

Clerks Operational Meeting Notes 27/02/2017

Highways Asset Management Policy & Strategy consultation

Andy Jackson 's presentation included feedback from the 'A roads to Zebras' consultation held between June-September 2016 and set out the proposed risk based approach re delivering planned /preventative maintenance works. Parish Councils are urged to respond to the consultation, which will run until 26th March. Information is on the LCC website.

Consultation results will be reported to Cabinet following the elections and it is anticipated that, once the policy and strategy have been formally adopted, LCC will start the development of a pilot scheme to develop options for closer joint working between LCC and Parish Councils. LCC continues to welcome expressions of interest in principle to being involved in this pilot. Various clerks expressed the wish for all Parish Councils to be engaged as part of the development of the pilot scheme. LCC will consider how best to do this.

Various issues / queries were raised as part of the discussion following the presentation:

- To put the amount of savings having to be made into perspective, it would be useful to see in more detail how the budget has developed and is forecast to develop over the next years.
- Please take account of the annual budget cycle to enable Parish Councils to adapt their budgets in response to a potentially enhanced role with regards to highway maintenance. Information about budget consequences would need to be available in time to allow budget planning.
- Even if parish councils will not be financially compensated for undertaking an enhanced role with regards to highways maintenance, there will be a need for an adequate level of information provision and 'handholding', guidance, advice & training opportunities etc. NWLDC's model of parish council liaison officers was considered a useful model.
- Suggestion: For Parish Councils to have access to LCC training for example with health and safety, risk assessment for their staff that carry out maintenance work on behalf of Parish Council. Jake indicated he is currently talking to LCC about parish councils getting access to relevant LCC training courses.
- Clarity on what is expected of Parish Councils in future would be welcomed. No need to beat around the bush: if you wish to devolve, just say so. Many councils have anticipated such a move and have either made budget provisions or have for instance included clauses in grass-cutting contracts that provide the possibility to expand those contracts to other areas of environmental maintenance.
- Some concerns over position of cyclists in risk-based approach. Ie already existing problems with lighting on road between Kegworth and Sutton Bonnington which is used a lot by students cycling to campus. Rural roads may see less maintenance in future, but are used by an increasing number of cyclists. LCC confirmed such local knowledge of road use can be factored into the risk analysis.
- LCC will look to share its review of the classification of roads to enable parish council input.

- There used to be a report on a Parish by Parish basis of reported defects and action taken. This was in the shape of an excel spreadsheet. It was often useful as it sometimes included works that allegedly had taken place while this was not actually the case. Such reports help Parish Councils be more effective as eyes & ears. LCC to consider re-introducing such a report as part of the communications work undertaken as part of the maintenance review.
- Customer Service Centre website 'report a problem' page needs a refresh. Could be more user/customer friendly
- The messages playing while people are put on hold when ringing the CSC refer to out of date links on the old LCC website. Needs to be updated.

Note from Derk: CSC have gone through all the messages and these all refer to the current website. Assume therefore this issue has been resolved. If not, please let me know.

Refresh of Communities Strategy

LCC cabinet will receive an updated draft in March 2017, with engagement to take place over the summer to develop an action plan. The Communities Strategy sets out how the County Council intends to work with communities, including voluntary and community sector groups. Parish Councils are a key player in this. The annual LCC/LRALC parish liaison event will be a good opportunity to discuss further, but additional workshops may also be appropriate.

Traffic Management Permit Scheme

LCC will shortly be undertaking an 8 week consultation with statutory undertakers on the introduction of a permit scheme for road works. This will make it easier for LCC to minimise disruption from road work. Parish Councils can respond to this consultation should they wish to.

- Sandbags and signs are often left by the roadside once roadworks have been completed.

All clerks were urged to continue to report such issues via the Customer service centre.

Weight Restrictions and Weight Limits / Signage:

Many parishes are dealing with issues related to HGV vehicles apparently breaking the local road weight limit restrictions. The group shared experiences and practice. Concern is mounting that reporting issues (to Police, LCC / Development Control) seems pointless.

Issues were discussed in Fenny Drayton, Cosby, Castle Donnington, Desford and Barrow and waste site traffic to Pebblehall Farm in Northants. Some of this is related to construction site traffic (with the construction sites clearly not being within the restricted zone).

In some cases the location of signs to warn drivers of weight restrictions may be a compounding factor, ie because they are placed too far from the main routes and it is already 'too late' for drivers to turn round and seek an alternative route.

Note from Derk: Within LCC, the Traffic and Signals Team review this function. All enquiries should go through Customer Services to ensure the issues are logged correctly.

It was suggested that LCC should look into the possibility of setting up a HGV watch scheme with the Police. Jake will share information about such a scheme in Kent.

AOB

Parking on pavements & verges – Short discussion took place about what the rules are and what can be done. Enforcement seemed to be using a rather narrow definition of when a car was causing an obstruction. Cars destroying grass verges was another issue where it wasn't clear if reporting actually led to action by authorities.

Charnwood BC had some useful leaflets that could be placed on the windscreen of 'offending vehicles' to gently remind the owners.

There would appear to be further opportunities to enable community action / vigilance with regards to these issues.

Next Meeting:

Next meeting will be the Annual Liaison Event in July at a date to be confirmed. Next operational meeting will be in September at a date to be confirmed.