

COLCHESTER LOCAL HIGHWAYS PANEL

Minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2021 - 10.00

ONLINE MEETING: MICROSOFT TEAMS

Chairman:	County Councillor Sue Lissimore
Panel Members:	County Councillors Lewis Barber, Mark Cory, Dave Harris, John Jowers, David King and Lee Scordis Borough Councillors Jeremy Hagon, Mike Hogg, Dennis Willetts and Julie Young. Parish Councillor John Gili-Ross
Officers:	Essex Highways: Sonia Church, Highways Liaison Manager, Jon Simmons – Highways Liaison Officer Nick Hill, Sustainable Travel Team Colchester Borough: Jane Thompson - Transport and Sustainability Project Officer
Secretariat:	Colchester Borough: Richard Clifford – Lead Democratic Services Officer

Item		Owner
1.	Welcome and Introductions: The Chairman welcomed Councillors and officers to the meeting and invited everyone in attendance to introduce themselves.	
2.	Apologies for Absence Apologies for absence were received from Parish Councillor Mannion.	
3.	Minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2021 The minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2021 were confirmed as a correct record.	

<p>4.</p>	<p>Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Previous Meeting</p> <p>The revised meeting dates to avoid clashes with Cabinet and Council meetings were noted.</p> <p>In respect of scheme 38 on the report of Funded Schemes, clarification was sought as whether the feasibility study had started and how long it would take. Jon Simmons confirmed that an engineer had begun work and the importance of the scheme to the Panel had been stressed to the Design Team. It was not possible to put a timescale on the length of time the feasibility study would take at this stage.</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p>Vehicle Activated Sign Presentation</p> <p>Sonia Church, Highways Liaison Manager, made a presentation to the Panel on Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) and Speed Indicator Devices (SID).</p> <p>There had been a recent change in policy which would allow Parish Councils to purchase VAS/SID in areas where they considered speeding was an issue, but were this was not necessarily backed up evidence from speeding surveys. Non parished areas could use the Local Highway Panel process, but that required the request to meet certain criteria. There were over 500 signs on the road network, which were maintained by Essex County Council. Those that were beyond their serviceable life would be removed.</p> <p>Information about where signs could be installed would be published on the Council's website. It was recommended that they were located 70 metres inside the speed limit area, half a metre from the edge of the carriageway and not near other flashing signage.</p> <p>The process to apply for a VAS/SID under the new policy would involve applying for a licence. Information on costs and contractors would be available on the website, but it was important that contractors were not engaged until the licence was approved. Essex County Council must be kept informed to ensure they were inspected and added to the Asset Register. They would also inspect them periodically because as the Highway Authority the Council was ultimately legally responsible for the signs.</p> <p>Councillor Gili-Ross indicated that it would be useful for the presentation to be made available for members of Colchester Association of Local Councils. Sonia Church indicated that she would make it available once all Essex members had been informed.</p> <p><i>Action: SC to make presentation available to CALC once all Essex members have been informed.</i></p>	<p>SC</p>

