

“Cracking Up”
A Scrutiny Report about Improving the Condition of Footways in County Durham
Scrutiny Sub-Committee for Looking After the Environment – 21 May 2007

Recommendations/Actions

Ref. No.	Recommendation	Lead Officer	Action Proposed (Position End June 07)	Progress End Sept 07	Progress End Dec 07	Comments
11.2a	Consider the provision of a one off contribution to the highways maintenance budget to carry out remedial repairs, either across the footways network, or by targeting footways in Categories 1, 1A and 2 (these are the footways against which BV 187 is measured).	M/H/GR	Business Case passed to County Treasurer June 07 for consideration by Cabinet as part of MTFP – awaiting feedback.	Raised at CMT on 21/08/07 as part of MTFP discussions – expected to be further discussed at Cabinet Briefing during Oct 07.	Two blocks of £500,000 approved by Cabinet/Scrutiny -scheme lists based on need -works ongoing	
11.2b	Maintain year on year funding for footways maintenance and improvement (as in 2006/07) from any savings arising from continued falls in PLI annual premiums.	E/M/NAN	Initial approach made to County Treasurer by NAN April 07 for further funding on the same basis as last year. Deferred by Treasurer pending the outcome of a PLI fund review.	Awaiting feedback from CMT/Cabinet Briefing Oct 07.	Treasurer’s report to Cabinet 01/11/07 confirmed that PLI premium reduction used as saving in base budget and not available for footway maintenance.	
11.2c	Develop local performance indicators for footways in categories 3 and 4 of the footways hierarchy, so as to give a more accurate picture of the condition of those footways which are most used by the public.	M/H/GR	Visual condition survey using Safety Inspections commenced on Cat. 3 & 4 in June 07. DVI survey on Cat 3 ongoing for correlation.	Trial Cat. 3 & 4 surveys ongoing via Area Highway Safety Inspectors. Cat. 3 DVI surveys ongoing via Maintenance Information Unit.	Surveys ongoing - analysis of results to be undertaken during early 2008/09.	Note:- Roads Liaison Sub Group “FCMG” are currently developing a new coarse network based footway condition survey.
11.3a	Seek to identify funding (perhaps arising from recommendations 11.2 a & b above) to promote jointly with our District/Borough Council partners additional verge hardening schemes in housing estates (subject to matched funding from partners)	M/N/DJW M/S/SF	Liaison has taken place with all of the District Councils. Derwentside/Durham/Easington have agreed match funding of £40,000 each. Other Districts confirmed they have no funding available.	Northern Area schemes progressing at varying stages – either under design/ordered/under construction/completed. Southern Area to raise this issue again at their next District Council Liaison meetings with a view to securing matched funding.	Northern Area Chester – complete Derw – ordered Durham – complete Eas DC - 1 ordered/1 under design Southern Area Raised at recent District Liaison meetings – still no funding available.	Northern Area It is expected that Districts will continue matched funding in 2008/09. Southern Area Will continue to raise this issue at future District Liaison meetings.

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11.3b	Ask the Corporate Director, Environment Services, to consider whether there is a need to promote greater use of traffic regulation orders to help reduce parking on footways in housing estates where there is <u>significant</u> inconvenience to pedestrian users.	M/T/DW	It is legally possible to introduce a traffic regulation order banning parking on footpaths and verges in specific areas although enforcement will clearly be an issue. We will identify a location for a possible trial within the current year.	Still to be progressed.	Police have indicated that additional resources would not be available to enforce traffic regulation orders in specific residential areas. The only remaining option would be to select an area in Durham District following the introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement.	
11.3c	To request Durham Constabulary to review its approach to obstructed footways, and in particular, how a tougher line can be taken against those car owners whose vehicles are substantially parked on footways to the extent they become impassable for people in wheelchairs or mobility scooters and those with prams and pushchairs.	M/T/DW	A meeting is to be arranged within the next two months with the Police to discuss the concerns of the Committee and to identify whether any targeted enforcement by the PCSOs can be given high priority.	Still to be progressed.	It is the view of the Police that enforcement activity will remain available to respond to specific requests or intelligence. Police would wish problem areas to be referred to them.	
11.3d	Use <i>Countywide</i> to raise awareness about the problem of footway parking; the damage it causes to footways and the inconvenience caused to pedestrians.	M/H/GR	Article to be included in Oct 07 issue of <i>Countywide</i> to highlight the issues involved.	Article now included in Oct/Nov issue of <i>Countywide</i> to be circulated early Oct 07.	Completed	

