



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

MINUTES OF THE HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE Thursday 13 February 2014 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor J Moher (Chair) and Councillors Denselow and McLennan

Also present: Councillor Chohan

Apologies for absence were received from: Councillors Mashari and A Choudry

1. **Declarations of personal and prejudicial interests**

None declared.

2. **Minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 December 2013**

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 December 2013 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. **Matters arising (if any)**

None.

4. **Highways Asset Management Plan for Brent and Draft Maintenance Programme 2014-16**

Paul Chandler (Head of Transportation, Environment and Neighbourhoods) introduced the report and began by describing the present process for maintaining the borough's highways. This consisted of undertaking an annual condition survey, with each section of roads being assessed and given a score in order to prioritise those roads in the worst conditions to undergo maintenance works. In addition, nominations from councillors, engineer reports and other factors such as the number of potholes were also taken into account. Paul Chandler advised that maintenance work typically involved replacing the top layer surface of the road. However, the current method did not address the deterioration of roads over time and so it was proposed to adopt a Highway Asset Management Planning (HAMP) approach, involving a programme of preventative maintenance schemes that would extend the life of roads and prevent more costly maintenance in the future. This would involve a thinner resurfacing that would water seal the road and replace anti-skidding features and would cost around £50,000 per kilometre cheaper than current arrangements. The committee heard that another benefit that would result from this was that the total length of the borough's roads to be resurfaced would increase from 8.65 miles in 2013/14 to 11.1 miles in 2014/15.

Paul Chandler advised that initially a two year plan for HAMP was proposed, although longer term plans would be drawn up in future. The committee heard that at this stage, HAMP would only be undertaken for carriageways, as it would not be feasible for footways. Paul Chandler added that a similar approach to maintenance to other council assets, such as street lamps and drainage, could also be considered in future. He then referred members to the proposed highways capital programme for 2014-16 as detailed in appendix B of the report. Members noted that the recommendations in the report were also to be put to the Executive on 17 January.

During members' discussions, clarification was sought as to whether member nominations would remain relevant when assessing highways. A member enquired how the HAMP would be communicated to residents to ensure they understood its purpose and benefits. He cited a recent survey undertaken by the *Evening Standard* that had highlighted the worsening situation with regard to potholes in London and enquired about the number of pothole repairs carried out in the borough and their average cost. It was commented that members received a number of residents' complaints in respect of condition of footways, including damage caused by vehicles driving over and parking on them and on grass verges and information was sought on what action was being taken to address this. It was also queried whether the condition of roads received a similar level of complaints.

The Chair emphasised the importance of explaining the benefits of HAMP to residents and suggested that it would be beneficial to highlight examples of problems it was designed to address. He commented that communicating the benefits of other programmes to residents, such as the Local Implementation Plan (LIP) programme, was desirable. In respect of damage to pathways, he stated that residents should be encouraged to report problems to the council and to their local residents associations and this could be publicised, for example, through the Brent Connects Area Forums.

In reply to the issues raised, Paul Chandler advised that councillor nominations would still be taken into account under HAMP as set out in section 5.16 of the report, and where for example a number of streets attracted the same score, those that had also been councillor nominated would be prioritised. Members heard that complaints on the state of roads were quite common, however often roads looked worse than their actual condition which may still be sound. Paul Chandler acknowledged that careful consideration needed to be undertaken over communicating the benefits of HAMP to residents, as well as other schemes such as the LIP programme. With regard to damage to pavements, this was a far from straightforward issue to overcome as there were practical difficulties in residents witnessing and reporting such breaches and also for the council in policing and in taking enforcement action. Often damage was due to inadequate crossovers or the absence of them and where such instances had been identified, residents would be sent a written warning which would also include advice on how to apply for a crossover to be built. Damage to grass verges was an even larger problem, however measures that the council may undertake included erecting wooden barriers. Paul Chandler advised that an eight year lump sum contract was in place with regard to pothole repairs and he would provide information to members on what steps were being taken to reduce the number of potholes and the number and average cost of repairs.

Jenny Isaac (Operational Director – Neighbourhood Services, Environment and Neighbourhoods) added that conditions of roads was also a big issue in many other London boroughs. However, residents in Brent appreciated a list of streets and scores being compiled that detailed at what level of priority their road was and when it was due for maintenance works.

The Chair requested that the issue of potholes be considered at the next meeting of the Highways Committee. Members agreed to the Chair's suggestion that 'notes' be replaced by 'be recommended' in all of the recommendations under section 2.0 of the report.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the draft highways asset management strategy for Brent as described in section 5.0 of the report and appended as background papers to this report be recommended to the Executive for approval;
- (ii) that the proposed prioritisation process and criteria for programme development described in section 5.14 of the report be recommended to the Executive for approval; and
- (iii) that the proposed 2014-16 highways capital programme, as detailed in Appendix B and summarised in the table in section 2.4 of the report which will be reported to the Executive for approval on 17 February 2014, be recommended to the Executive for approval.

5. **Date of next meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Highways Committee was scheduled to take place on Thursday, 20 March 2014 at 7.00 pm.

6. **Any other urgent business**

Wembley Event Day parking

The Chair advised that a review of Wembley Event Day parking was underway and would look at issues such as penalties for removing vehicles and any adverse impact that the scheme currently has on local residents. A report with recommendations was due at the next Highways Committee meeting.

Councillor Cheese

The Chair, in noting that Councillor Cheese, a regular attender of the Highways Committee, had been taken ill, expressed on behalf of the committee their best wishes for his swift recovery.

The meeting closed at 7.35 pm

J MOHER
Chair