

## COLCHESTER LOCAL HIGHWAYS PANEL

Minutes of the meeting held on 19 December 2023 - 10.00

### ONLINE MEETING: MICROSOFT TEAMS

<b>Chairman:</b>	County Councillor Sue Lissimore
<b>Panel Members:</b>	County Councillors: Lee Scordis, Dave Harris.  City Councillors: Jeremy Hagon, Richard Kirkby Taylor, Andrea Luxford-Vaughan, Tim Young  Parish Councillor: Cllr Robert Johnstone, Rik Andrew
<b>Officers:</b>	Essex Highways: Jon Simmons –Highways Liaison Officer  Daniel MacLean – Highways Liaison Team Leader
<b>Secretariat:</b>	Colchester City Council: Robert Carmichael – Democratic Services Officer.

Item		Owner
1.	<b>Welcome and Introductions:</b>  The Chairman welcomed Councillors and officers to the meeting including the newly appointed Members.	
2.	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>  Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Simon Crow, David King, and Lee Scordis	
3.	<b>Minutes of the meeting held on the 19 September 2023</b>  The minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2023 were confirmed as a correct record.	

<p><b>4.</b></p>	<p><b>Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Previous Meeting</b></p> <p>The Highways Liaison Officer detailed that on p3 of the minutes an action had been noted and that the Highways Liaison Officer had provided Cllr King an update on all schemes in their division until December 6, 2023, and detailed that for the carry forward schemes these would require a further decision in the 2024/ 2025 budget.</p> <p>It was noted on p5 that the Highways Liaison Team Leader would provide an update on the Low Traffic Networks (LTNS) before the meeting in March 2024 and detailed that they did not have any information on when this would be yet but would be investigated ahead of the March 2024 Panel meeting.</p>	<p><b>DM</b></p>
<p><b>5.</b></p>	<p><b>Report on Funded Schemes 2023/24</b></p> <p>The Panel considered a report providing an update on the current position of the previously allocated schemes (Carry Forward Schemes) The Highways Liaison Officer detailed that the following schemes were being implemented:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Monkwick Cycleway Improvements , Maypole – Cycle Route – works completed.</li> <li>2. Titania Close j/w Avon Way, Colchester- Dropped Kerbs – in progress.</li> </ol> <p>The Panel were asked to agree to an additional £20,000 of funding for the Monkwick Cycle improvements as the project required a top-up to complete the works.</p> <p>Members of the panel expressed their concerns that the project had overrun and that they had been asked for more funding with no reasons or report as to why the project had overspent. It was noted by Members that it was unacceptable that no reasons were given for the overspend or the justification for further funds.</p> <p>The Highways Liaison Team Leader detailed that a full breakdown of the reasons for the additional request for £20,000 and had received some information ahead of the meeting that needed to be reviewed. The Highways Liaison Team Leader confirmed that they would be writing to the Panel by the end of the week confirming the details of the scheme, its funding and the request for the additional £20,000.</p> <p>Members of the panel discussed the communication from the County Council to Panel Members and outlined that this needed to be improved as well as questions being raised on whether this was an isolated incident or one that was replicated across the other Local Highway Panels. Members indicated that they wished to see further information on what percentage of proposals went over budget and the wider context and how many projects across the Local Highway</p>	<p><b>DM</b></p> <p><b>DM</b></p>

	<p>Panels had exceeded £10,000 as an overrun. The Highways Liaison Team Leader detailed that they would investigate this and send the information round to the Panel.</p> <p>Some Members queried whether any options had been investigated to get the project back into budget via alternative means. A further question was raised on whether it would be possible to understand the Quantity Surveyors (QS) role. The Highways Liaison Team Leader responded that there were QS's and engineers who worked on schemes across the board and that the Council was currently looking into how these teams were managed.</p> <p>A further concern from the Panel was whether the schemes before them needed to be reviewed in terms of inflation as many of them had been on the list for at least six months.</p>	
<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b>Report on schemes awaiting funding.</b></p> <p>The Panel considered a report that detailed the schemes that were awaiting funding and an update was provided by the Highways Liaison Team Leader as follows.</p> <p>The Panel heard that funding had not been released and that there was slippage on funding which meant that some schemes that had been previously allocated may not receive funding and that this would be looked at in the next budget.</p> <p>The Chair detailed that they had met with the Leader of Essex County Council and the Cabinet to express their views and to review ways forward.</p> <p>In response to a question from the Panel the Highways Liaison Team Leader responded that some of the proposals for the schemes awaiting funding needed to be revisited and that this was a frustration shared by all 12 panels across the County and that funding would be reliant upon the next budget being agreed.</p> <p>Members debated the issues around funding with Panel Members detailing that they found the situation unacceptable and although the Cabinet Member was looking into this some Members felt that there was not any point making any recommendations on schemes until the funding was in place in the March 2024 meeting as the capital budget would be agreed . Members continued to discuss the situation and how projects had been funded and then had the funding rescinded querying how it would be returned to these schemes.</p>	

	<p>The Highways Liaison Team Leader outlined that they were not certain as to which schemes would be funded from those previously agreed and confirmed that a further £20,000 funding was required for Monkwick Cycleway Improvements , Maypole – Cycle Route as detailed in the previous report.</p> <p>Members agreed that a decision on this item’s additional funding would be required following receipt of the information from the Highways Liaison Team Leader and that a vote would be taken through email on a majority decision to allocate the funding or not.</p> <p>Some Members expressed regret that the Scheme had been approved in the first place as it should have not come to the Local Highway Panel due to the large cost involved. Some Members raised concern as to whether inflation was an issue and whether other schemes had been assessed recently to take into account inflation.</p> <p>The items discussion concluded with Members discussing whether the Local Highway Panel and the way it worked needed revising and that the panel would await the updates regarding the funding.</p>	
<p><b>7.</b></p>	<p><b>Revenue Funding and Traffic Survey Requests 2023/2024</b></p> <p>The Highways Liaison Officer presented the report to the Committee outlining the 11 requests for traffic surveys had been completed and that 13 requests were awaiting funding.</p>	
<p><b>8.</b></p>	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>A question was raised regarding an HGV Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) and why a traffic survey was required in Wivenhoe. The Highways Liaison Officer detailed that the proposal was currently being validated and that they would be looking at the data and what was feasible. Additionally, it was noted that a traffic survey was not always required for a TRO if existing survey data already existed which was up to date and relevant.</p> <p>A concern was raised regarding the number of schemes that were in validation as some schemes had been in there for over a year and what was the expectation on timetables for completion. The Highways Liaison Team Leader detailed that work was continuing on these and that the team would be working on the outstanding schemes to validate as many as possible ahead of the March 2024 meeting.</p>	

<b>9.</b>	<b>Date of next meetings:</b>  Via Video call:  Tuesday 19 March 2024	
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