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11.3e	Ask the Corporate Director, Environment Services, for a report about off street parking guidelines for new residential development in the light of Planning Policy Statement 3 and associated guidance (including an assessment of the impact of current guidance on car parking in new residential developments).	M/NM/DP	PPS3 guidelines and DCLG Residential Parking Research paper to be used to develop recommendations for a more flexible policy for residential parking in the County.	Still to be progressed.	Report under preparation.	
11.4	Cabinet is recommended to consider how the scheme can be better promoted with our Parish/Town Council partners and to identify possible corporate funding to act as pump-priming for re-launching the scheme.	M/H/GR	Needs to be resolved as part of ongoing budget considerations. More funding is required if the scheme is to be extended.	Still awaiting feedback from ongoing budget considerations.	Still awaiting feedback from ongoing budget considerations - funding needed just to retain existing arrangements.	
11.5a	Ask the Corporate Director, Environment Services, to: i) Develop and report upon proposals for the introduction of weekend inspection arrangements for utilities/statutory undertaker works, including any associated costs. ii) Prepare a report on proposed measures which will ensure that greater co-ordination and more advance notification of utility works is achieved.	M/NM/DP	i)Business Case report to be prepared with proposals, costs and recommendations in October 2007. Additional funding will be required. ii)Report to be prepared drawing on new Notices CoP to come into force April 2008 – October 2007 under the Traffic Management Act legislation. The new requirements will need additional funding.	In progress. In progress.	Report to EMT 12/11/07. New weekend inspection arrangements agreed and implemented from mid December 2007. Report to EMT 07/01/07 describing new measures to be introduced from 2 nd April 2008.	

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11.5b	Require the Corporate Director to develop and report on any actions proposed by Environment Services to more proactively tackle statutory breaches by utilities and statutory undertakers in relation to works in highways.	M/NM/DP	Report on Highway Enforcement presented at Highways Committee on 11 July 2007 - NRSWA enforcement procedure has contributed to improvement over the last year in Category A (Works in Progress) failures from an average across all utilities of 13.5% (worst utility was 19%) in 2005/06 to 6.8% (worst utility was 8%) in 2006/07, with a target set in April 2006 of reducing failures to 5% by April 2008.	Failure rate on Category A in 2007/08 Quarter 1 was 4.9%.	Report to EMT 12/11/07 describing enforcement action taken over the past two years and the positive effect this has had on compliance. New NRSWA Code of Practice coming into force 2 nd April 2008 which will require parity of treatment between Utilities and DCC contractors.	
11.5c	Ask the Corporate Director to consider how existing arrangements for core sampling of reinstatements can be further developed and to report on any implications of this proposal.	M/NM/DP	Options for routine or targeted coring and costs to be considered. (linked to 11.5(a)(i)) Report/ business case to be prepared in October 2007	In progress.	In progress.	
11.6	Cabinet is recommended to consider whether the additional maintenance costs of floorscaping schemes should be factored into the budget for such works and the highways maintenance budget be uprated accordingly when these schemes are undertaken.	E/M/NAN	This will need to be considered as part of future budget deliberations.	Still to be considered as part of future budget deliberations – EMT will also need to decide on future priorities.	Not under consideration as part of current MTFP process.	Note:- Schemes are undertaken out of Capital funding whereas future maintenance is from Revenue funding.