

Questions , Answers and Actions – Mid Sussex County Local Forum – 10 March 2022

In Attendance:

County Councillors

Liz Bennett (Chairman), Joy Dennis, Bruce Forbes, Ian Gibson, Stephen Hillier, Kirsty Lord, Garry Wall and Sujjan Wickremaratchi.

Apologies

Pete Bradbury, Richard Cherry, Stuart Condie and Jacquie Russell.

Question 1 from Carole Steggles:

With so many new houses destined to be built in Mid Sussex how much money is going to be available for improvement to local roads.? Every adult occupant of a new house is potential owner of a vehicle and another user of local roads. Turners Hill crossroads need to be assessed for improvements and a solution to be found to provide a safe way for the pupils of the school and all pedestrians to cross?

Response to Question 1 provided by the local member Cllr Bruce Forbes:

National planning policy and regulations mean that developers can only be compelled to mitigate cumulative impacts on the transport network that are considered to be severe. In practise, development typically provides improvements that are necessary to make development acceptable in planning terms and contributions towards County Council transport projects in the area that will help to mitigate its impacts and also benefit existing users.

Although additional housing does result in additional income through Council Tax receipts, this is typically outpaced by the increase in demand for other council services and most transport funding is not allocated on a per capita basis meaning there is no general increase in funding for highways as a result of additional housing. However, as housebuilding is a priority for the current Government, additional housing is likely to improve the chances of being successful in securing funding from ad hoc 'challenge funds' which are typically allocated based of a set of objectives set by the Government. The County Council looks to bid for these funds as opportunities arise and is expected to set out its priorities shortly in the West Sussex Transport Plan 2022-36.

Larger sites are allocated within the District Plan (<https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/planning-building/mid-sussex-district-plan/>) have been subject to Strategic Transport Modelling to understand the likely impact and to calculate what transport mitigation is required to make these developments acceptable in planning terms. Outcomes can include, for example, junction and capacity improvements and sustainable transport provision such as new walking and cycling infrastructure and new bus routes/services.

Other, generally smaller developments, coming forward in Mid Sussex also contribute towards transport improvements and this is secured by West Sussex County Council and Mid-Sussex District Council officers on a case by case basis from each development. The Development Infrastructure and Contributions Supplementary Planning Document

(<https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/3614/development-infrastructure-and-contributions-spd.pdf>) sets out how contributions can be secured.

National legislation only allows contributions to be sought through the planning process where they accord with the Community Infrastructure Levy regulations.

With regard to the specific query for the Turners Hill Crossroad, the Area Highways Manager is in liaison with the parish regarding the ongoing concerns about the crossroad and school cross but both are reliant on future planning applications to resolve.

Supplementary

Noted that two pedestrian crossings were being installed in Ardingly and felt these would be better situated in Turners Hill. If funding is available, it should be utilised in Turner's Hill to help Children Crossing.

Response to Supplementary

Cllr Gibson stated that there was a need to consider area of effect from developments. East Grinstead developments do not consider any impacts on Turners Hill.

Upcoming transport plans may look into the issues. Immediate areas and rat runs should be considered.

The Area Highways Manager responded stating that the concerns in the area are noted. It is confirmed that Ardingly crossings are part of local schemes.

Question 2 from Edward Owen:

Would like to raise a query on Paddockhall Road, Haywards Heath, and a Community TRO.

Response to Question 2 provided by the Chairman Liz Bennett in absence of the local member Pete Bradbury:

We are aware that in December you received correspondence from the Area Highways Manager that your Traffic Regulation Order request for parking restrictions was declined.

The Highways Authority is reluctant to offer a solution to one party if it is unable to offer a similar solution to others suffering the same problem.

With regard to your query on traffic monitoring – we are aware that the Area Highways Manager has informed you that the Highway Authority would normally only instigate a monitoring program if there was an identified problem that could be resolved with a reasonably practicable engineering measure. The three types of problem normally associated with a request of this nature are speeding, congestion or casualty collisions.

Sussex police, who are the speed enforcement authority, have not identified Paddockhall Road as a road of concern to them, and so this is why a speed monitoring program can not be organised.

We understand that Pete Bradbury is working with the Area Highways Manager to develop a parking strategy for the whole of Haywards Heath which may allow the opportunity to review the requirement for On-Street parking.

