

Lancashire County Council

Environment, Economic Growth and Transport Scrutiny Committee

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 5th December, 2023 at 2.00 pm in
Committee Room 'B' - The Diamond Jubilee Room, County Hall, Preston**

Present:

County Councillor Rob Bailey (Chair)

County Councillors

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| S Rigby | J Oakes |
| A Cheetham | J Purcell |
| G Dowding | A Schofield |
| J Mein | S Serridge |

County Councillor Jennifer Mein replaced County Councillor Kim Snape for this meeting only.

It was reported that County Councillor Alan Hosker replaced County Councillor Stephen Clarke on a permanent basis.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from County Councillor Julie Gibson.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

None were disclosed.

3. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 26 October 2023

That the minutes of the meeting held on the 26 October 2023 be approved as an accurate record.

4. Lovecleanstreets App Review

The Chair welcomed to the meeting County Councillor Rupert Swarbrick, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, Phil Durnell, Director of Highways and Transport, Sarah Scott, Highways Operational Support and Liaison Manager and Ned Dave, Senior ICT Architect.



The committee was presented a report which provided details on changes that had been implemented in the Love Clean Streets application (app) in response to issues that had been raised. The report also outlined current work in progress, future steps and provided responses to specific questions from the committee.

Comments and questions raised by the committee were as follows:

- On the Customer Access Service, there had been a significant improvement in the reporting of Highways defects across Lancashire. Whilst the number of calls for the Highway line had increased year on year, the percentage of calls that needed to be logged and addressed by Customer Access Agents had fallen due to officers signposting callers to the app.
- On whether the quality of information in reports received through the app had improved capabilities to address defects, officers explained that the new system provided pinpoint locations and allowed users to submit photographs of the defects which made finding them easier and more efficient. Engineers were now able to identify the problem utilising desktop searches rather than carrying out site visits to identify the issue and then deploying staff to carry out the repairs.
- Officers explained that a project was underway to improve the automated communication provided and the language used by the app.
- Members were informed that any reports that were not scanned correctly via the app, or any suggestions to improve the service or request any additional categories should be sent to the Love Clean Streets email address. As this would allow officers to use the data to inform ongoing projects on further improvements to the app.
- On route optimisation to improve response times and the effective deployment of staff, it was reported that this requirement had been reported into the Highways Asset Management procurement exercise for action.
- Members of the committee suggested that emergency contact numbers should be circulated amongst county councillors to report incidents that required an immediate response and were deemed more serious than those reported through the app.
- Officers confirmed that, once project scopes had been mapped out for those projects listed on page 9 of the report, the dates for project completion would be circulated to all members of the committee.
- Officers highlighted that once reports were received through Love Clean Streets, the system was able to tell if the incident involved a Lancashire County Council or National Highways Asset, users would be provided the relevant contact number if the asset was managed by National Highways. Assurance had been provided in that county council officers already communicated with third party organisations when defects on assets that did not belong to the county council had been reported directly to them, rather than through the app. There was a suggestion that the app should simply forward reported issues directly to third party organisations rather than direct users to call the respective organisation.
- On reports made by residents that related to Borough Council duties or where joint responsibilities were in place between the county council and borough council, the committee was informed that currently there were only two



specific categories in two specific borough areas (Pendle and Fylde) where such reports were sent on accordingly via email. Officers were looking to expand this two-tier feature further.

- It was highlighted that the Highways Asset Management System (HAMS) was due to be replaced and a procurement process had just commenced. This meant that the integration between Love Clean Streets and the new highways asset management solution might need to be changed. There was also a possibility of Love Clean Streets being replaced once the procurement process was completed. However, this was dependent on the offer from prospective future suppliers for a new Highways Asset Management System. The new system projected to go live in April 2026.
- It was noted that complex queries should be sent directly to the District Lead Team at Lancashire County Council and simpler queries, such as a pothole, should be reported through the app.
- It was clarified that the Highways Councillor Dashboard was a system that collated management information on the number of defects reported across Lancashire specifically for use by county councillors.
- In noting that the top category for reported defects logged using the app related to 'blocked and flooding the road', it was highlighted that the information on reactive gully cleaning contained on the dashboard showed a significant number of reports had not been dealt with in one specific division in West Lancashire. It was felt that the committee should be appraised of the plans to reduce the backlog. Officers were aware that the number of reports were high and were actively looking at ways to address the numbers. One example was the encouragement of the public to safely unblock a gully if they were able to do so by removing those leaves. The point mentioned earlier on two tier working and reporting through the app was raised again as removal of leaves involved the borough councils as well.
- It was suggested that a briefing note on the future plans for the emptying of gullies be provided to the committee.
- It was also suggested that a further category for weeds be created in the app.

Resolved: That:

- (i) The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport gives consideration to;
 - a) Expanding the Love clean streets app to include borough council issues (e.g., fly tipping, street cleansing) where they specifically affect the highway.
 - b) Creating a new category for weeds in the app's reporting system.
 - c) Providing emergency contact numbers for councillors, to avoid members reporting these via the app.
- (ii) The projected dates on the forward plan for developing the app be shared with the Environment, Economic Growth and Transport Scrutiny Committee.
- (iii) A Briefing Note on future plans for gully emptying be provided to the committee.



