

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the Highways Committee held at the County Hall, Durham on **Thursday 19 November 2009 at 10.00 a.m.** in Committee Room 2.

Present:

Councillor D MORGAN in the Chair

Members of the Committee:

Councillors Arthur, Bainbridge, Hancock, Hugill, Magee, D Marshall, Morgan, Naylor, Shiell, Stradling, L Thomson, Tomlinson and R Young.

Other Members:

Councillors J Blakey and J Shuttleworth

Apologies:

Apologies were received from Councillors Burn, Maslin, Taylor, Todd, Robinson and Woods.

A1 Minutes

The Minutes of the meetings held on 18 September 2009 and 13 October 2009 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

With reference to the Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Highways Committee held on 13 October 2009, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services replied that no further correspondence has been received from the Open Spaces Society in relation to the Diversion Order of Public Footpath No. 21 at West Auckland.

A2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

A3 B6278 and B6306 Edmundbyers – Proposed Amendment of a Speed Limit Traffic Regulation Order

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director, Regeneration and Economic Development regarding the proposal to de-restrict a section of lit highway being the B6278 between The Fell Road and Church Lane, Edmundbyers (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Corporate Director, Regeneration and Economic Development informed the Committee that one objection had been received regarding the positioning of a national speed limit repeater sign erected in the vicinity of the first lamp column approaching Edmundbyers from the Fell Road. The Objector claims the sign will encourage speeding around the bends until the 30mph restricted area is reached.

The Objector also pointed out that no footpath is in place and pedestrians have to walk on the carriageway. The Corporate Director Regeneration and Economic Development informed the Committee that the repeater sign is required to ensure that the speed limit is fully enforceable, and, it is unlikely that the erection of the sign will change driver behaviour around the bends.

No objection to the proposal was raised by the Local Members.

Resolved:

That the report together with the Recommendation included therein be approved.

A4 Neighbourhood Services Update

The Committee received a presentation by Steve Keetley, Head of Technical Services providing an update on the work undertaken by Technical Services (for copy of presentation see file of Minutes).

In response to a question from Councillor D Marshall, the Head of Technical Services informed the Committee that electronic data capture enables the Service to gather intelligence which can lead to the dimming of street lights or the reduction of light burning hours in areas, and at times, when it is safe to do so. A continuous review is undertaken to identify where carbon and energy reductions can be made.

Councillor Naylor asked whether it was possible to make a requirement that all schools operate a 20 mph speed limit outside of school premises. The Head of Technical Services replied that we use the data and intelligence that we have with regard to accidents in order to target resources where they will be best placed. Also generally figures indicate that most children who are injured by cars are involved in accidents well away from school premises. He added that Officers undertake visits to schools offering advice on road safety issues.

Councillor D Marshall expressed concern regarding the lack of information available to Members on the Civils / Highways Schemes. Members were informed that Scheme details are included in the Local Transport Plan. Councillor Stradling commented that Members would find an annual update useful.

Councillor Blakey referred to the volume of rain that has recently fallen which has led to debris accumulating in the river Wear, particularly around the Elvet Bridge location and asked who is responsible for removing the debris. The Head of Technical Services replied that he believed that the Local Authority and the Environment Agency have removed debris previously and discussions take place regularly with a view to removing the debris in conjunction with the riparian owner.

Councillor Stradling enquired whether joint working is undertaken with Durham's neighbouring Authorities. The Head of Technical Services informed the Committee that joint working takes place with Gateshead Council on winter maintenance and regular discussions regarding cross-boundary arrangements are held with other neighbouring Authorities.

Councillor Arthur commented that residents regularly make complaints about cars parking on footpaths, leading to access problems. The Head of Technical Services explained to Members that, if the vehicle is not causing an obstruction and people can safely pass by, then it is classified as no offence being committed.

In response to a query from Councillor Stradling regarding procurement, The Head of Technical Services replied that the Strategic Procurement Network Group deals with joint procurement and a report is being prepared for a future Cabinet meeting on joint procurement and partnership working.

The Head of Technical Services concluded by thanking the Committee for their input and invited Members to a Seminar on Highways and Road Safety which is due to be held on Monday 25th January. The Seminar will take place in the afternoon between 12.30 pm and 2.30 pm and, for those Members who would prefer to attend an evening session, the Seminar will be repeated between 6.30 pm and 8.30 pm. Further information will be provided in due course.