

EPHING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Committee: Local Highways Panel **Date:** Thursday, 25 November 2010

Place: Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping **Time:** 7.00 - 9.00 pm

Members Present: Councillors Ms S Stavrou (Chairman), R Barrett, K Chana, Ms C Edwards, D Jacobs, L Leonard, A Lion, Mrs J Sutcliffe, Ms S Watson and D Wixley

Parish Reps: Councillors A Buckley and A Purkiss

Other Councillors: Councillors R Morgan, and J M Whitehouse

Apologies: Councillors R Bassett, W Breare-Hall, C Finn, S Jones and B Judd
Parish Reps: Councillors K Angold-Stephens, D Borton, and C Buttlng

Officers Present: T Baker (District Manager, Epping (ECC)), K Durrani (Assistant Director (Technical)), G Lunnun (Assistant Director (Democratic Services)), P Rose (District Manager, Traffic and Projects (ECC)), A Ruffell (Senior Traffic Engineer (ECC)), P Sewell (Democratic Services Assistant) and Mrs R Tanfield (Highways Liaison Officer (ECC))

Also in attendance: County Councillors V Metcalfe and E Webster

69. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that Councillor K Chana had substituted for Councillor Mrs S Jones.

70. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2010 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

71. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The terms of reference were noted.

72. MATTERS ARISING

(1) Parking Restrictions in Meadow Road, Loughton

At the meeting on 23 March 2010, the Panel had been informed of a petition submitted by residents of Meadow Road, Loughton. It had been signed by over 80% of the residents, who had requested a parking permit scheme.

The Highways Liaison Officer reported that the County Council did not fund the introduction of residents parking zones or similar. Funding was provided by the District Council but due to the ongoing parking reviews, additional proposals were not being considered at present. Members considered the possibility of pursuing the request as a pilot scheme.

The Chairman advised the Panel of her upcoming report to Council, which would inform members of the outcome of ongoing discussions with the local Sainsburys in relation to this issue.

RESOLVED:

That officers report back on estimated costs of a Controlled Parking Zone scheme at the next meeting.

(2) A1168 Chigwell Lane/Langston Road/Oakwood Hill Junction

Members were advised that a feasibility study had been carried out in October 2006 to evaluate the impact of providing pedestrian facilities at this junction.

Two options had been investigated:

Option 1: considered the provision of controlled pedestrian facilities across Oakwood Hill, Langston Road and Chigwell Lane south bound approaches to the junction. This would have replicated the uncontrolled crossing facilities that were already provided on site.

Option 2: considered the provision of controlled pedestrian facilities across Oakwood Hill and Langston Road approaches plus crossing facilities across Chigwell Lane utilising the existing central island between Oakwood Hill and Langston Road approaches.

Using LINSIG computer modelling software and existing traffic and pedestrian counts, it was observed that the traffic queues on Oakwood Hill increased from 16 to 49 with Option 1, and 52 with Option 2. Chigwell south bound existing queues of 41 increased to 135 with Option 1, and 164 with Option 2.

Additionally, the recorded number of pedestrians crossing had not been deemed particularly high, with only 301 pedestrians recorded in a 12 hour period.

Councillor Leonard requested that a full copy of the report be sent to him.

RESOLVED:

That, in light of the results, a decision had been taken not to pursue the provision of pedestrian facilities.

(3) Pedestrian Crossing and Development Section 106 Funding for High Road, Ongar

The County Council officers advised the Panel that there was £35,000 of funding available through a Section 106 agreement with the developer Higgins Homes Ltd. Officers had been investigating the possibility of implementing a zebra crossing in the vicinity of Love Lane and High Street Ongar, but the width of the footway was insufficient to accommodate a crossing.

Officers had also investigated the option of purchasing the section of verge in order to widen the footpath to the required 2.0m, but the costs involved in processing a compulsory purchase order (CPO) and other associated costs would exceed the available budget. Other options had been considered, but were not feasible owing to the presence of vehicle crossovers, bus stops and visibility splays.

Ongar Town Council had been contacted by Essex County Council about other options, but discussions had yet to commence.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That officers investigate an alternative location for the crossing, the installation of up to two vehicle activated signs, and moving bus stops, based on members' suggestions; and
- (ii) That County Council officers visit the site with Councillor Jacobs to investigate an alternative location for the crossing.

(4) Current Restructuring at Essex County Council

The Panel noted that the Highways Rangers Service would be discussed as part of the LHP report later in the meeting.

