affected was small and that the work would cost in the region of £70,000. It was therefore anticipated that different solutions would be considered to solve the problem.

AGREED: As a matter of urgency the Liaison Engineer to email members present on what action will be taken with regard to the widening of the footpath in Worcester Road, Kidderminster.

4. Work commissioned for St. George's and St. Oswald's Area, Kidderminster

Councillor Mrs F M Oborski queried what had happened about the work that had been commissioned for the St. George's and St. Oswald's area of Kidderminster.

5. Drains in Wolverley

Councillor Yarranton was pleased that the drainage work that he had requested in Wolverley had been completed. He wished to know how much money had been spent on this work.

ACTION: Councillor G Yarranton to be provided with the following information:

1. He requested a full breakdown of the money that had been spent on the drains in Wolverley.
2. What had been spent per County Councillor.
3. What money had been left in the budget as a carry over.
4. What was the likely allocation in the future.

5. What system is in place for this work to be done and checked upon.

4. LOCAL DETERMINATION FUNDING - UPDATE

The Liaison Engineer reported that for the financial year 2007/08 £3,900 was available for local determination funding. This money was available for the purpose of remedying problems with drains, mending potholes and undertaking work on footpaths.

Potholes on Offmore Road, Kidderminster

Councillor Mrs F M Oborski reported that a pothole in Offmore Road, Kidderminster was so bad that the old cobblestone surface was now visible. She expressed concern about the way potholes were dealt with. She referred to an article on the front page of the Kidderminster Chronicle in which Councillor Prodger had stated that the County Council had been failing in its duty to mend potholes. She perceived the pothole situation to be worse than it was three years ago.

Routine Inspection of Roads

The Liaison Engineer said that a routine inspection system had been in place for a long time now whereby most roads were inspected monthly and inspections should pick up areas where potholes were bad. He urged members to contact the Highways Control centre at the County Council and report any problems. Money was being spent on roads where the potholes were perceived to be dangerous.

Cherry Orchard/Chester Road North, Kidderminster

A long debate ensued on what constituted 'dangerous.' Roads that were in serious need of repair included Cherry Orchard, Kidderminster and Chester Road North, Kidderminster. Members were concerned that an accident might occur and perceived the surfaces of these roads to be very dangerous for cyclists. The current policy of patching and refilling potholes was not considered to be satisfactory as the repairs did not last and the problem reoccurred.

No Through Road Sign, Kidderminster Cricket Club

Another problem that was raised was that of people using satellite navigation systems that sent them incorrectly up one way streets. Councillor Mrs Oborski raised the fact that John Fraser had agreed in April 2007 to address one area in particular by the Kidderminster Cricket Club where the 'No Through Road' sign needed to be sited higher up in order that drivers could see it.

Torton Street/Long Acre, Kidderminster/Castle Road, Cookley

The tarmac at the junction of Turton Street, Kidderminster was poor and the double yellow lines had been covered over by tarmac. The same thing had occurred in Long Acre. Councillor Yarranton expressed concern about other areas and said that he was unhappy that in the Highways Partnership Forum meetings he perceived that members were told what they wanted to hear i.e. that work would be done and then nothing was done. He reported problems in the following areas: Castle Road, Cookley, required resurfacing work.

Lengthsman Scheme

He had concerns about the Lengthsman Scheme. He said that the necessary health and safety equipment had not been provided.

The Liaison Engineer stated that the management of the Lengthsman Scheme was his responsibility. He stated that in the last financial year Lengthsmen had been expected to provide their own health and safety equipment. However at a recent meeting it had been agreed that the County Council would supply the necessary health and safety equipment to lengthsman.

ACTION: Councillor G Yarranton requested a copy of the documentation that outlines the agreement to provide the lengthsman with health and safety equipment.

Potholes in Marlpool Lane, Kidderminster

Councillor Baker was concerned that whilst a lot of the potholes in Marlpool Lane had been filled but there were still a number remaining that required attention. He queried whether resurfacing of this road would be a cheaper option. The Liaison Engineer pointed out that resurfacing was a much more expensive alternative.

Nursery Grove/Franche Road, Kidderminster

Councillor Martin reported that these roads were in a poor conditions and he did not think they had been resurfaced for a considerable time. He acknowledged the roads had been patched but despite this they had the appearance of a third world road. He also expressed concern about roads that were inappropriately used as 'rat runs.' His main concern, however, was whether the work that was required to repair roads following the floods, would have an impact on the budget that was available to mend roads.

Repair of Roads Damaged by Recent Flooding

The Senior Liaison Engineer stated that announcement had been made by central Government that the full cost of the repairs would be met but what this would cover is not clear yet. It was anticipated that full recompense for these works would be sought.

