

12th November 2014

Environment Committee

Pot Hole Improvement Initiative

Report of: *Roy Ormsby – Head of Street Scene*

Wards Affected: *All*

This report is: *Public*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 At the Environment Committee on 7th July 2014, it was agreed that the Leader of the Council, and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Environment Committee meet with the lead Member for Highways and Transportation at Essex County Council to explore partnership working opportunities to improve highway maintenance across the Borough.
- 1.2 The meeting took place on 29th September 2014 with Cllr Bass, the lead Member for Highways and Transportation at ECC, and provided an opportunity for the Borough Members to open a debate on how communication and on-going maintenance could be improved. Cllr Bass welcomed the meeting, as there had been a lack of engagement with Brentwood Borough Council in the past over these matters.
- 1.3 It was agreed by all that for a number of years there had been a lack of investment nationally on the highway network, and that there was a need to invest more on local roads throughout the County.
- 1.4 However, through the discussion it became evident that the maintenance of highways should be co-ordinated centrally through ECC as the Highway Authority, but there was an opportunity to debate wider issues at the Local Highways Panel. It was noted that maintenance could be improved by making more detailed information available regarding the state of the network, which is currently being assessed through survey work.
- 1.5 It was therefore agreed that there would be better communication between the two Authorities, and that when detailed information is available regarding local roads, then Cllr Bass would, in principle, be

happy for this to be debated at the Local Highways Panel to ensure local knowledge is used moving forward.

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1 Agree that Members note the outcome of the discussion with Essex County Council, and that when detailed information becomes available relating to local roads, this will be debated at the Local Highways Panel.

2.2 That in Principle, Members agree to the development of area working with Essex County Council, and other Districts/Boroughs.

3. Introduction and Background

3.1 At the Environment Committee on 7th July 2014 there was a debate regarding the improvement of minor roads throughout the Borough, and if the Borough Council could assist ECC, through implementing a scheme to speed up the programme of improvements, especially pot holes. It was therefore agreed that a meeting would take place to identify opportunities to move forward with improvements.

3.2 The meeting with ECC was held on 29th September 2014, where it was made clear that the discussions were about having a proactive relationship with ECC on potentially developing schemes that could improve local highways, and if the Borough could assist with this on non-priority routes.

3.3 ECC felt that as Highway Authority they should remain responsible for any highway improvements, and this would be delivered through their contractor. This would ensure that residents are clear on who is responsible for highway improvements, and there is no confusion on who they should report any defects to.

3.4 To ensure that there is an effective programme, which is within the ECC highways budget, they would decide on which roads will be repaired. ECC have identified what they feel are the worst 50 roads in each District/Borough, and have a programme to improve these within the current financial year. These are published on the ECC website and a copy is also attached as Appendix A to this report.

3.5 ECC are also carrying out further work through condition surveys, which is being done for the first time, and this information will be shared with the

Local Highways Panel, and used to develop the future improvement programme.

- 3.6 It was agreed that in the longer-term the Local Highways Panel would be the forum to discuss the maintenance programme, but this will need to be based on the information being generated through the condition surveys currently being undertaken.
- 3.7 In the long-term ECC would like to engage Local Authorities in debating opportunities to establish area working arrangements to improve efficiency. This was still being developed by ECC, but it was felt that in principle this could improve the service, but further details would need to be provided before the Council could become involved.

4. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

- 4.1 Discussions through the Local Highways Panel will enable Members to be involved in debating the programme that is to be delivered, and provide local knowledge relating to future schemes.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1 To inform Members of the outcome of discussions with Essex County Council, and how issues relating to the Borough's highway network will be debated at the Local Highways Panel to seek local input on future improvements.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 The meeting provided an opportunity to open discussions with Essex County Council on highways related issues, and promote future debates and consultation through the Local Highways Panel.

7. References to Corporate Plan

- 7.1 Partnership working is a key part of the Corporate Plan, as is working closely with community groups to enhance the environment.

8. Implications

Financial Implications

Name & Title: Jo-Anne Ireland, Acting Chief Executive

Tel & Email: 01277 312712 / jo-anne.ireland@brentwood.gov.uk

8.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications

Name & Title: Christopher Potter, Monitoring Officers and Head of Support Services

Tel & Email: 01277 312860/ christopher.potter@brentwood.gov.uk

8.2 None.

Other Implications (where significant) – i.e. Health and Safety, Asset Management, Equality and Diversity, Risk Management, Section 17 – Crime & Disorder, Sustainability, ICT.

8.3 None.

9. Background Papers (include their location and identify whether any are exempt or protected by copyright)

9.1 None.

10. Appendices to this report

Appendix A - List of roads identified for maintenance in 2014/15

Report Author Contact Details:

Name: Roy Ormsby, Head of Streetscene

Telephone: 01277 312554

E-mail: roy.ormsby@brentwood.gov.uk