

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the Highways Committee held at the County Hall, Durham on **Wednesday 13 February 2008 at 10.00 a.m.**

Present:

Councillor H Douthwaite in the Chair

Members:

Councillors C Carr, Cordon, E Foster, Gray, Hunter, Knox, Meir, Morgan, O'Donnell, Pendlebury, Porter, Priestley, Pye, Robson, Southwell, Tennant and Walker.

Other Members:

Councillors Chapman, NC Foster and Magee.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bell, Hodgson, Holroyd and Young.

A1 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2008 were agreed as correct and signed by the Chairman.

Referring to Minute A4, the Corporate Director, Environment advised that the position of one of the road humps was still to be agreed with the resident. He pointed out that this would not delay the scheme.

A2 Public Rights of Way- Public Path and Definitive Map- Modification Orders

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director, Environment that advised that the majority of the Public Paths and Modification Orders which had been made as a result of decisions of the Committee since June 2004 have been upheld by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (for copy see file of Minutes).

In response to a question from Councillor Southwell about the length of time that some of the orders had been in the system, the Corporate Director, Environment advised of the procedures that were involved. The process for passing information to the Secretary of State can be complex and time consuming, and then receiving a decision also takes some considerable time. In relation to Councillor Southwell's

question on whether there would be costs arising from the public inquiry for the public path order at Cotherstone, it was pointed out that any costs were not yet known, however, if there were any they would not be significant.

Councillor Pendlebury pointed out that the process is very slow and determined by law, and other neighbouring authorities are either in a similar position or slightly worse.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

A3 Definitive Map Modification Orders- Statement of Priorities

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director, Environment to agree the Council's method for determining priorities for Definitive Map Modification Order work (for copy see file of Minutes).

In response to a question from Councillor Southwell whether the backlog was due to there being a resources issue, the Corporate Director advised that the work is complex and like many other areas of work there are resources issues, however it is a matter of striking the right balance.

Councillor O'Donnell advised of his disappointment that a scheme in his area relating to the A19 was not included in the list of priorities. It was pointed out the issue which he referred to was a diversion order rather than a modification order.

Councillor Robson advised that these issues were complicated and it was not just a matter of having more resources. He pointed out that any human resources issues would need to go to the appropriate committee.

Councillor Walker advised that when considering resources issues the Council has to make difficult decisions when seeking to balance the budget.

Resolved:

The report together with the recommendations included therein be approved.