

## **Questions, Answers and Actions – Horsham County Local Forum 7 July 2022**

### **In Attendance:**

#### **County Councillors**

Amanda Jupp (Chairman), Andrew Baldwin, Nigel Dennis, Nigel Jupp, John Milne, Christian Mitchell, Sarah Payne and Duncan Crow (Observer).

#### **Apologies**

Charlotte Kenyon, Paul Linehan, Paul Marshall, Jay Mercer and Katie Nagel.

#### **Residents**

14 members of the public.

#### **Written Question 1 from Ms H. Gadd:**

Does West Sussex County Council have agreements with social housing providers who provide a related business/service to the council by looking after housing that was once owned & managed them - please advise?

#### **Officer Response to Question 1:**

WSSCC is not a housing authority and as such does not own a portfolio of affordable housing nor has an arrangement with a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) to manage housing stock on its behalf. The Housing Authority for Horsham is Horsham District Council. The Housing pages of the HDC website may offer some further help. [Housing | Horsham District Council](#). HDC should be able to answer the question relating to agreements they have with Social Housing providers. Regulation of Social Housing is a government function. Details on the Regulator of Social Housing is available on the Government website here. [About us - Regulator of Social Housing - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). The County Council does own a very small portfolio of residential property which includes staff housing, farmhouses on the smallholding estate and some very specialist supported housing provision. Each of these properties is held either on a secure tenancy, lease or individual arrangement which on the odd occasion may involve an RSL.

#### **Written Question 2 from Mr P. Williams:**

I would like to know what steps the Council can and will take to prevent developers submitting speculative planning applications/consultations that cause anger and distress amongst residents? Specifically, the Berkeley Homes proposals for further houses in Southwater. Their public exhibition was full of inaccuracies and misinformation, verging on outright lies, and currently has no possible chance of complying with local or national planning regulations. It appears that the developer can do this with no repercussions for the distress they are causing. This is, I believe, a deliberate tactic to wear down residents with a view to getting smaller proposals through with reduced opposition. Southwater has been my home for more than 25 years and has been disrupted

by development for far too many of those years...now is the time for a period of settlement to enjoy our village and the surrounding countryside.

**Officer Response to Question 2:**

Planning for housing and associated infrastructure is a matter for the relevant local planning authority. For Southwater, this would be Horsham District Council. This link to the [Horsham District Council webpage](#) may be helpful to you. From a County Council perspective, the Authority cannot prevent speculative planning applications.

**Written Question 3 from Ms R. Ashfield:**

I would like to know why there is no maintenance to the footpaths behind Vicarage Lane in Steyning? Residents themselves have been known to cut back the overgrown brambles as they are a hazard to children and the footfall. Also, the road in Market Field which adjoins said footpath is disappearing under debris and has totally covered a drain, there is overhanging foliage also. We have repeatedly been in our local parish council and reported this but three years on and the problem persists!

**Officer Response to Question 3, in consultation with the local member, Cllr Paul Linehan:**

West Sussex Highways' Inspection and Contract Support Manager attended the location on the morning of Wednesday 6 July to ascertain the current position. The path shown on the map (see next page) as '1' is an 'E' maintainable path and is in good condition. It is not currently obstructed by vegetation and is easily passable. The road shown below as '2' does have overgrowing vegetation, from the side of 38 to the footpaths, that would benefit from being cut back, although the worst of it has already been cut back. A local highways steward has been requested to attend the site and raise any job that may be required. The path shown as '4' has two parts. The first section, up to the lamp column shown in the second photo below is publicly maintained highway. This is currently not obstructed and is easily passable. Beyond this point is not showing as publicly maintainable highway or PROW. However, it is not currently overgrown and is easily passable.



The above photographs were sourced from Google Maps and do not reflect the actual vegetation growth in situ currently. They are to show the location only.

**Question 4 from Mr T. Poyser:**

With most candidates promising to reduce the amount of through traffic, I wonder what plans do you have to satisfy the local residents? This would not include the Arundel bypass which, in my humble view, would only delay a blockage in Storrington and has, in any case, taken years to finalise.

