

Overview and Scrutiny Task Group - Highways issues

Thursday, 16 July 2009

Present: Councillor Mike Devaney (Chair) and Nora Ball, Alan Cullens, Adrian Lowe, Marion Lowe and June Molyneaux

Also in attendance: Councillor Ken Ball

09.HTG.01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Doreen Dickinson and Roy Lees.

09.HTG.02 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

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

09.HTG.03 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Martin Walls gave some background on highways issues and advised that as Chorley was a two tier area Lancashire County Council was the highways authority. Every three years a Streetscene Services Agreement was signed between the authorities. The agreement was in draft form and was due to be signed, but was on hold awaiting comments from this group.

Lancashire County Council are currently responsible for providing the following services: work in the highway in connection with and limited to highway, traffic, cycling, and pedestrianisation schemes, inspection and maintenance of roads, pavements, signs and lighting, pedestrian crossings, speed restrictions, traffic regulation, gritting, funding issues, new residents parking schemes.

Chorley Council are currently responsible for providing the following services: Grass cutting in highway verges and roundabouts, weed control in the highway, street cleaning, renewal of residents parking schemes, other parking issues mainly around enforcement, highway floral and other decorations (in consultation with LCC), special events ,such as ad hoc town centre markets, removal of unauthorised signs and other obstructions and road safety hazards, fly posting and graffiti from the highway. It was noted that Chorley Council don't provide streetscene services for Chorley Community Housing now, this contract was recently awarded to Adactus.

Members of the public would not be concerned who undertakes work on the highways as long as it is carried out timely and to a high standard. There is a need for a closer working relationship with Lancashire County Council, potentially a different reporting mechanism for officers and Councillors rather than the current single telephone number for the public, officers and Councillors. The performance monitoring of the services provided required further consideration.

Improvements could be made around keeping customers informed of the progress and completion of service requests and the use of postcards for "work in progress" or "work completed" was considered as a potential method for reducing avoidable contact (NI14). Improved co-ordination of works between utility and telecommunication providers was discussed. Whilst this will go on at County level, it needs to be shared with Chorley

The remit of the Lancashire Locals Committee and the provision of information relating to planned road works was queried.

RESOLVED

- 1. The background information and discussions be noted.**
- 2. The draft Streetscene Services Agreement be emailed to the Task Group members after the meeting.**
- 3. Officers be requested not to sign the Streetscene Services Agreement until the completion of the inquiry.**

09.HTG.04 DRAFTING OF THE SCOPING DOCUMENT

The Task Group considered points to be included within the scoping document.

The following objectives were discussed:

To investigate, consider and evaluate:

- Provision of information – Criteria for: pot holes, speed limits and enforcement in rural areas, residents parking schemes. Contract performance monitoring, highways comments on planning applications, schedules for street cleaning and highways works. Roadworks and trees on highways maintenance information.
- Consulting and influencing – gritting routes and grit bins. Future service aspirations: reactive highway repairs, enforcement on highways, including A boards and illegal street trading.
- Communication cycles – reporting, monitoring and feeding back on requests for service.
- Anomalies – order of tasks (i.e. grass cutting before gully cleaning), gully cleaning both sides of the same road. Where a section of grass is owned by different organisations negotiate one contractor to do all sections.

Other points raised included on the Markets there are stalls encroaching footpaths which causes problems for partially sighted people and where tarmac is used for pavements moss can cause a slip hazard.

Additional funds for pot holes and gritting may be available through Lancashire Locals in the future.

RESOLVED – That the information be compiled into a draft scoping document by the Chair, Martin and Ruth for consideration at the next meeting.

09.HTG.05 INFORMATION / WITNESSES

Members requested the following information for a future meeting:

- Current Lancashire County Council and Chorley Council responsibilities,
- The remit of the Lancashire Locals,
- Other scrutiny inquiries relating to Highways in Lancashire,
- Town Centre audit Report
- Criteria for: pot holes, speed limits in rural areas, residents parking schemes,
- Schedules for street cleaning highways and road works,
- Gritting routes and grit bins.

RESOLVED – That the information requested be noted.

09.HTG.06 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED – That the next meeting be held on Monday, 3 August at 6.30pm.

09.HTG.07 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

Councillor Alan Cullens was proposed and seconded as the Vice-Chair of the Task Group.

RESOLVED – That Councillor Alan Cullens be the Vice-Chair of the Task Group.

Chair