The Highways Liaison Officer informed the Panel that current restructuring at the County Council Area Highways Office was ongoing. Once completed, members would be informed of the appropriate representatives, but until then they were to use the following contact details:

Highways & Transportation
West Area Office
Warwick House
Roydon Road
Harlow
Essex
CM19 5DX

Email: highways.westarea@essex.gov.uk

Tel: 0845 603 7631

R. Tanfield advised that she remained the Local Highways Panel contact at the County Council.

73. WINTER GRITTING ARRANGEMENTS

Catherine Gaywood, Principal Officer Asset Management, reported on the changes to Winter maintenance.

The key improvement made was the communication of arrangements to the public. The website (www.essex.gov.uk/winter) had been redesigned for clarity, and now stated policy on what the Council would and would not do, as well clear route maps for gritting. The scheme also endeavoured to work closely with District Councils to facilitate a joint communicative process.

New salt had been issued which was coated in molasses. This aids adhesion to the road surface, and reduce spread rate by approximately 20%. The gritting network had also identified trigger points to cope with rationed salt and high demand.

Last Winter, Essex County Council had observed theft of salt, vandalism and misuse of salt bins. As a result all requests for new bins this year had been refused, though it was noted that bins were not being removed. However, replenishment of salt in bins would be dependant on resources available.

In addition 46 Parishes across the County had been included in a new pilot scheme aimed at ensuring salt was used appropriately. Tonne bags of salt were being delivered to Parishes next week, with small Parishes receiving one bag and larger Parishes receiving two. These bags would not necessarily have to be stored at Parish offices, providing they were secure and accessible in alternative places. 7g of salt would be sufficient to clear 1m². Training would be provided about gritting arrangements, occurring in the week beginning 6 December 2010, and the County Council website would clearly display the Government guidance on usage.

Members raised concerns over the lack on consultation regarding this pilot scheme, which was noted by officers.

Ms. Gaywood extended thanks to Epping Forest District Council for their help with emergency gritting last year.

RESOLVED:

That the letter sent to Parish Councils and the list of Parish Councils taking part in the pilot be attached to the minutes of this meeting.

74. LOCAL HIGHWAYS PANEL REPORT

The Highways Liaison Officer provided members with a report outlining the programme of works for 2010/11, the Highway Ranger Gang Works Overview, and a 'Reserve List' for 200/11.

The Panel was informed that the total cost of schemes under the Locally Determined Revenue Budget had come to £48,700. This was £3,700 over the original estimate, which would be managed by reducing the Highways Rangers Service by 2 weeks.

RESOLVED:

That Panel members contact Mrs. R. Tanfield about any road or footpath issues they wish to highlight, to be included in the list which would be prioritised at the next meeting on 3 February 2011.

75. PARKING REVIEWS

The Assistance Director (Technical) Environment and Street Scene informed the Panel that, at their meeting on 25 October 2010, the Cabinet had agreed that the Parking Reviews would be progressed through a phased approach. The Epping review would be completed first, followed by Buckhurst Hill, and finally the Loughton Broadway review. The Cabinet had also authorised the use of the ring fenced On Street Parking account to meet additional costs of the reviews.

Essex County Council officers informed the Panel that the draft order for the Epping review was being published imminently, and that copies had been sent to ward

members. They also confirmed that allowances to the consultation process were being made for the Christmas period.

76. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It was noted that there was no other business for consideration by the Panel.

77. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Noted that the next meeting would be held on Thursday 3 February 2011 at 7.00 p.m. in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Epping.

CHAIRMAN

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WINTER SERVICE REPORT BY PRINCIPAL OFFICER ASSET MANAGEMENT ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

2009/10 Service delivery

Following last winters severe weather, the Highways Winter Service team went to Scrutiny Panel to review the service which was provided. An action plan was produced and raised three key learning points: stock management, better communication and improved working relationships with partners.

1. Stock Management

To improve ECC stock control a transfer was made to ABP salt; rock salt covered with molasses, which sticks the product to the road and provides a more effective cover. The benefits are two-fold, in that there is less waste and the spread rate is reduced. Without increasing the storage capacity, resilience will increase by approximately 20%.

Salt bins

Salt bins are important to the local community, but there have been increasing trends, evident in the previous year, for the salt to be stolen, or for people to use the salt on their own personal driveways, not on the highway. It is therefore important to look at options, as how to best ensure that the salt is available to local communities for their need, but also ensure that it is not misused. Whilst options are being considered, the Authority has made a formal decision not to install any new salt bins across the County this year. All existing salt bins will remain and they will be filled in preparation for the start of the season.

The only change to procedures for salt bins is a formalisation of last winter's delivery. The policy now confirms that salt bins will only be re-filled when there are sufficient resources (i.e. staff, machinery and stock), available to do so without risk to the precautionary network.

