

IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION
Wednesday, 18th June, 2014

Present:- Councillor Read (in the Chair); Councillors Atkin, Cowles, Foden, Gilding, N. Hamilton, Sims and Wallis; together with co-opted members Mrs. L. Shears, Mr. P. Cahill and Mr. B. Walker.

Also in attendance: Councillor Smith (Cabinet Member for Planning, Highways and Street Scene Services)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Andrews, Finnie, Gosling and Roche and from co-opted member Miss P. Copnell.

1. WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

The Chairman welcomed new members to their first meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission, including the two co-opted members, Mr. Pat Cahill and Mrs. Lilian Shears (the latter attending as substitute for Miss Copnell).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made at this meeting.

3. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

There were no questions from members of the public or the press.

4. COMMUNICATIONS

The Select Commission confirmed that the scrutiny review group for the review of dampness and condensation in Council housing properties shall comprise Councillors Andrews, Cowles, Foden, Sims and C. Vines.

5. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 23RD APRIL, 2014

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission, held on 23rd April, 2014, be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

6. METHODOLOGY FOR THE PRIORITISATION OF HIGHWAY WORKS AND THE VARIOUS METHODS OF HIGHWAY SURFACE REPAIRS

Further to Minute No. 17 of the meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission held on 4th September, 2013, consideration was given to a report presented by the Principal Engineer (Streetpride) describing the methodology for the prioritisation of highway works and the various methods of highway surface repairs.

The report stated that, as Highway Authority, the Council's primary objective is to ensure that Rotherham's roads and footways are maintained to the nationally recognised safety standards. Additionally, in carrying out maintenance works on the highway, such works are not necessarily on roads that are in the worst condition, but the aim is to extend the life of the existing highway network fabric.

The Select Commission was informed of the three, proactive forms of assessment used to examine the condition of the highway network:-

SCRIM (Sideway-force Coefficient Routine Investigation Machine)
SCANNER (Surface Condition Assessment of the National Network of Roads)
CVI (Coarse Visual Inspection)

The assessment process permits Elected Members to identify highway locations, within their Wards, which require treatment.

The various methods of surface repair and treatment to highways, as well as the budget allocations, were also described in the report:-

- : no works required (but some may be planned for the future);
- : Safety defect repair;
- : Patching;
- : Super Patching (larger areas of highway than patching);
- : Overlay;
- : Resurfacing;
- : Reconstruction.

The Select Commission viewed maps of various highways, throughout the Borough area and discussed the road surface maintenance requirements of those areas.

The Select Commission's discussion of this issue included the following salient issues:-

- : Bellows Road, Rawmarsh – highway maintenance deferred, pending redevelopment of adjacent retail area;
- : a question whether an improved highway surface encourages higher vehicle speeds – there was no specific evidence to support such a suggestion;
- : consultation with statutory undertakers, to ensure the completion of their works and to prevent excavation works in newly-resurfaced highways (nb: the resurfacing of Morthen Road, Wickersley had been delayed for a short period because of excavation works having to be completed);
- : the provisions of Section 58 of the Highways Act 1980 concerning the legal obligations upon local authorities to maintain the highway;

- : statutory undertakers are required to resurface the highway after completion of excavation works, but not the whole surrounding area;
- : completion of resurfacing throughout residential estates, as quickly as possible, so as to minimise disruption of travelling;
- : the reducing budgets available for highway maintenance and the need to secure value for money;
- : improved highway maintenance techniques (eg: use of the 'multihog' machine); procurement of materials and machinery at more advantageous costs; the proposed use of the 'find and fix' teams for highway repairs;
- : production of the Highways Asset Management Plan (involving the financial value of the entire highway network);
- : Department for Transport national averages for planned maintenance of the footway and the carriageway – the Rotherham Borough area highway network compares favourably with the national averages (nb: the Department for Transport does not collect data for footpath maintenance);
- : inspection of footpaths in Council-owned housing areas, where maintenance is funded from the Housing Revenue Account;
- : specific arrangements for strengthening the highway surface near to 'speed humps', to prevent rutting and tracking of the road surface;
- : 'fretting' of a road surface caused by the oxidation of the binder in the primary aggregate and causing holes in the road surface as chippings work loose; this issue does not occur with other methods of road surface treatment;
- : provision of Local Transport Plan funding by central Government; the method of funding may alter from 1st April, 2015 onwards and be based upon the asset valuation of an area's highway network;
- : sharing of best practice of highway maintenance with other local authorities in Yorkshire and in the wider region;
- : the experience of Sheffield City Council, where highway maintenance is the subject of Private Finance Initiative funding.

Resolved:- That the report be received and its contents noted.

7. ARRANGEMENTS FOR MANAGING OFF ROAD MOTOR VEHICLE NUISANCE

Further to Minute No. 62 of the meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission held on 16th April, 2013, consideration was given to a report

presented by the Director of Streetpride describing the arrangements for the management of Off-Road Motor Vehicle nuisance and including information on the way in which this nuisance is currently being dealt with in the Rotherham Borough area.

The report referred to:-

; the Off Road Motor Vehicle Prevention function became the responsibility of Streetpride with effect from 1st April 2012;

: the management of the reducing budget for this function, within Leisure and Community Services;

: the response provided to contacts (usually by telephone, electronic mail or letter) expressing concerns about off-road motor vehicle nuisance;

: the responsibility for enforcement against any individuals who engage in off-road motoring causing nuisance and criminal damage lies with the South Yorkshire Police (nb: there is no separate recording of incidents of off-road motor vehicles nuisance; these incidents are included within the statistics on anti-social behaviour).

The report also described various structural works, undertaken on Council-owned land during the 2013/14 financial year, in areas ranging from Wath upon Dearne and Swinton, to Kimberworth, Scholes and the Rother Valley Country Park. These works would assist in reducing the incidence of off-road motor vehicle nuisance in these areas.

Members of the Select Commission discussed the following issues:-

: off-road motor vehicle nuisance is frequently discussed at meetings of the Area Assemblies and the Police sometimes attend and report on incidents which have occurred in the local area;

: Elected Members and the general public are able to report incidents of off-road motor vehicle nuisance, to the Borough Council, by telephone 01709 336003 and speaking to the Leisure and Community Services' business support team;

: an important issue to resolve is the prevention of unlicensed vehicles using the public highway to access land for off-road motoring; the Police have responsibility for apprehending such motorists;

: it was noted that there are specific sites located in the Doncaster Borough area, where off-road motor cycling is permitted, although there is no similar provision in Rotherham.

Resolved:- That the report be received and its contents noted.

8. REPRESENTATION ON OTHER BODIES 2014/2015

Resolved:- (1) That the following appointments of representatives from the Improving Places Select Commission to the groups and outside bodies listed below, be approved for the 2014/2015 Municipal Year:-

RUSH House Management Committee - Councillor Sims

Health, Welfare and Safety Panel - Councillor Foden

Rotherham Local Plan Members' Steering Group - Councillor Sims (as Vice-Chair)

(2) That consideration of appointments to the following organisations and groups be deferred, pending receipt of further information as to their frequency of meetings:-

Groundwork, Creswell, Ashfield and Mansfield

Recycling Group

Social Concerns Committee Churches Together

Women's Refuge

Yorkshire and Humberside Pollution and Advisory Council