

Place Select Committee

A meeting of Place Select Committee was held on Monday, 21st June, 2021.

Present: Cllrs Chris Barlow (Chair), Louise Baldock (Vice-Chair), Pauline Beall, Cllr Mohammed Javed, Stefan Houghton, Hugo Stratton, Hilary Vickers, Bill Woodhead MBE.

Officers: Simon Milner, Ian Raine (CS&T); Rebecca Saunders-Thompson (MD).

Also in attendance: None.

Apologies: None.

PLA 1/21 Evacuation Procedure

The evacuation procedure was noted.

PLA 2/21 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

The Chair welcomed the two newest Members of the Place Select Committee.

PLA 3/21 Minutes of the meeting held on 17 May 2021

Consideration was given to the minutes from the meeting held on 17 May 2021.

AGREED that the minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**PLA 4/21 Scrutiny Review of Highways Asset Management (inc. Potholes & Flooding)
- To receive a presentation from link officers (to follow)**

This was the first evidence session of the Scrutiny Review of Highways Asset Management (inc. Potholes & Flooding). Members received a presentation from link officers.

The presentation focused on the following key lines of enquiries:

- What are the most common problems reported to Community Services and Transport? How have these problems changed over time?
- What is SBC'S Highway Infrastructure Routine Safety Inspection regime?
- Could advances in technology, or new materials, be utilised to improve the quality of highways in the long term?

The presentation covered the following topics:

- Statutory Duty
- Defect Reporting
- Website – 'Report It'
- Common Defect Reports
- Roads and Lights by Reporting Medium
- Highway Safety Inspection Regime

- Highway Safety Inspections
- What is a Pothole or Trip Hazard?
- Risk Matrix
- Traditional Processes
- Alternative Processes
- New Materials
- New Processes

The key issues were highlighted as follows:

- Members questioned how and why trip hazard levels were set. Officers explained that the current level (3/4 inch on pavements) had been set based on levels in the previous Code of Practice (2005) and the number of claims compared with the number of settlements. Levels were reviewed every five years and consideration was given to the number of claims during that period. Authorities in the surrounding area had set similar levels for trip hazards.
- Members asked if the new materials would be able to withstand a rise in temperatures resulting from global warming. Members were informed that new materials, such as 'rubber roads', had been rigorously tested to see how they responded in colder and hotter conditions.
- Members questioned if it was cost effective to patch the same road several times rather than resurface a full road. Members acknowledged that there had been around a £5million deficit in the Highway Assets budget and this prevented the Council from being able to fully resurface every road where it was required. Officers sympathised with councillors and residents and explained that roads that have been patch repaired are revisited every year and the roads which are most in need of full resurfacing are prioritised.
- Members highlighted that a patch repair could be a small job whereas a full road resurfacing could be a large and very expensive job, depending on the length of a road and the number of workers needed to carry out a job.
- Members questioned if poorer quality materials, such as concrete, which were used to build roads in the past had caused additional problems up to the present day. Officers explained that concrete was not a poorer quality material but was promoted heavily in the post-war period and this was now an area of concern with regards to ongoing maintenance. However, investigations into new processes, in parts of the UK, were underway to determine if these problems could be resolved through more cost-effective methods.
- Members requested that officers supply a list of examples where alternative processes have been utilised in road repairs across the borough.
- Members requested if further information could be provided on the reasons for reductions in common defects between 2016 and 2020. Officers explained that this information could be provided, particularly for street lighting, where the invest to save initiative had resulted in 50% less complaints.
- Members requested if further information could be provided on the value of 'invest to save' on equipment. Members highlighted the example of a machine which had reduced the time taken to fill potholes from 40 minutes to 8 minutes.
- Members were informed that night patrols/scouting still took place.
- Officers explained that the online 'Report It' system had been developed to prevent repeat reporting of the same streetlight problem. The system would have to be updated further in the future to prevent repeat reporting of potholes. Work was currently underway to introduce a new asset management system after which the 'Report It' system would be updated.

AGREED that:

- 1) The evidence be noted.
- 2) That link officers provide information requested by Members.

PLA **Work Programme 2021-22**
5/21

Consideration was given to the Work Programme.

The next Committee meeting would be held on Monday 19 July 2021.

AGREED that the Work Programme be noted.

PLA **Chair's Update**
6/21

The Chair had nothing to update.