**Response to Question 4 from the local member, Cllr Paul Marshall:**

Thank you for your question. As a County Councillor since 2015 and a parish councillor before that, I am very familiar with this situation. In replying I cannot ignore the impact of the A27 Arundel bypass will make once opened. This has been one of the prominent areas I have been working on since being a County Councillor and will continue to work with stakeholders and National Highways, along with our MP Andrew Griffiths, to ensure the commitment to build this road is undertaken. What this means for our villages is a circa 30% reduction in traffic. This is a significant factor and why I constantly campaign for this in addition to the road improvement benefits to the county as a whole. We need to provide an alternative quick route that is less congested than the current one to make it attractive for commuters to take, rather than going through the village. Any scheme to restrict traffic through the village, as many schemes have been discussed over the years, would have a major impact on those resident who both live in and or live in adjoining villages that access Storrington to visit shops etc. I would be more than happy to speak to you outside of this meeting and please let us know if you would like me to follow up a call or a meeting with you.

At the Forum, Mr Poyser requested a meeting with Cllr Marshall to discuss this matter in further detail, per his invitation.

**Officer Response to Question 4:**

WSSC is continually responding to demands on the highway network and Storrington is no exception, including feasibility studies currently being undertaken at the junction of the B2139 Amberley Road and A283 High Street, as well as early exploration to the junction of B2139 School and A283 Manleys Hill inclusive of the signed lorry route of Water Lane. There is also various feasibility studies ongoing surrounding the A24 Corridor from Findon to Dorking which will see improvements to a number of junctions along this route, which desirably will incorporate improvements to adjoining routes such as Storrington. Coincided with improvements to the A27 would make the route of the A27 and then A24 more desirable and thus reduce volumes of traffic through Storrington.

**Verbal Question 5, raised by Mr Spray:**

Following recent short-lived repairs to the area in question, a large, sunken pothole has appeared in between Hurst Avenue and Hurst Road.

**Local member response:**

Cllr Dennis recognised that the subsided road had been reported to West Sussex Highways in April or May, and was subsequently informed that it did not meet the required intervention levels to carry out repair work.

### **Supplementary:**

Is Highways' criteria for pothole repairs available in the public domain?

### **Response:**

Yes, an overview of response times for fixing various sized potholes is publicly available on the WSCC's website at this link: [Potholes - West Sussex County Council](#). The WSCC Highway inspection manual contains detailed information in relation inspection frequencies and repair times and is available at the following link: [Potholes and claims data - West Sussex County Council](#).

### **Action:**

Clerk to investigate who inspected the area and provide an update to Mr Spray and Cllr Dennis.

### **Verbal Question 6, raised by Mr Beckley:**

Pothole repairs are of a poor standard and deteriorate within months – surely a long-term fix is more cost-effective?

### **Response to Question 6 by Cllr Amanda Jupp:**

Cllr Jupp commented that, Balfour Beatty, WSCC's highways maintenance contractor has invested in advanced equipment designed for emergency works which directly injects bitumen into the problem area to provide a mid to long-term solution.

### **Verbal Question 7 from Mr Baxter:**

Potholes marked in white are repetitive – the same potholes re-appear on the Church Causeway.

### **Response to Question 7 by Cllr Amanda Jupp:**

Cllr A. Jupp agreed that re-surfacing is required in this area and stressed how important it is for residents to report potholes as and when they are first noticed, in order to increase the timeliness of repair work being carried out.

### **Verbal Question 8 from Ms A. Inalsingh:**

Residents living near to Carfax are unhappy with the late-night loitering and noise level coming from the bandstand area, contributed by a successful alcohol and takeaway licensing application. Residents were not informed of the proposals and only given one month to respond.

### **Response to Question 8 by the local member, Cllr John Milne:**

Cllr Milne confirmed that both licensing and environmental health fall under the responsibility of Horsham District Council (HDC) – not WSCC. He referred the resident to raise the issue with Chris Boyle, Licensing Officer at HDC. Anti-social behaviour in a public space should be reported by telephoning 999, as advised on Sussex Police's website.