We understand that Pete Bradbury has previously communicated to you that he has agreed to support a Community Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) application from another interested party for the junction of Paddockhall Rd and Sergison Rd and no doubt the parking arrangements in the immediate vicinity will be considered as part of this.

The Area Highways Manager will be taking this forward as part of the ongoing work programme of TROs. Information on the progress of this can be found on the Traffic Regulation Orders section of the website.

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/traffic-regulation-orders>.

Supplementary

Concerns with parking over entrances. 40 years in property has seen traffic increase. The road is straight with 40mph+ speeds. It is hard to see traffic coming and to safely leave driveways. Resident proposal is to move the parking all to the East side of the street.

Response to Supplementary

The Area Highways Manager confirmed that there has been continued dialogue with the resident on this issue.

Question 4 from Martin Hooper:

The bridge over the Ouse on the B2114 had been unrepaired for at least a couple of years.

This had been reported by the parish council and by me. I have received no reply nor has the parish.

Why has this not been repaired by now? When will it be repaired??

Response to Question 4 provided by the Chairman Liz Bennett in absence of the local member Pete Bradbury:

Please accept our sincere apologies for the delay in undertaking these important repair works. Unfortunately, as a result of role changes and high volume of emergency safety critical works, this has not received the attention that it ought to. Please let me assure you however that these repairs are important to us and we are committed to undertaking them at the earliest opportunity.

A contractor has now attended site to price the works and intends to start work as soon as possible. This will be at the end of the week commencing 7th March assuming traffic management can be obtained and there are no adverse weather conditions.

In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact us with any further queries or concerns.

Question 5 from Wendy Vickers:

When did it become permissible and acceptable for cars, vans, lorries and building materials to be parked or left on grass verges and pavements? The beautiful grass and often trees are being destroyed by this practise. We are being encouraged to take more exercise and walk to save the environment. It is impossible to walk on many pavements because they are blocked by vehicles. Walking in the road to bypass the vehicles is impossible. I have submitted pictures showing building materials that have been there for at least 8 months and are added to at frequent intervals.

The cars parked on the bridge at Handcross are always there.

What are you going to do about this problem? I look forward to hearing from you.?

Response to Question 5 provided by the local member Cllr Bruce Forbes:

Storing materials on the public highway is a licensable activity regulated by West Sussex Highways as the local Highway Authority.

West Sussex County Council does not allow materials to be stored on the footway under any circumstances. This is because of the damage this can cause and potential obstruction to the public footway. The County Council will only allow the verge to be used in exceptional circumstances.

All materials must be stored on a spoil board and be safely barriered off with reflective barriers. If there are no streetlamps, we would expect the barriers to have lighting attached.

Any damage caused to the highway will be recharged to the licence holder.

If the activity is taking place on private property a licence is not required from the County Council.

Residents are encouraged to report each case separately via our 'Make an enquiry about a road or pavement' web site so that each case can be appropriately investigated - <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/make-an-enquiry-or-report-a-problem-with-a-road-or-pavement/make-an-enquiry-about-a-road-or-pavement/>

Anti-social parking should be directed to the police or us if yellow lines are required.

The parking on the bridge at Handcross is a known problem and one we are working with the parish to find a solution.

Question 6 about Blackthorn Primary School

Concerns with trust and proposed Lindfield merger. Investigations had been requested by parents and also Mims Davies MP. 18 Teachers had raised concerns. COVID-19 catchup sessions had been impacted.

Response to Question 6 provided by the local member Cllr Garry Wall

The Cabinet Member for Learning and Skills, Nigel Jupp, is aware of issues, as is Mims Davies and DfE. Issues are being taken seriously. The County Council had limited influence as the school is part of the University of Brighton Academy Trust.

Subsequent response to Question 6 provided by Officers

The issue remains a Trust issue and is not one that the local authority is involved with. Our understanding is that the Trust is undertaking a governance review. The DfE and RSC office has been engaged with the Trust on this. As a local authority, we have no concerns about either the Trust or the school.

Question 7 from Janice Henwood – Burgess Hill Councillor

Queried the regulations for the proposals for the joining of pedestrian and cycle paths.

Response to Question 7 provided by Officers

The scheme will be safety audited to ensure all necessary compliance.