

BRAINTREE LOCAL HIGHWAYS PANEL MINUTES – 18th January 2024 at 5.00pm

Meeting held ‘In Person’

Chairman:	Councillor C Siddall (Chairman)	(ECC)
Panel Members:	Councillor L Bowers-Flint	(ECC)
	Councillor G Butland	(ECC)
	Councillor R Playle	(ECC)
	Councillor P Schwier (from 5.03pm)	(ECC)
	Councillor P Thorogood	(ECC)
	Councillor J Ayten (from 5.03pm)	(BDC)
	Councillor M Cunningham	(BDC)
	Councillor G Spray	(BDC)
	Councillor R van Dulken	(BDC)
	Councillor G Warren	(BALC)
Officers:	Dan Maclean – Highway Liaison Team Leader (EH)	
	Also in Attendance:- Lisa Hinman – Area Manager (North Essex Parking Partnership)	
Secretariat:	Alison Webb – Governance and Members Officer (BDC)	
	(EH – Essex Highways) (ECC - Essex County Council) (BDC - Braintree District Council) (BALC - Braintree Association of Local Councils)	

Item		Owner
1.	<p>Welcome:</p> <p>Councillor C Siddall welcomed all attendees to the meeting and he invited everyone to introduce themselves.</p>	
2.	<p>Apologies for Absence, Declarations of Interest and Public Questions:</p> <p>Apologies for Absence:</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillor K Barnes (BALC), Councillor T Cunningham (ECC), Councillor D Louis (ECC), Councillor P Rawlinson (BALC) and S Pandya – Operations Strategy and Policy Manager (BDC).</p>	

It was reported that Councillor T Cunningham (ECC) had been appointed as Essex County Council's Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Sustainable Transport. As such, Councillor Cunningham had a conflict of interest, which meant that he would no longer be able to attend any meetings of the Panel.

Declarations of Interest:

There were no interests declared.

Public Questions:

The meeting was not held in public, but the Chairman allowed two people to make statements, the details of which are set out below.

Statement by Mr P Kohn, Greenway North Essex Cycleway Project

On behalf of the Greenway North Essex Cycleway Project, Mr Kohn provided an update on the proposal which had previously been referred to as Earls Colne to Kelvedon (EC2K) cycleway project.

Mr Kohn reminded Members of Braintree Local Highways Panel that the Panel had allocated funding for a feasibility study which had been published by Sustrans. This study related to the Coggeshall to Earls Colne stretch of the route which formed the middle section of a longer 15 km route stretching from Halstead to Kelvedon. The Panel had subsequently agreed to £20,000 being allocated in its programme of work for 2022/23 to enable the scheme to progress to the design and tender stage.

Mr Kohn reported that the design and tender stage of the project had now been completed and a report had been produced. It was reported that discussions had taken place with the Trustees of the Marks Hall Estate regarding re-routing the cycleway around the estate and that the proposal had also been amended to comply with LTN 120, the Government's revised specification for cycleways. The costs of the project were highlighted in the report and these compared favourably to those contained within the feasibility study.

It was reported that the original planning consent for the project had expired, but a renewal application had been submitted. This addressed the requirement for a sealed surface to be provided to assist eg. wheelchair users. It was anticipated that the application would be determined in the near future.

	<p>Once the planning consent had been received, the project would proceed to the contract management stage and papers would be despatched to various organisations to seek funding. Once funding had been obtained, the scheme would be ready to go out to contract with an estimated completion time of one year. Following his update, Mr Kohn answered questions put to him by Members of the Panel. Members of the Highways Panel welcomed the progress being made on this unique project which would provide a cross country rather than edge of road cycleway linking villages together. The potential costs of the scheme, as outlined in the design and tender stage report, were noted and it was agreed that a copy of a report comparing the costs identified in the feasibility study and at the design and tender stage should be circulated to Members of Braintree Local Highways Panel.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked Mr Kohn for attending the meeting, for providing the update and for answering questions. Mr Kohn left the meeting at this point.</p> <p>Action By: Councillor C Siddall to circulate to Members of Braintree Local Highways Panel a copy of the report comparing the costs of the Greenway North Essex Cycleway Project contained in the feasibility study with those in the design and tender report.</p> <p><u>Statement by Councillor J Edwards, Councillor for Braintree District Council, Bocking South Ward</u></p> <p>Councillor Edwards made reference to the following issues affecting residents and roads within residential areas of Bocking South Ward.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Crossing on Springwood Drive, Braintree – Children walking to school along Rayne Road from local new housing developments do not currently have a safe place to cross Springwood Drive, or Pod's Brook Road. - Speed Gun or Traffic Calming Measures on Rayne Road, Braintree – Some drivers travelling along Rayne Road to and from Rayne are far above the 30mph limit as they approach/leave the roundabout at Springwood Drive. As this area becomes more residential, fast cars pose more of a risk to pedestrians. - Speed Gun or Traffic Calming Measures at Tabor College, Panfield Lane, Braintree – Vehicles are being driven far too fast, particularly at school pick-up/drop-off times, around Tabor College. 	<p>Cllr C Siddall</p>
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	<p>- Speed Gun or Traffic Calming Measures on Bailey Bridge Road, Braintree - Vehicles are being driven far too fast, particularly at school pick-up/drop-off times.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked Councillor Edwards for attending the meeting and for raising these issues. It was acknowledged that some of the matters could be quite expensive to implement and that Braintree Local Highways Panel had limited funds. It was reported that an investigation was on-going into difficulties associated with access to and egress from Springwood Industrial Estate but that a solution was not straight-forward. It was also reported that a request to the Highways Panel for a vehicle activated speed sign on Rayne Road had not met the criteria for implementation, but agreement had been obtained for a 30mph roundel on the road surface and the cutting back of vegetation.</p> <p>It was acknowledged that Councillor Edwards and Councillor Bowers-Flint, Essex County Councillor for Bocking Division, were liaising in respect of each of these matters.</p> <p>Councillor Edwards left the meeting at this point.</p>	
<p>3.</p>	<p>Minutes:</p> <p>The Minutes of the meeting of Braintree Local Highways Panel held on 21st September 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p>Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting Held on 21st September 2023:</p> <p>Reference was made to two matters which had been recorded in the Minutes of the Panel's last meeting and the following updates were provided for each of them:-</p> <p><u>Minute 4 - 'Matters Arising'</u></p> <p><u>Damaged and Outdated Directional Signs</u></p> <p>At a previous meeting of the Panel, reference had been made to a number of road signs across the District which were damaged, obscured, or out of date.</p> <p>Dan Maclean, Essex Highways, had been requested to investigate if a proactive approach towards the replacement and maintenance of road signs in the Braintree District might be implemented; how a sum of approximately £100,000 allocated by Braintree District Council for such work in Braintree town might be utilised; and to ascertain the outcome of a joint</p>	

