

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the Highways Committee held at the County Hall, Durham on **Wednesday 10 September 2008 at 10.00 a.m.**

Present:

Councillor D Morgan in the Chair

Members:

Councillors Arthur, Avery, Bailey, A Bainbridge, C Carr, N C Foster, D Hancock, S Hugill, J Hunter, Magee, D Marshall, Maslin, C Potts, J Shiell, Southwell, Stradling, E Tomlinson, M Wilkes, B Wilson, M Wood, C Woods, Wright and Zair.

Other Members:

Councillors M Plews, Williams and J Wilkinson.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Blakey, and B Myers.

A1 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2008 were considered by the Committee. The Minutes amended to include the apologies of Councillors B Arthur, C Carr, and C Potts were agreed as correct and signed by the Chairman.

The Chairman advised that The Acting Corporate Director, Environment had written to the Northern Gas Network to advise of the disappointment that they had not met the target 10% failure rate. Northern Gas Network had been equally disappointed and were investigating why this had occurred, and would provide the Authority with an action plan as soon as possible.

A2 Training Exercise- Public Rights of Way

The Committee received a presentation from Claudine Freeman, Rights of Way Solicitor, and Audrey Christie, Senior Rights of Way Officer that gave an introduction to Public Path Orders (for copy of slides of presentation, see file of minutes).

Their presentation included information about the Access and Rights of Way, and a brief overview of the various Public Path Orders that the Committee may have to consider. The procedure for making Definitive Map Modification Orders was explained and Members were given a case study which illustrated many of the legal

issues that may arise when applications for modifications orders are brought before the Committee for a decision.

In response to Councillor Southwell enquiring whether attendance at the training was prescriptive, the Chairman advised that a Panel appointed to make a decision on a case would be competent to do so.

The Chairman agreed that the next item could be considered as a matter of urgency.

A4 Salting of Roads

Councillor Wilkinson advised that Larks Hill in Esh Winning had been deleted from the salting route 6 years ago. It is on a bus route and the middle section is on a steep hill. There are 8 streets adjoining on to it, 4 bus stops on the route and 180 households are affected. If the bus cannot run on that route, young children have to walk to school, and elderly people walk into the village.

Councillor Southwell asked that at the time of setting the budget, they should bear in mind that there should be sufficient money put aside to be able to include this road on the salting route. He pointed out that some District Councils do salt roads, and questioned whether these roads would continue to be salted by the new authority.

Councillor J Maddison advised that Members had agonised over salting routes for many years, and there would be patches in many Members' wards that had similar problems. If this road was to be looked at, they would need to look at the county as a whole. He pointed out that not all District Councils do salt roads, and some had stopped due to health and safety issues.

Councillor Wilkes enquired whether it was a statutory duty to salt bus routes.

Councillor Woods suggested that the money used to paint yellow lines on a stretch of road in her ward could have been better used.

The Acting Corporate Director, Environment advised that there would be no material change to the salting routes as a result of re-organisation as those District Councils that do salt roads are doing it on behalf of the County Council. He advised that the Authority does have a duty to make the highway network reasonably safe. He pointed out that due to the budget, there are several bus routes that are not pre-salted. The Authority pre-salts 42% of the highway network, which is one of the highest in the country at a cost of £2.4m. The determination of whether to pre-salt is dependent on the temperature. They receive numerous requests for roads to be salted, however, they cannot do them all. He explained how they determine which routes to salt. He suggested that Members may wish to have a presentation on this at a future meeting. He pointed out that they do try and make people aware of the salting routes, and copies of the routes were available for Members. He advised that if this were to be included on the salting route, they would need to review all roads in the county.

He advised that one of his officers would look at the route in question.

