
Halesowen Area Committee – 9th November 2011

Report of the Area Liaison Officer

Responses to Questions Raised at the Halesowen Area Committee held on 6th July 2011

Purpose of Report

1. To inform the Committee of the written responses made to questions asked at the previous meeting.

Background

2. It was queried what criteria had been used to determine which roads would be resurfaced in Halesowen during April 2011. Complaints were also made about the quality and swiftness of the work that had been undertaken on certain roads and that some roads had suffered from patchy tarmac. In responding the Head of Traffic and Transportation indicated that he was not aware of the full details but stated that planned maintenance had been organised through a traffic survey. He pointed out that extreme weather conditions during the past couple of years may have contributed to the state of the roads but he undertook to investigate the matter and write direct to the questioner with a response.

The questioner has been written to with the following response:-

'All highways in the borough, approximately 1000 km, (3900 Streets) are inspected and their condition assessed by independent surveyors. Factors are then attributed to this data relating to the geometry, traffic volumes, bus routes and treatment required etc. This process forms the basis of Highway Maintenance Programme. The result is a listing of all remedial work in priority order required to ensure that all of the borough's highways are maintained to an acceptable standard. Instructions are issued to contractors in batches requiring the same treatment, and wherever possible schemes are collated into areas eg Halesowen.

In compiling the annual programme we consider the needs of the public utilities, gas, water, electricity etc to ensure that a newly resurfaced highway is not damaged by their planned maintenance works. Some of the utility companies provide 5 year programmes of their works which allows us to co-ordinate efficiently. However, this may result in resurfacing work being delayed. When this occurs the roads and footpaths are inspected and remedial work undertaken to ensure they are maintained in a safe condition for the meantime.

Both Firth Park and Woodbury Road are in this financial year's programme. Firth Park is included in batch 3 and is programmed for February/March next calendar year. Woodbury Road was included in batch 1 and has been completed. This was one of about 250 roads in the borough to be treated this financial year with microasphalt. This is a thin overlay comprising aggregate and a bituminous emulsion widely used as a cost-effective preventive maintenance treatment. It seals the surface to prevent further deterioration and reduces the unevenness in the road surface such as sunken trenches. One of the benefits

3. Concern was expressed about the changes to 16-19 funding and the change in transport arrangements for disabled children and that consultation was being made via the website which was difficult to do. Concerns were expressed about the affordability factor and it was further commented that bursaries had to be paid back and that day care centres were also being cut. In responding the Assistant Director, Education, Play and Learning indicated that he was not aware of the specifics relating to consultation being online only and undertook to investigate the matter. With regard to changes to the 16-19 funding it was stated that there had been a change in administration. Previously funding had been administered in London but this was no longer the case and that the Local Authority were now responsible. The Local Authority had deliberated on the best way to meet the increasing costs of transport and consultation on the matter was being sought.

The questioner has been written to and a copy of the consultation regarding the Post 16 Transport Policy was attached. The list of consultees is extensive and consultation documents are usually relatively large therefore the full report is always made available on the Council's website to reduce any unnecessary printing costs. The document can be accessed on <http://online.dudley.gov.uk/dudco/engagement/>. In addition, all consultees receive a letter indicating that a hard copy of the document can be posted to them on request and this option has been taken up by a number of residents of the Borough. Details of the consultation are also kept at all Dudley Public Libraries, where free Internet access is available and at Dudley Youth Centres.

Additional consultees can also be added on to the standard list, in this case a letter was sent to all parents of current year 10 and 11 pupils in Dudley, Dudley Colleges and 6th forms, Dudley Youth Parliament and Dudley Youth Forum. These letters informed of the website access to the document and also where a hard copy of the document can be obtained.

Finance

4. There are no direct financial implications arising from the report.

Law

5. Section 111 of the Local Government Act, 1972 enables the Council to do anything that is calculated to facilitate or is conducive or incidental to the discharge of its functions.

Equality Impact

6. The report takes into account the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy and there are no direct implications for children and young people in noting the report.

Recommendation

7. That the Committee notes the contents of the report.



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List of Background Papers

Minutes of the Committee held on 6th July 2011