ACTION: Councillor N Knowles requested to see a copy of the letter from central Government agreeing to fund the cost of the repairs following the recent flooding.

Budget for Road Repairs

The Senior Liaison Engineer commented that £1 million had been taken out of the budget for road repair this year and the budget required a further £6 million to make all the repairs to the roads that were deemed necessary to bring the roads up to a satisfactory standard. He said that either priorities had to be changed or this situation would continue for years. He told members that he was prepared to support initiatives on a cross party basis that would put an emphasis on the necessity for more money to be put into the Highway Repair Programme. He perceived if action such as this was not taken the situation would continue to worsen.

Seeking Redress for Work that is Substandard

It was queried whether there was any form of redress for any work that is sub standard, the Senior Liaison Engineer confirmed that this was written into the contract with the contractors. Councillor Hazlewood referred to a situation where work had been undertaken by the Three Crowns and Sugar Loaf public house in Wolverley where a pothole had been repaired and three weeks later it was back to the state it was in prior to the repairs having been undertaken.

Materials used for the Repair of Potholes

The Senior Liaison Engineer referred to a problem that was being experienced with pothole repairs. Due to health and safety legislation the staff were not allowed to use hot materials and therefore pothole repairs did not last. He perceived that hot material repaired a pothole much more satisfactorily.

Road Repairs Post-Flooding

He referred to strategic problems that had been experienced with in the network within the Highways Partnership. He commented that he had been tasked with getting the south of the County sorted out by getting the infrastructure working properly. He stated that since the occurrence of the floods it would take at least three months to get back to normal. Currently the department was concentrating on repairing the bridges that had been damaged by the floods.

Councillor Mrs Oborski said she would like to see the work that had been arranged for last year to be completed and she did not want to see the money for this work used on other priorities. She was concerned that there were several issues she had asked to be raised on the agenda and this had not happened. She also referred to work that she had requested to be done

on double yellow lines. She was concerned about the failure of the County Council to respond to requests for parking restrictions.

Chester Road North, Kidderminster

Above Chester Road North, Kidderminster on Hurcott Road, on the left hand side, there were a number of areas where there were double yellow lines, then a gap for 8 houses where there is off street parking and then the double yellow lines resume. People in this area parked in front of their houses and this impaired the vision from the junction. A request had been put in for double yellow lines to address this issue in October 2006. John Fraser and PC Julian Turner agreed that double yellow lines would address the problem and that they should be installed.

St. Ambrose and St. George's, Kidderminster

Three trees had been cut down in this area. However there was now basal growth that prevented people walking along the pavement. It was requested that basal growth be addressed when cutting trees down.

Scrutiny Exercise into Highways Issues

Councillor Mrs F M Oborski suggested that as Chairman of the Community and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee that an exercise be undertaken that considered highways issues within the district. She suggested that members be invited to submit a wish list. She was aware that at the moment it was County Councillors who submitted a wish list.

ACTION: A letter be written to all District Councillors asking them to let the Committee Section know of highways issues in their wards. These issues would be considered at the Community and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee's meeting in September 2007 for consideration and to ascertain whether a Review Panel needed to be set up to give the matter further consideration.

PC J Turner

Members were disappointed that PC Julian Turner was not present at the meeting.

ACTION: A letter be sent to PC Julian Turner expressing disappointment at his non-attendance. A copy of the letter be sent to the Chief Superintendent for Kidderminster.

Trees in Lickhill Road, Stourport-on-Severn

Councillor Mrs J Fairbrother-Millis commented that there were a line of trees in Lickhill Road, Stourport-on-Severn that obscured the view for motorists. She enquired if there was a time-frame for this work to be done. She was particularly concerned about the growth from saplings. She said that she

had raised this issue in May 2007 and had tried to track the problem on the County Council website but this had been an onerous task.

ACTION: The Liaison Engineer to inform Councillor Mrs J Fairbrother-Millis of the current situation with regard to this matter.

Telephone Contact Number for Liaison Engineer

The Liaison Engineer gave members his direct dial number (01905-788356) in order that they could contact him directly with problems.

Play Area, Heronswood, Spennells Estate, Kidderminster

Councillor Aston stated that this area was a 'rat run' where motorists tended to speed. He had suggested in January 2007 that a sign be erected in the road to make motorists aware of the children but nothing had been done.

ACTION: The Liaison Engineer to ascertain progress on this issue.

Throwing of stones at Trains, Viaduct in Kidderminster

Councillor Aston was concerned that children had been throwing stones at trains from the viaduct in Kidderminster. It had been agreed that another surface would be installed to prevent this occurring.