	<p>discussion between Essex County Council and Braintree District Council on this matter.</p> <p><u>Update</u>: - Dan Maclean reported that Essex Highways Officers had met to consider possible options and that design work had been scheduled for completion in Quarter 4 of 2023/24. Any recommendations arising from the design work would be funded from the Panel's budget in 2024/25.</p> <p><u>Minute 5 – Funded Schemes 2023/24</u></p> <p>LBRA192042 – Refurbishment/replacement of fingerposts, Fairstead Estimated Cost:- £10,000</p> <p>Councillor R Playle, Essex County Councillor for Witham Northern Division, had queried the estimated cost of this scheme which seemed excessive for three fingerposts and it had been agreed that D Maclean, Essex Highways, should check the cost.</p> <p><u>Update</u>: - Dan Maclean reported that Officers within the Essex Highways Design Team had provided information on this matter very recently. Dan Maclean agreed to circulate the information to all Members of Braintree Local Highways Panel.</p> <p>Action By: D Maclean, Essex Highways, to circulate information regarding the cost of refurbishing/replacing three fingerposts at Fairstead to all Members of Braintree Local Highways Panel.</p>	<p>D Maclean (HLTL)</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Greenway North Essex Cycleway Project (previously known as Earls Colne to Kelvedon (EC2K) Cycleway Project)</p> <p>This Item was dealt with earlier in the meeting (Minute 2 refers).</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>Funded Schemes 2023/24:</p> <p>Consideration was given to a report on the Panel's Funded Schemes for 2023/24, which had been recommended for approval. The report provided an update on the current position of all schemes in the 2023/24 programme of work.</p> <p>Members of the Panel were reminded that funding of £407,600 had been allocated to Braintree Local Highways Panel for the year 2023/24. This included a sum of £203,800 for improvement schemes, £144,189 for carriageway improvements and £59,611 for casualty reduction schemes. A sum of £198,000 had been allocated from the budget for improvement schemes leaving a sum of £5,800 for allocation.</p>	