	<p>In response to questions it was confirmed that the relevant parish council would own the sign and would be responsible for its installation, maintenance and cleaning. The Parish should also consider moving the sign regularly as they tended to lose their effectiveness after 4 weeks. In terms of design, there were 4 approved companies and whilst all were given the same specification, there some limited variations in design. They were battery operated, although there were options for solar powered rechargeable batteries.</p> <p>Clarification was sought as to whether an individual borough councillor could make an application through this process and it was confirmed that a VAS/SID needed to be owned by legally defined body rather than by an individual. Therefore individual borough councillors could not make applications, and would have to apply through the Borough Council. Clarification would also be sought on whether a Residents Association could make an application via the policy, although members generally felt that it was more appropriate for requests to be made by organisations with a democratic mandate.</p> <p><i>Action – SC to provide clarification on whether non democratically representative bodies can apply for VAS/SID.</i></p> <p>It was anticipated that once the policy came into effect there would be a surge of applications but once the process settled down it was anticipated that the process of application and installation would take a couple of months. Where there were existing applications under the LHP process from parished areas, the parishes may wish to discuss with the Highways Liaison Officer whether to continue with the application or wait for the new process.</p> <p>Some concern was expressed that the funding proposals were inherently disadvantageous to parishes in that they would pay for their own signs whilst also contributing through their funding mechanisms to those provided for non parished areas. In response, it was confirmed that parishes could still apply through Local Highway Panel process where the request met the criteria. The new policy gave them additional freedom to apply for a sign in areas where there wasn't a recognised speeding problem.</p> <p>Clarification was also sought as to the process to be followed if a sign was not working properly and the relevant parish council did not take remedial action. Sonia Church confirmed that Essex County Council could intervene in these circumstances as it was ultimately responsible for the highway network.</p> <p>The Panel thanked Sonia for her presentation.</p>	<p>SC</p>
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<p>6.</p>	<p>Report on Funded Schemes 2021/22</p> <p>The Panel considered a report providing an update on the current position of all the schemes which the Colchester Local Highway Panel has recommended for inclusion in their 2021/22 programme. Jon Simmons reported that there was £10,500 left in the budget and it was recommended that this was not allocated but left to help manage any schemes that went over budget.</p> <p>In discussion the following issues were raised about the Funded Schemes.</p> <p>5. Monkwick Cycleway Improvements: A site visit was being arranged</p> <p>4. Trinity Street, Signage Review: Members of the Panel stressed the need for progress to be made and it was reported that the results of the design work would be reported to the March meeting.</p> <p>8. St John’s Road, Crossing Improvements: It was reported that design work was underway with completion scheduled for Quarter 4.</p> <p>15. The Commons, Zebra Crossing: There had been some supply issues that had delayed the scheme but the scheme should be completed shortly.</p> <p>47. S/o 18 Gazelle Court, Colchester – Bollard: This was an additional scheme added to the list in June 2021;</p> <p>48. Tiptree Heath Primary School, Maldon Road, Tiptree – Pedestrian Guard Railing: This was another additional scheme added following an incident at the school. Validation had been completed on a potential scheme, introducing staggered barriers. However this would be on school land so discussions with the school were underway on implementation.</p>	
<p>7.</p>	<p>Schemes Awaiting Funding</p> <p>The Panel were invited to review the schemes on the Schemes Awaiting Funding List and in particular those schemes flagged as red to consider whether they should be removed from the list.</p> <p>In discussion the Panel raised issues and expressed the following views on the schemes</p> <p>Traffic Management Schemes</p> <p>14. Athelstan Road, Colchester: It was reported that the issues that had led to the request had reduced significantly because of the Covid 19 pandemic but were likely to recur in due course once use of the school playing field increased. The best solution would be for</p>	

	<p>the school to use another entrance to the playing field which was more suitable. It was agreed that the scheme should be removed from the list and further discussions involving the School be taken forward.</p> <p>19. West Stockwell Street: It was agreed that this scheme could come off the list following the changes to the access to West Stockwell Street.</p> <p>41. Queen Boudica Primary School: It was agreed that this scheme should remain on the list.</p> <p>47. Greenstead Road: Whilst the conclusions of the speed survey were noted, a Panel member explained that residents' perception was that speeding remained an issue. Whilst it could be a suitable site for a VAS it was a non parished area and therefore there was no funding available to pursue this. As there was no evidence of a speed problem the scheme should be removed from the list.</p> <p>It was suggested that this was indicative of a wider issue that would be best addressed by a policy of a 20mph speed limit on residential streets and that the Panel should seek to influence Essex County Council policy on residential speed limits, which was currently under review. In discussion it was also suggested that was a divergence between the Council's policy objectives and local delivery. The Chair suggested that greater clarity was need as to how initiatives such as Active Travel and School Streets linked into the work of the Local Highway Panel and how schemes aimed at limiting speed to 20 mph could be taken forward where they did not meet Local Highway Panel criteria. There needed to be greater clarity on processes. Sonia Church indicated that an item on these issues would be added to the agenda for the next meeting, and she would invite colleagues who dealt with School Streets and Active Travel to provide clarity. It was suggested that it would be useful if the relevant Cabinet member attended but this may not be possible and in any case it was noted that a commitment had already been given that Local Highway Panels would be consulted on any policy changes.</p> <p><i>Action – SC to arrange for an item on links with Active Travel and School Streets to the work of the Local Highway Panel to be added to the agenda of the next meeting.</i></p> <p>48. London Road, Copford: The County division allocated to the scheme was incorrect.</p> <p>50. A1124 junction with Wood Lane and Spring Lane roundabouts: It was agreed that this scheme should be retained on the list whilst the impact on lower hierarchy roads was monitored.</p>	<p>SC</p>
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<p>8.</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>None</p>	
<p>8</p>	<p>Date of next meeting:</p> <p>The next meeting of the Local Highway Panel would take place on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14 December, online meeting, Microsoft Teams 	