ACTION : The Liaison Engineer to ascertain progress on this issue.

Work by Severn Trent on Comberton Hill, Kidderminster

Councillor Mrs F M Oborski drew attention to problems that had been encountered during the work that was being done by Severn Trent. She queried whether it would be possible to temporarily suspend the no road turning into Chaddesley Road, Kidderminster. She queried whether some notices could be erected to advise that there was no access to the town centre.

Potholes on Highways Verges Comberton Estate, Kidderminster

Potholes had been caused by inconsiderate residents who parked their cars on the grass verges on the Comberton Estate. The tenants of Wyre Forest Community Housing properties had been warned against this. However it was not clear if the County Council had the power to warn residents against this course of action.

ACTION: The Liaison Engineer to ask Alan Moore of the County Council's Legal Department to look into this matter.

Offmore Road Footbridge, Kidderminster

Shrubs were growing in the brickwork and were sticking out into the carriageway.

ACTION: David Hunter to look into this matter.

Yew Tree Road, Kidderminster

It was raised that Yew Tree Road in Kidderminster was being used as car parking for those people who went to work by train. It was queried whether this road could have 'residents only' parking.' The situation was becoming acute.

ACTION: It be requested that the County Council undertake a formal consultation with the residents to ascertain if they would welcome 'residents only' parking.

Mill Road, Stourport-on-Severn

Councillor D Millis referred to problems with flooding for the cottages in Mill Road, Stourport. He commented that they had been flooded several times in the 1990's and he had emailed the Highways Department about this but not received a reply.

Purcell House, Habberley Estate, Kidderminster

Councillor Knowles stated that residents wanted bollards in front of the building to prevent illegal parking.

Flashing 30 mph signs

Councillor Knowles felt the use of these signs would be useful in problem areas as they helped to slow down speeding motorists. He had requested one for Canterbury Road, Habberley Estate, Kidderminster at the junction of Habberley Lane.

Tennyson Way, Kidderminster

Councillor Mrs F M Oborski queried what had happened to the traffic calming measures that had been requested for Tennyson Way, Kidderminster. She said that the road was very dangerous to cross. She perceived that the use of mobile units to encourage motorists not to speed would be useful if they were used from time to time.

The Liaison Engineer stated that vehicle activator signs were available for use from the Road Safety Department. He conceded that there were mixed feelings regarding their effectiveness, particularly if there were no identifiable hazards at a location. If they were used on a regular basis motorists tended to ignore them.

ACTION:

1. **The Liaison Engineer to provide members with the cost of purchasing two vehicle activator signs and to provide members with further information about how they operate.**
2. **The Liaison Engineer to check on the possibility of the police being able to use a mobile speed camera after an area has used vehicle activator signs.**

Safer Routes to School

It was noted that the money for this initiative was allocated on a priority basis. Thereby accident cluster sites were a priority.

Hoo Road, Kidderminster, Traffic Calming Scheme

Councillor Aston queried when the Hoo Road traffic calming scheme might be implemented.

The Senior Liaison Engineer reported that 90% of the issues that had been raised at the meeting were the responsibility of the Liaison Engineer. He remarked that traffic calming schemes went on a system and were given a number.

ACTION: The Liaison Engineer to make enquiries as to when the scheme would be completed and inform Councillor Aston accordingly.

Holmcroft Road/Chaddesley Road/Radford Avenue/St, George's Church Kidderminster

Councillor Mrs F M Oborski stated that a request had been made from the police via the Offmore Comberton meeting for double yellow lines on Holmcroft Road/Chaddesley Road, because parking on Chaddesley Road made visibility difficult for Holmcroft residents. She also mentioned the fact that the Radford Avenue Centre was going to be used as a children's centre next Easter and thereby would require more parking. She had held discussions with John Fraser regarding alternative traffic orders in Radford Avenue.

ACTION: Liaison Engineer to investigate this matter.

Waterloo Road, Kidderminster

Councillor Mrs Oborski requested an assurance that the traffic parking restrictions on Waterloo Street, Kidderminster had been abandoned. She was assured by the Liaison engineer that this was the case.

5. **HIGHWAYS MAINTENANCE ISSUES UPDATE**

Members were given a list of highways maintenance issues.

ACTION: The list of highways maintenance issues be noted.

6. **TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT/ACCIDENT STUDIES UPDATE**

No information was available.

7. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

8. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Friday 16th November 2007 at 2 pm in the Earl Baldwin Suite, Duke House, Clensmore Street, Kidderminster.

The meeting ended at 3.40 pm.