<p>In an update to the report, it was stated that scheme LBRA212010 – (Traffic Management) Design for deer signage, Belchamp Road, Little Yeldham, Estimated Cost £2,500 had been completed.</p> <p>It was reported that due to an error, information about the progress of four schemes had not been included within the report attached to the Agenda. The report had subsequently been amended. The information which had been omitted is set out below:-</p> <p>LBRA192042 – (Traffic Management) Refurbishment/replacement of fingerposts, Fairstead Estimated Cost:- £10,000 Estimated Completion: Quarter 2</p> <p>LBRA193006 – (Walking) Design for crossing improvements, Coggeshall Road, Railway Street and Courtauld Road, Braintree Estimated Cost:- £10,000 Estimated Completion: Completed</p> <p>LBRA212012 – (Traffic Management) Design for byway signage, Belchamp Road, Tilbury-Juxta-Clare Estimated Cost:- £2,500 Estimated Completion: Quarter 4</p> <p>LBRA212020 – (Traffic Management) Restoration and preservation of metal fingerpost signs, Station Road j/w High Street, Kelvedon Estimated Cost:- £4,000 Estimated Completion: Completed</p> <p>DECISION:</p> <p>(1) That the report on the Panel’s Funded Schemes for 2023/24 be noted.</p> <p>(2) That an updated report on the Panel’s Funded Schemes for 2023/24 be circulated to Members of the Panel.</p> <p>(3) That details of the proposed design for the following scheme be forwarded to Members of the Panel:-</p> <p>LBRA193006 – (Walking) Design for crossing improvements, Coggeshall Road, Railway Street and Courtauld Road, Braintree Estimated Cost:- £10,000</p> <p>Action By: D Maclean, Essex Highways, as indicated.</p>	<p>D Maclean (HLTL)</p> <p>D Maclean (HLTL)</p>
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<p>7.</p>	<p>Schemes Awaiting Funding:</p> <p>Consideration was given to a ‘Schemes Awaiting Funding’ report, which included details of requests received for funding from the Panel’s budget. The value of the proposed schemes amounted to £448,500.</p> <p>In considering this Item, Members of the Panel were advised that Councillor T Cunningham, Essex County Council’s newly appointed Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Sustainable Transport, was introducing a new system for the way in which Local Highways Panels across the County would operate in future. This would require larger scale schemes to be considered by a new Group comprising the Cabinet Member and the Chairmen of the Local Highways Panels. These schemes would not be considered by individual Highways’ Panels. Braintree Local Highways Panel’s representative on the new Group would be Councillor C Siddall, but it was suggested that Councillor R Playle, the Vice-Chairman of the Panel, should be appointed to attend any meeting between the Cabinet Member and the Chairmen should Councillor Siddall be unable to. It was agreed that D Maclean should raise this suggestion with Councillor T Cunningham.</p> <p>It was suggested that Members of the Panel should not recommend any schemes for approval at this time. However, it was proposed that Members should endorse the removal from the list of potential schemes those schemes which had been categorised as ‘red’ as they did not meet Essex County Council’s criteria. It was also proposed that Parish/Town Councils should be advised in writing if their scheme had been unsuccessful and removed from the list. D Maclean agreed to introduce this process.</p> <p>In discussing this Item, reference was made to some individual schemes for which action points were agreed and these are recorded below.</p> <p>DECISION:</p> <p>(1) That it be recommended that the following schemes, the status of which has been assessed as ‘red’ as they do not meet the criteria, are removed from the list of potential schemes:-</p> <p><u>Traffic Management</u></p> <p>LBRA222041 – Buffer zone to alleviate speeding, Piccotts Lane, Great Saling Estimated Cost:- Not applicable</p>	<p>D Maclean (HLTL)</p> <p>D Maclean (HLTL)</p>
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	<p>(Note: Location incorrectly described as Braintree in report)</p> <p>LBRA222046 – Speed limit reduction, Maldon Road, Witham Estimated Cost:- Not applicable (Note: Location incorrectly described as Hatfield Peverel Parish in report)</p> <p>LBRA222063 – Signage to restrict heavy goods vehicles entering road, Queen Street, Coggeshall Estimated Cost:- Not applicable (Note: Location incorrectly described as Braintree in report)</p> <p>LBRA222066 – Re-location of 30mph sign, Finchingfield Road, Steeple Bumpstead Estimated Cost:- Not applicable</p> <p>LBRA222067 – Speed reduction, Water Lane, Steeple Bumpstead Estimated Cost:- Not applicable</p> <p>LBRA222071 – Heavy goods vehicle restrictions, Stisted Estimated Cost:- Not applicable (Note: D Maclean to speak to Councillor P Thorogood, Essex County Councillor for Braintree Eastern Division, about heavy goods vehicles being diverted through Stisted village temporarily when eg. there is an accident on the A120).</p> <p>LBRA232082 – Installation of bell bollards, Bradford Street, Braintree Estimated Cost:- Not applicable</p> <p>LBRA232086 – Removal of yellow hatched box road marking, Swan Street, Sible Hedingham Estimated Cost:- Not applicable</p> <p>(2) That the following schemes be subject to the specific comments denoted:-</p> <p><u>Traffic Management</u></p> <p>LBRA202016 – Traffic management improvement measures to discourage breaches of the speed limit close to Deer Park Drive, Braintree Road, Great Bardfield Estimated Cost:- Not applicable (Note:- (Classified as ‘red’).</p>	<p>D Maclean (HLTL)</p>
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	<p>It was reported that a request for a zebra crossing in this location had been considered by the Panel previously, but that it had been rejected as it did not meet the required criteria.</p> <p>Councillor Thorogood queried if the petition should be presented to Braintree Local Highways Panel, or elsewhere. It was suggested that the petition should be submitted to a meeting of Essex County Council's full Council via Councillor Thorogood.</p> <p><u>Highway Liaison Officer, Essex Highways - Appointment</u></p> <p>Dan Maclean, Highway Liaison Team Leader, Essex Highways reported that the process for appointing a Highway Liaison Officer to support Braintree Local Highways Panel should commence from the new financial year in April 2024.</p>	
<p>10.</p>	<p>Date of Next Meeting:</p> <p>The next meeting of Braintree Local Highways Panel will take place 'in person' on Wednesday, 20th March 2024 at Causeway House, Bocking End, Braintree starting at 5.00pm.</p> <p>The meeting commenced at 5.00pm and closed at 6.12pm.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Councillor C Siddall (Chairman)</p>	