This year, if a Parish has requested a salt bin, they have been refused and instead will be offered the chance to take part in a trial which is running across the County for this season only. It is based on experience from other Authorities and enables ECC to test the practicalities within the County. Each Parish will be offered a one tonne bag of salt and responsibility will lie with them to identify areas of need and for distributing the salt. The letter, which was sent to the Parishes that had requested a salt bin, is attached for information. If a Parish has not expressed a need for a salt bin, their community will be unaffected by the pilot and therefore have not been directly informed of it. General information has been sent out to all Parish and Town Councils about the pilot, via ECC's monthly publication produced by Angie Balcombe.

With winter now upon the County, the application process has closed and the pilot is currently underway.

2. Communication

Communication was identified as a key learning point and as a result, a review has been undertaken of the ECC web pages. Work has been carried out to making the information clearer and easier to use. The site now also includes the gritting routes. Please visit: www.essex.gov.uk/winter

3. Partnership working

Together District and Borough colleagues, ECC are also producing a common statement which sets out guidelines, guidance and procedures for future joint working. ECC is producing a communication pack for distribution to all Districts and Boroughs. This will provide District and Borough staff with a 'Question and Answers' for common concerns by the public, it will also supply additional contact points. This, it is hoped, will help improve the service provided to the public.

Partnership working has also been a key issue and from learning from last year where it was not possible to clear high streets effectively, a memorandum of understanding has been formulated with each District and Borough, which sets out who and how, ECC can call on the Council to help in periods of heavy snow fall.

Dear **CLERK**

Re: Participation in the ECC Salt Bag Pilot Scheme

This letter is to confirm the interest expressed by **NAME** in participation in the ECC Salt Bag Pilot Scheme which will be operated this winter. Please return the attached sheet to Catherine Gaywood as acceptance of participation in the trial.

Salt bins are perceived as an important part of the local resilience in times of snow and ice by local communities. The use of salt bins is unregulated and reliant on the goodwill of the people living nearby and or using that section of the highway to spread the salt in times of need. Oh the whole this system works effectively. Unfortunately, as your own experience will testify, salt bins are often vandalised and the salt within them used for personal areas such as driveways, away from the highway. Last year, with the national salt shortage, a growing trend was the whole scale theft of the salt from the bins for resale and even the theft of the bins themselves in some cases.

At the end of last winter ECC underwent a review of our service and one of the areas identified as needing improvement was our management of and the resulting use of salt bins to maxims the benefits to local communities. Seeking best practice from our counterparts nationally we became aware of a scheme whereby salt bags were provided locally for management and distribution by the local community. This pilot is our attempt to understand all the practical implications of running such a scheme and to see if the use of salt is better managed as a result.

The Pilot – The parameters within which the pilot scheme will operate are as follows:

For every parish or town council that requested a salt bin this year will be refused but instead offered the opportunity to participate within the pilot. Those that agree to join the pilot will be provided with a one tonne bag of salt and sand mix. The one tonne bag must be stored in a secure location. If outside, the open top of the bag will need to be covered to ensure it is water tight. The salt is provided for use on the highway only; the highway includes roads and pavements. A nominated volunteer must be identified. The nominated volunteer will act as the lead contact between ECC and the parish or town council. It will be for the nominated volunteer to decide when and where to spread the salt within their local community once the pilot is operational. Training will be provided to the nominated volunteer and his supporters. One further salt bag will be guaranteed for delivery during the winter season. The nominated volunteer must provide feedback to ECC on his or her experiences of being part of the pilot.

With last years extremes of weather the demand for salt was high and the suppliers struggled to replenish stocks nationally. As a result central government set up a salt cell to monitor and control the distribution of salt – effectively rationing stocks. This year ECC will start the season with stocks at full capacity, however the salt suppliers have already indicated there are minimal reserved ready mined. If weather is again extreme ECC is anticipating that the salt cell will be reinstated.

ECC must priorities the precautionary network above all other activities. A range of measures with trigger points have been introduced to ensure this happens; if salt levels fall below a given volume the refilling of salt bins will be stopped until stock levels are more secure. By participating in the scheme your parish or town council will be guaranteed to be restocked with one further salt bag during the winter season.

I hope that you will participate in this pilot, the support you have expressed is appreciated and the feedback you provide us through the season on your experiences will be invaluable in developing future policy around the provision of salt bins and salt bags for the county.

Yours sincerely

Catherine Gaywood

Question and Answers

If I join the scheme, will I be able to use the salt in our parish hall car park.

No, the salt is for use on the public highway.

Do I have to always do the same sites.

It would be advisable to identify key sites around your local area which are prone to snow drifts or ice patches. Having identified these key locations consider options of distributing and storing salt in that locale. Would it be possible to co-ordinate with local volunteers or the service providers to collect a bucket full of salt for them to store and use when needed outside their premises.

