

**COUNCIL SEMINAR  
11th October, 2016**

Present:- Councillor (in the Chair); Councillors Albiston, Allcock, Allen, Andrews, Atkin, Beaumont, Bird, Councillor Maggi Clark, Cooksey, Cusworth, Cutts, Ellis, Hoddinott, Jarvis, Jepson, Khan, McNeely, Mallinder, Napper, Price, Russell, Sansome, Sheppard, Short, John Turner, Walsh and Wyatt.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cutts, Elliott, Jones and Tweed.

**HIGHWAY ASSET MANAGEMENT**

Members received a presentation from the Highway Network Manager (Community Safety and Street Scene) concerning Highway Asset Management.

The presentation highlighted the following salient issues:-

: it is intended that there will be an annual seminar on Highway Asset Management for Elected Members;

: Highway Maintenance - Background

The Rotherham Borough area has 700 miles of road and 1,300 miles of footway/Public Rights of Way. The Local Highways Authority has a mandatory duty to keep roads safe by maintaining the highway network in a cost effective way (which may sometimes mean not repairing the roads in worst condition first).

: Highway Policy Strategy and Plan

This strategy and plan had been adopted by the Council at its meeting held on 21st October, 2015 (Minute No. 75 refers); asset management ensures that sufficient information and records are maintained about the highway network (a complete inventory and data about highway condition).

: Highway Lifecycle Planning

The RAG system is used to assess the condition of the highway network, ranging from Green (good condition), through Amber to Red (the worst condition). Good practice shows that early intervention in terms of repairing a highway surface is usually the most cost-effective means of repair, enabling up to four times the length of road to be repaired. Classified A, B and C roads within the Rotherham Borough area are maintained to average national standards, or exceed those standards. However, some 24% of unclassified roads require significant works, compared to a national average standard of 18% for this type of road.

**: Programme of Highway Works**

Capital Investment of £3 millions, during 2015/16, had enabled 80 highway schemes to be undertaken. The programme of highway works for 2017/18 is currently being prepared. Elected Members were asked to suggest suitable locations within their electoral Wards for consideration in the programme of works. The programme of works is available to view on the Council's Internet web site. Members will be informed of the Highway Inspectors for their areas so they have an opportunity to see on site how Officers carry out their duties in accordance with the Council's Code of Practice for Highway Inspection.

**: Changes to the Highway**

Members were informed of the process of formal legal notices which may be served by the Local Highway Authority on the various statutory undertakers, to prevent repeated works in the highway. The notices are served in accordance with Section 58 of the Highways Act 1980, although specific emergency works (e.g.: repair of a gas leak) were exempt from this process.

**: Long Term Highway Maintenance Strategy to 2020**

Financial information and graphs and charts detailing highway condition were displayed during the presentation. This long-term strategy aims to minimise the deterioration in highway condition as well improve the condition of the unclassified estate/residential roads. Members noted that every endeavour is being made to maximise the amount of funding available for highway maintenance, using the principles of good asset management.

**: Performance Management and Risks**

There were local indicators measuring performance in respect of highway maintenance and an average 94% performance rating was being achieved. In order to keep the highway safe, the target was to effect repairs to potholes within 24 hours of reports being received. The Council has a robust system of responding to insurance claims and complaints about accidents caused by the condition of the highway surface.

Members' questions referred to the following matters:-

(i) cutting back vegetation which overhangs the highway and trees which may obstruct the highway – the Borough Council can undertake works immediately to ensure the safety of users of the highway; private landowners will be contacted to undertake necessary works and the Local Authority also has powers to undertake works in default and to recharge the landowner; Members referred to various locations where highway trees and overhanging shrubs and vegetation were obstructing highway users;

(ii) Street lighting – discussion took place on the phased replacement of the older street lighting lamps (sodium) with the modern LED lamps; the latest technology made the use of LED lamps cost-effective; tests had

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shown that lighting levels are to British Standards; a proposal is being considered to complete the replacement of lamps across the Borough and this work would be completed over a period of three years; there had been a comprehensive procurement exercise undertaken, together with Barnsley MBC, to secure the supply and fitting of the LED street lighting lamps for the previous two programmes;

(iii) the modern street lighting would be fitted to new development sites within the Borough area wherever possible, but was dependent on various factors such as the age of the planning consent and whether the highway would eventually be adopted and maintainable at public expense;

(iv) Members questioned the highway maintenance strategy and the assessment criteria; it was emphasised that Councillors should continue to be involved in suggesting locations to be included in the future works programme; the assessment criteria was readily available to view, via the Intranet page and officers were available to provide further explanation if needed;

(v) It was noted that the illuminated bollards, usually located in the pedestrian crossing refuges in the centre of the carriageway, would be replaced with new bollards with reflective material, instead of requiring an electric lamp.

Members thanked the officers for the interesting and informative presentation.