

Overview and Scrutiny Task Group - Highways issues

Monday, 7 December 2009

Present: Councillor Mike Devaney (Chair) and Ken Ball, Doreen Dickinson, Roy Lees, Adrian Lowe, Marion Lowe and June Molyneaux

Chorley Council officers: Jamie Carson (Corporate Director (People)) and Ruth Hawes (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

Also in attendance: Councillor Eric Bell (Executive Member (Neighbourhoods))

09.HTG.29 WELCOME TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS

The Chair welcomed Councillor Eric, the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods, who had been invited to the meeting.

09.HTG.30 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Nora Ball.

09.HTG.31 MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group - Highways issues held on 20 October 2009 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

09.HTG.32 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

No Members declared an interest in respect of items on the agenda.

09.HTG.33 DRAFT FINAL REPORT

The Chair introduced the draft final report and invited comments from Members.

Councillor Bell thanked the Group for their work on the issues.

RESOLVED – The following recommendations be made to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

Lancashire County Council:

- 1. To set in place a formal information sharing system between Councillors and officers on a strategic level, for example, changes to gritting routes and policy changes, utilising email and other communication tools.**
- 2. To use “intheknow” to notify Members of practical information, such as, roadworks, highways and neighbourhoods information.**
- 3. To identify and introduce meaningful performance indicators to enable both County and District officers and Members to scrutinise the performance of the Streetscene Services Agreement. This is subject to the development of the Public Realm Strategy that could supersede the Streetscene Services Agreement.**
- 4. To present an update report to the relevant County Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee every six months on the inquiry recommendations to ensure robust performance monitoring.**
- 5. That key information relating to inspections frequencies, highway intervention levels and key performance indicators are extracted from the Highway Maintenance Plan and provided in a simpler format to Members and Key Officers.**

Chorley:

6. To make available to Members current street cleaning schedules and the maintenance schedule for the car parks.
7. To utilise intheknow to cascade highways and Neighbourhoods information to Members.

Lancashire County Council:

8. To provide a separate reporting mechanism for officers and Councillors rather than the current single telephone number.
9. To communicate with the public more, for example, by improving information on the Lancashire County Council website with the detail of the highways maintenance plan.
10. To reduce avoidable contact with the contact centre (NI14) by keeping customers updated, with text messaging, email alerts or use of postcards for "work in progress" or "work completed".
11. To implement an information sticker to be used on grit bins, street lights and generally which displays contact telephone numbers and location information to enable easier fault reporting.

United Utilities

12. To reduce avoidable contact (NI14) by keeping customers updated, with text messaging, email alerts or use of postcards for "work in progress" or "work completed".

Lancashire County Council:

13. To introduce meetings between the county (Environment) and district (Neighbourhoods) portfolio holders at appropriate times, perhaps April and October, and to report back relevant information to Members via intheknow.
14. To introduce regular meetings between Lancashire County Council (Environment Directorate) and Chorley Council (People and Places Directorate) officers.
15. To streamline existing meeting arrangements (including co-ordination meetings with utility companies and highways schemes) to make them more effective and ensure the correct people are in attendance and the information from meetings is cascaded down.
16. Officers to enter into negotiations with Lancashire County Council with respect to Chorley delivering some enforcement functions, such as advertising boards, highway encroachment and overhanging vegetation.

Chorley Council

17. To include performance monitoring information on enforcement activities on the quarterly report presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee and forwarded to LCC as the Highway Authority.
18. To enter into negotiations with Lancashire County Council to provide certain enforcement services such as advertising boards, highway encroachment and overhanging vegetation and seek a level of devolved budget to support this function.
19. To further develop Chorley's Pavement Café Policy to ensure it is fit for purpose and serves the needs of the traders and other town centre users and has an element of clear regulation built into to prevent abuse.

Lancashire County Council:

20. To enter into an agreement whereby the County has responsibility for maintaining roads and pavements and Chorley Council has responsibility for grass verges, weed control, tree and shrub maintenance, leaf sweeping and enforcing overhanging vegetation.
21. The Lancashire County Council call out officer to notify, by the most appropriate means, Members and the Head of Streetscene Services when gritting wagons are dispatched.
22. To investigate and resolve the anomaly of gully cleaning just one side of the road rather than both sides.

Chorley:

23. To enter into an agreement whereby the County has responsibility for maintaining roads and pavements and Chorley Council has responsibility for grass verges, weed control, tree and shrub maintenance, leaf sweeping and enforcing overhanging vegetation.
24. The Head of Streetscene Services to set in motion the gritting of Chorley car parks on receipt of the above notification.

09.HTG.34 THE NEXT STEPS

The report of the Task Group would be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the new year.

Chair