

## REPORT OF THE PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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The Place Scrutiny Committee met on 19 March 2019.

Present: Councillors Richard Stogdon (Chair), Colin Belsey, Martin Clarke, Godfrey Daniel (Vice Chair), Claire Dowling, Simon Elford, Nigel Enever, Darren Grover and Barry Taylor

Also present: Councillor Nick Bennett (Lead Member for Transport and Environment), Bill Bentley (Lead Member for Communities and Safety), Councillor Rupert Simmons (Lead Member for Economy), and David Elkin (Lead Member for Resources)

### 1. Scrutiny Review of Road Repairs

1.1 The Place Scrutiny Committee has completed its Scrutiny Review of Road Repairs. A copy of the Committee's full report is attached at Appendix 1.

1.2. A Review Board was established in June 2018 and was comprised of Councillors Chris Dowling, Claire Dowling, Simon Elford, Nigel Enever, Pat Rodohan, Stephen Shing, Richard Stogdon (Chair) and Barry Taylor. The review examined a number of highway maintenance issues including the repair of clusters of potholes, the condition of pavements and other road maintenance concerns reported to the Committee.

1.3 The scope of the review includes:

- Road repairs, both reactive pothole repairs and planned resurfacing work;
- The repair of pavements.
- How the Council tackles highway drainage problems; and
- The quality of repairs;

1.4 Overall the Review Board found that the Council's arrangements for road repairs are robust and there is a commitment to continuously improve the approach to highways maintenance. The Board has made a number of recommendations which it believes will help improve road maintenance, respond to residents' concerns and highlight issues that warrant further attention such as the condition of pavements.

1.5 The Place Scrutiny Committee **recommends** to the County Council that –

1.5.1 The Council examines how it could better communicate with residents on highways maintenance policies and practices, and the Committee would welcome the opportunity to work with Officers to achieve this (e.g. how the Council achieves value for money).

1.5.2 Officers conduct a pilot into the feasibility of introducing a new approach to repair all neighbouring potholes at the same time, within a given distance of a category 2 or 3 intervention standard pothole using the funding allocated from the Department for Transport (DfT) pothole fund for the pilot.

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1.5.3 Scrutiny should be consulted on the use of any future one-off highways funding from Government, before work has been programmed via a Review Board of the Committee.

1.5.4 That the existing level of capital investment in roads through planned maintenance and the Asset Management approach is maintained and if possible increased, as this is the most cost effective way of repairing potholes.

1.5.5 The Council explores the possibility of identifying additional funding to improve the condition of pavements, via existing sources of funding and partnership working.

1.5.6 The condition of the remaining 50% of pavements is surveyed, and a measure of the condition of pavements is developed within the next 2 years, so that their condition can be monitored and the impact of any additional investment can be assessed.

1.5.7 The Council considers using its powers to ban parking on pavements and verges in problem areas, as part of regular parking reviews.

1.5.8 Safety defect intervention criteria are defined for the different types of pavement surfacing, and insurance claims for pavements are separately recorded.

1.5.9 Increase the amount of sampling and inspections to 20% to monitor and assure the quality of road repairs or reinstatements, and the work carried out prior to resurfacing, particularly those carried out by utility companies.

1.5.10 Officers develop a work programme to complete the Council's knowledge of the highway drainage network, including determining the cost and timeframe for this work, focussing initially on utilising the remaining additional capital investment to gain knowledge of parts of the network that require repair and replacement as a priority. The work programme is to be reported to the Scrutiny Committee in September 2019.

1.5.11 Joint work is undertaken with District and Borough Councils to improve street sweeping, particularly in autumn, to prevent highway gullies and other drainage becoming blocked with leaves and other debris.

[See also Report of the Cabinet – 23 April 2019]

## **2. Scrutiny Review of the effectiveness of School Travel Plans**

2.1 The Place Scrutiny Committee has completed its Scrutiny Review of the effectiveness of School Travel Plans. A copy of the Committee's full report is attached at Appendix 2.

2.2 A Review Board was established and was comprised of three members of the Place Scrutiny Committee: Councillors Claire Dowling, Nigel Enever and Godfrey Daniel.

2.3 The Review Board's report, which the Place Scrutiny Committee endorsed, makes seven recommendations to:

- Support greater effectiveness of the monitoring of school travel plans secured through the planning process, and
- Ensure existing information in relation to school travel initiatives and guidance in relation to school travel is readily available to access for schools, parents and carers.

2.4 A recurring feature of objections to expansions of schools in the County is the effect on traffic conditions in the area, particularly anti-social parking at pick-up and drop-off times. In the minds of objectors an increase in pupil numbers equates to an inevitable increase in cars, traffic and negative impact on their amenity. Members of the County Council's Planning Committee have expressed reservations as to the enforceability and effectiveness of School Travel Plans.

2.5 The Place Scrutiny Committee **recommends** to the County Council that –

2.5.1 Schools continue to return data on pupils' modes of travel through the school census run by the IT&D Team, to enable schools which have travel plans to monitor these with a consistent set of data.

2.5.2 Communities, Economy and Transport Officers encourage schools to nominate a senior post-holder to have responsibility for the review of the School Travel Plan, and for this to be included in the School's Development Plan.

2.5.3 Further promotion of the active travel initiatives offered by the Active Access for Growth Programme 2017-2020 to educational establishments.

2.5.4 Future external funding be sought to support active travel with schools and other organisations, alongside signposting to schools of other funding streams which they can apply for, to support these types of measures.

2.5.5 The Planning Team include a Condition requiring a new or revised (as appropriate) School Travel Plan, including a stipulated review period. Consideration should also be given to including an Informative, encouraging schools to nominate a senior post-holder to undertake responsibility for its review, and for this to be included in the School Development Plan.

2.5.6 The Communities, Economy and Transport department ensure that advice and guidance to develop School Travel Plans and Walking Buses is available electronically, on CZone (the Intranet for schools) and the East Sussex County Council website.

2.5.7 Staff to continue to co-ordinate work in relation to active travel, to support the delivery of key departmental objectives relating to the economy, planning, the environment and health.

[See also Report of the Cabinet – 23 April 2019]

19 March 2019

RICHARD STOGDON  
Chair