**Verbal Question 9 from Mr Spicer:**

HDC have refused to install a dog bin despite coming to collect the waste between Marringdean Road and Station Road in Billingshurst – can WSCC influence this request?

**Response to Question 9 from local members:**

Provision of dog waste bins and its collection is solely within HDC's remit. Their website states that: 'Dog waste can be disposed of in public litter bins if they are available or you can take the waste home and dispose of it in your general refuse bin.'

**Verbal Question 10 from Mr T. Connolly:**

There is dangerously overgrown vegetation overhanging the pavement along Worthing Road - north and south of The Boars Head pub. It is virtually impossible to navigate safely. How often is this maintained? In addition, the pavement is broken and neglected in many areas.

**Action:**

Clerk to report this to WSCC's Maintenance Team Manager for a response and update the resident and local member, Cllr Nigel Jupp.

**Verbal Question 11 from Mr T. Connolly:**

There are overhanging shrubs and briars etc on Park Street near where it adjoins Albion Way.

**Response to Question 11 by the local member, Cllr Nigel Dennis, and Cllr Amanda Jupp:**

I have reported the overgrown vegetation next to RSA Insurance Group and the site should be inspected, I will let you know the feedback. RSA has some responsibility for upkeep as the landowner and local members are good at being proactive and telephoning landowners to remind them regularly.

**Verbal Question 12 from Mr T. Connolly:**

There is a broken illuminated sign and neglected non maintained overgrowth at an office converted residential property on the corner of Albion Way and the Bishopric. I appreciated this may be more of a matter for HDC.

**Action:**

Clerk to report this to WSCC's Maintenance Team Manager for a response and update the resident and local member, Cllr N. Dennis.

**Verbal Question 13 from Mr P. Carder:**

I have concerns regarding Berkeley Homes (BH) proposals to build 1,500 new homes in Southwater given the vehicle congestion building up near the existing development, while traffic jams have also become increasingly apparent on Worthing Road at peak times.

**Response to Question 13 by the local member, Cllr Nigel Jupp:**

WSCC will take into account all objections to BH's planning application and I expect BH to carry out their own studies as part of their supporting evidence. Highways' officers will in turn deliver a professional traffic assessment.

**Verbal Question 14 from Mr P. Carder:**

Reminded Cllr Nigel Jupp of his request for local County Councillor support for a community highway scheme designed to create a footpath between Chessall Avenue (recently developed by BH) and the bus stop just to the north on the west side of Worthing Road (opposite Roundstone Caravan Park).

**Response to Question 14 by the local member, Cllr Nigel Jupp:**

I am supportive of the scheme idea in principal, however I would need to review the application in full detail before pledging my full support. I would recommend contacting the Clerk to Southwater Parish Council, Justin Tyler, in order to gain the local parish's backing and potentially submit the application on your behalf as a recognised community group.

**Verbal Question 15 from unknown resident:**

What is the current regime for maintaining grass verges in residential areas on Lymington Way in Holbrook? Overgrown grass has been up to two feet high and grass cuttings left behind could be hazardous to pedestrians.

**Response to Question 15 by local members:**

Highways cut and maintain grass verges in urban areas between March and November usually. On average, this works out at five cuts per annum but varying weather conditions can lead to longer grass in between cuts. WSCC does not collect cuttings as the cost would limit the number of cuts available within the budget. Consideration also must be given to preserve natural habitats in terms of frequency of cuts. Further information about WSCC's schedule for cutting grass on roadside verges is available at the following link: [Grass cutting - West Sussex County Council](#).

**Verbal Question 16 from Ms F. Davis of West Chiltington Parish Council:**

We have had an issue with HDC approving the next phase of our Neighbourhood Plan – are WSCC able to intervene?

**Response to Question 16 by local members:**

Members advised the parish council representative to raise the matter with Cllr Philip Circus of HDC, as his ward is inclusive of West Chiltington.

The meeting ended at 8pm.