These could be roads which are: Steep hills, tight bends, locations where surface water commonly accumulates.

Or footways which are: Steep, pedestrian routes to key facilities such as health clinics, schools, residential homes or outside key attractions so have high footfall.

Can we lock the existing salt bins to manage their stock use

Yes but only in consultation with ECC staff so we are aware of your intention and agree if locking the bin will be beneficial or may prove a greater risk.

Our highway salt bins are usually set out in specific sites of need. If a bin was to be locked we would need you to provide us with a plan of how the salt will be spread in this location. Therefore it may only be suitable if you have a volunteer of the scheme who lived nearby who was willing to take responsibility and co-ordinate the salt distribution in that area. That volunteer should let the other residents and businesses know what is happening and why. Where possible seek additional support and volunteers to participate.

We must be able to have access to the bin as needed.

Is it safe to work on the roads

Any activity undertaken should only be done if it is safe to do so. Training will be offered to all volunteers to give them a general introduction into manual handling and risk assessment.

How much salt do we spread.

The amount of salt applied to a surface varies depending on the forecasted temperature and conditions.

Typically

- 10 grams of salt is applied to each metre square of road surface as a precautionary treatment when surface temperatures are forecast to fall between 0OC and -2 OC and ice or hoar frost is anticipated.
- 20 grams of salt is applied to each metre square of road surface as a precautionary treatment when surface temperatures are forecast to fall below -2 OC and ice or hoar frost is anticipated.
- 40 grams of salt is applied to each metre square of road surface as a precautionary treatment when snow is anticipated.

20 grams is a very small amount. You don't need a lot of salt to protect a footway. Use it sparingly. Over salting is damaging to the environment and a waste of a limited resource.



The white board in the above photo is one metre square and has 20 grams of salt / grit spread across it. You will observe that you do not need a lot of salt to protect the footways. Spread it evenly and your salt will last longer and cover a greater area.

The training will go into greater detail of how to clear snow, where to store it and how to spread salt as well as an explanation as to how salt actually works.

Will the salt bins be refilled anyway?

ECC has committed to refill all salt bins across the county which are located on the highway for the start of the winter season. The policy previously stated that all salt bins would be refilled as necessary. Last winter this was not possible due to the limited availability of resources and salt. The policy is being amended to reflect the changing circumstances and to reinforce our position which is “we will refill only when sufficient salt supplies are available which can be spared without affecting the reserves necessary to protect the primary network”. We are unable to guarantee the refill the bins beyond this first restock.

Will you need to know everyone who is helping out on the scheme?

Yes. A list of all volunteers and contact details will need to be kept by the nominated volunteer. It is advisable to include on that list what assistance that volunteer is able to offer. If they can clear snow and spread salt in prescribed area, they have access to an open backed truck, can co-ordinate resources etc.

A copy of the names and a method of communication must be provided to ECC.

Should we let people know we are storing salt

The location of the salt and where it is stored needs to be secure to prevent the miss use of the stock. When you publicise the scheme to your local community it will be for you to decide if it is appropriate information to share the location of this stock.

Nationally there is a big push for the public to be proactive and undertake increased levels of self help during the winter. ECC will be endorsing this message in our publications. It is advisable that you also promote this message to your communities.

ECC Salt Bag Pilot Scheme

Name of the Parish or Town Council	
Contact details of the Clerk Name Title Address Telephone number Email	
Contact details of the Nominated Volunteer Name Title Address Telephone number Email	
Location at which the salt bag will be stored. This will be the location to which ECC will deliver the salt bag to.	
Contact detail to arrange delivery of the salt if different from the Nominated Volunteer Name Title Address Telephone number Email	
Names of the volunteers who will be assisting the nominated volunteer (If identified at this point)	

Parish/Town Council

Billericay Town Council
Birchanger
Boxted
Bradwell
Brentwood North
Brentwood South
Bures Hamlet
Chigwell
Clavering
Doddinghurst
Elsenham
Felsted
Fyfield
Gosfield
Great Easton & Tilty
Great Saling
Great Totham
Great Yeldham
Harwich Town Council
Herongate and Ingrave
Hockley
Hutton North
Hutton South
Little Hallingbury
Loughton
Maldon
Manningtree
Nazeing
Noak Bridge
North Weald Bassett
Ongar Town Council
Rayleigh Town Council
Rayne
Rochford
St Osyth
Stanway
Stondon Massey
Terling & Fairstead
Theydon Bois
Tiptree
Toppesfield
Wendens Ambo
White Notley & Faulkbourne
Wimbish
Woodham Mortimer

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