5. Levelling Up East Lancashire: Creating Opportunities through Safer, Greener and Healthier Travel

The Chair welcomed to the meeting County Councillor Aidy Riggott, Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Growth, and Andrew Mullaney, Director of Environment and Planning.

The committee was presented a report which provided the background to the Levelling Up Fund within East Lancashire, the County Council's successful bid and next steps. The opportunity was taken to consult and take feedback from the committee on how the county council might engage with residents and community groups those schemes set out at Appendix 'C' in the report.

Comments and questions raised by the committee were as follows:

- Some of the feedback received from residents and community groups during phase 1 of the consultation process had helped to shape the work and approach of the project. To date there had been unanimous support for the work that was intended to happen.
- On levelling up, it was expected that phase 2 of the project, would begin in early 2024.
- Detailed engagement with local residents in East Lancashire was expected to take place in January 2024 with a particular focus on the Safer, Greener and Healthier Streets initiative.
- It was stressed that the geographical locations of schemes set out at Appendix 'C' to the report would change as a result of the consultation process.
- On current timescales based on the Department for Transport's (DfT) requirement to produce a full business case, it was highlighted that construction work was expected to start in September 2024. However, it was reported that there was ongoing engagement with officials from the DfT with a view to taking a more relaxed approach to the county council in the light of the county council's good track record with delivering large scale capital projects.
- It was confirmed to the committee that the total amount of funding for the levelling up projects was £55 million.
- On how levelling up funding would be split, around 40% of the total funding would be allocated towards the Safer, Greener and Healthier Streets initiative. With the remaining 60% being split evenly between Active Travel Routes and Public Transport Improvements. Discussions were live and no firm decisions had been made in respect of the financial allocations. However, cost benefit analysis was being undertaken with some of the cases ranking positively in favour of providing a return on investment.
- Officers were actively looking at rolling out initiatives from the Levelling Up work across the whole of Lancashire in the future such as mobility hubs and the expansion of the Safer, Greener and Healthier Streets initiative where residents had a desire for these interventions.
- It was noted that some of the measures such as smart traffic lights and real time information systems that would be introduced in those East Lancashire



districts would help to improve the efficiency and working of buses and complement certain aspects within the county council's bus service improvement plan.

- It was confirmed that areas developed using the Safer, Greener and Healthier Streets Initiative would be maintained with most of those assets belonging to the county council. Projects such as the mobility hubs were being designed to be robust and low maintenance for the long term.
- It was highlighted that a national government indexing tool was used to determine where levelling up investment would be needed, which included indices of multiple deprivation.
- Officers highlighted that the proposed devolution deal for Lancashire would unlock more funding for the Bus Service Improvement Plan but would not include additional funding for rail service improvements. However, there was an aspiration to unlock more funding in future devolution deals with the National Government.
- Members of the committee suggested that a further update explaining the expected outcomes, how these would be measured, expectations and timelines on what is hoped to be achieved from the Levelling Up projects be provided in 2024.

Resolved: That a further update on Levelling Up East Lancashire focussing on expected outcomes, how these would be measured, expectations and timelines on what is hoped to be achieved be provided at an appropriate time in 2024.

6. Work Programme 2023/24

A copy of the committee's work programme for 2023/24 which contained an update on progress with responses to the committee's recommendations on road closures was presented.

The Chair reported that a request had been received from the Community, Cultural, and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee, to consider reviewing the Traffic [Transport] Asset Management Plan (TAMP), taking into consideration if it is working effectively and to what extent the data is demonstrating the need to address highway issues. In considering the request the Chair felt this matter should be added to the committee's work programme. It was felt that the current system for resurfacing was entirely automated and suggested that there should be more councillor involvement in the process. There was a consensus from the committee that the matter be added to the current work programme.

The Chair informed members that since the last committee meeting, an informal virtual meeting had taken place with representatives from the National Grid with a view to attending a future meeting of the committee to present on the work they were undertaking to enable net zero infrastructure in Lancashire. Discussions were underway to finalise arrangements and agree a date.



Resolved: That:

- (i) The Environment, Economic Growth and Transport Scrutiny Committee work programme for 2023/24 be noted.
- (ii) The formal response from the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport to the committee's recommendations on road closures be noted.
- (iii) A request to add a new topic to the Environment, Economic Growth and Transport Scrutiny Committee's work programme for 2023/24 on reviewing the Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP) be made to the Scrutiny Management Board at its next scheduled meeting on 16 January 2024.

7. Urgent Business

There was no urgent business.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Environment, Economic Growth and Transport Scrutiny Committee would be held on Thursday 25 January 2024 at 10:30am in Committee Room B – The Diamond Jubilee Room, County Hall, Preston.

H MacAndrew
Director of Law and Governance

County Hall
Preston

