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**Environment Development & Transport Scrutiny Committee**  
**Minutes of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2016**  
**The Blue Room, County Hall**  
**(Meeting held in public)**

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**PRESENT:-**

Councillor Liz Coombe (Chair)

Councillor Paul Bell (Deputy Chair)  
Councillor Jim Broomfield  
Councillor Stan Heggs  
Councillor Allan Hills  
Councillor Derek Lawson  
Councillor Graham Lawman (substitute  
for Cllr A Walker)

Also in attendance for all or part of the meeting

Debbie Taylor-Bond	Head of Transport and Highways
Sarah Gimbley	Infrastructure Manager KierWSP
Leon Johnny	Operational and Delivery Manager
James Edmunds	Overview & Scrutiny Manager (Democratic Services)
Catherine Greenfield	Democracy Officer (Democratic Services)

No members of the public were present.

The meeting commenced at 10.00

Min ref:

29/16 Apologies for Non-Attendance

Apologies for non-attendance were received from Councillors Allen Walker (with Cllr Graham Lawman as substitute) and Sarah Uldall (no substitute advised).

30/16 Notification of requests from members of the public to address the meeting

There were none

31/16 Declarations of Members' Interests

There were none.

### 32/16 Chair's Announcements

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised that the meeting was being Webcast and that members should use their microphones when speaking.

There was no scheduled fire alarm.

### 33/16 Minutes of the meeting of the Environment, Development & Transport Scrutiny Committee meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2016

**RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2016 be agreed.**

### 34/16 Overview of the Highways Strategy

The Chair invited the Head of Transport and Highways to deliver the presentation to the Committee. The following points were highlighted;

- The Highways Strategy covered 4,200 km of roads, drainage assets, bridges, signals, crossings and rights of way and their associated maintenance.
- As part of the whole government accounting for 2016/17 the highway asset had been valued at over £6bn.
- A technical assessment was undertaken annually on how the budget would be spent. There was constant pressure to ensure that funds went as far as possible.
- Revenue spend was lower than in many other local authorities.
- Maintenance of the highway network involved identifying problems, prioritising and carrying out appropriate work within the budget available.
- Funding from the Department of Transport had changed and the level of funding was inconsistent so a more consistent approach was being taken in bidding for more capital funding from the Incentive Fund, the Challenge Fund and the Local Growth Fund.
- Future priorities were to protect the existing infrastructure and continue to develop a preventative approach for other parts of the highway. The prioritisation of works was required for all other assets.
- Highways and the County Council had been recognised nationally for their prevention strategy.
- Highways was currently at Band 2 in terms of the Asset Management Strategy, only two Local Authorities had achieved Band 3 through a self-assessment process. The aim therefore was to achieve Band 3.
- There was a need to secure more funding and resource and there was still work to do including promoting self help within communities.

The Committee considered the presentation and raised the following points;

- What was the position regarding the adoption of unadopted roads? Some roads had remained unadopted for over 10 to 15 years.
- Why did the Council's website use kilometres rather than miles when most people still used miles?
- What was the best way in which to achieve value for money and add value to the asset?
- Were there guidelines available which determined the full or partial closure of roads for utilities works?
- How much was being done to ensure that roads being built on new developments were being built to an acceptable standard?

- Communication with local councillors about Highways works had been excellent, however it was not always consistent.
- Some potholes were marked for repair whilst others near by were not. Was this a sensible approach?
- The delay in the dualing of the A45 was likely to cause delays to the opening of phase 1 of the Rushden Lakes development.
- It would be helpful if councillors were advised of the reasons for highways works in their electoral divisions so they could inform local people.
- Smaller drains on footpaths were not regularly maintained and contribute to flooding.
- Were there plans to replace slab footpaths to help reduce claims for trips and falls?
- Tree lined streets also contributed to trips and falls. Were there plans to replace older trees?
- Was the County Council engaging with Parish Councils and local path wardens regarding public Rights of Way?

The Head of Transport and Highways, the Operational and Delivery Manager and the Infrastructure Manager KierWSP responded to the points raised as follows;

- Highways were aware of that a working group had been set up by the Environment, Development & Transport Scrutiny Committee to look at unadopted roads in the county. There was a step by step process to the adoption of roads which would be brought to the working group at a future meeting.
- The website could be amended to show miles as well as kilometres.
- Value for money was being achieved through the preventative treatment of roads. 294 miles of roads had received preventative treatment and 26 had received structural treatment over the last 5 years. The county's road network had improved greatly compared to the national average and the targeted prevention strategy had contributed to these improvements.
- The Roadmaster vehicles were able to undertake small to medium size lasting repairs of up to 155 square metres per day compared to traditional operational gangs who could complete 6 to 10 square metres per day.
- The Roadmaster vehicle was able to prolong the life of the highway through asphalt rejuvenation. It also recycled and reused materials which would otherwise be expensive to dispose of.
- The Highways service asked for bonds on estate roads and were becoming more reactive to the adoption of roads.
- The repair of potholes was dependant on their depth, however repair teams were given a degree of flexibility and work was being undertaken to try to address this issue.
- The dualing of the A45 formed part of the Highways England Programme. The Highways service had continued to make representations and had done everything possible to try to expedite the scheme. Councillors may wish to contact their MP to encourage them to lobby Highways England.
- Data on the clearance of drainage gulleys was collected and the data was assessed annually with the Flood Prevention team.
- There is an approved list of trees which can be planted on streets, however they are expensive to fell and remove.
- There were some Highway and Footpath wardens in place and the service was keen to promote and support their work, but budget constraints meant that the role was currently being undertaken by Highways Wardens.

**RESOLVED that; (a) the Committee is provided with a briefing note on the process of road closures relating to utilities works; and  
(b) the Highways Strategy is noted.**

### 35/16 2016/16 Work Programme

The Chair invited the Assistant Manager Democratic Services to deliver the report.

The Committee provided a short update on the progress of each of the Working Groups;

- The Waste Reduction Working Group had met with Vanessa Kelly of the Northamptonshire Waste Partnership and with Fiona Unett Head of Waste Strategy and Partnerships and with Sheridan Kerr, Waste Education Service. It was hoped that an information pack would be available for councillors to take into schools. Schools were being asked for dates when a visit could be arranged. This information had been emailed to the Working Group, however only one response had been received to date.
- Northampton to Bedford Rail Link. Meetings had been held with the English Regional Transport Association (ERA), Northampton Borough Council Planning and with Chris Wragg, Transport Planning Northamptonshire County Council. Both Bedford and Milton Keynes Council's had been contacted and Bedford had already supplied some information. The response so far had been positive and the group would keep the Cabinet Member for Transport, Highways and the Environment informed.
- The Fire and Rescue Services Review Working Group had met with the Chief Fire Officer regarding the 2017/20 Community Protection Plan (CPP) which out for consultation. The CPP had been discussed at the meeting of Cabinet on 9<sup>th</sup> November. If any member of the Committee wished to visit the Fire and Rescue Services facility at Chelveston they should inform the Chair.
- The Unadopted Roads Working Group had held their first meeting. Two further dates had been planned for 21<sup>st</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> November 2016.

**RESOLVED that; (a) the Committee receives an update from all Working Groups at it's meeting in March 2017; and  
(b) that the 2016/17 Work Programme be noted.**

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 11.30 am.

This information can be made available in other formats upon request. Please contact Catherine Greenfield, Democracy Officer, Democracy Team, tel. (01604) 366084 or E-mail: [cgreenfield@northamptonshire.gov.uk](mailto:cgreenfield@northamptonshire.gov.uk)