



meeting	HIGHWAYS SELECT COMMITTEE	
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Report of the Service Director for Highways

Highways Review Draft Final Report

Purpose of the report

1. To present to Members a summary of the evidence gathered during the course of this review and its associated recommendations.

Background

2. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee of 10 July 2006 commissioned a review of highways issues which began evidence gathering during the autumn of 2006 with a view to producing a final report in the spring of 2007. The purpose of the review was to look at highways issues and road safety with an emphasis on the protection of vulnerable road users.

Summary of Evidence:-

Highways

3. The Select Committee commenced its review on 11 September 2006 with a scene-setting presentation from Bob Hart, Service Director Highways. Mr Hart reported that principal roads ("A" class roads) were in good condition and likely to remain in a steady state for the next four years. "B" and "C" class roads are in surprisingly good condition and will improve with planned investment between 2006 and 2010. However, unclassified roads, which are subject to a different surveying technique, are in a below average state but will receive considerable investment from Local Transport Plan 2 and Highway Enhancement Funds up to 2010 to improve their condition – this is only possible because the money does not need to be spent on "A," "B," and "C" class roads.

Footways

4. The Select Committee heard that footways are in a deteriorating condition but have received £1.5m investment for 06/07. Members were concerned that there were significant areas of footways in poor

condition outside categories 1 and 2 (the most heavily used footways) which would not benefit from this investment. While the Department obviously wanted to direct expenditure to areas that are monitored via performance indicators (i.e. category 1 and 2 footways) there was also a case for putting the national indicators to one side in order to address substantial local need. Therefore the Select Committee recommended that, within existing budgetary considerations, an essential maintenance programme for the rural footway network as a whole should be developed.

Street Lighting

5. The Select Committee were informed that the performance of Eon Energy on unmetered connections “still remains a problem.” In fact, the relevant performance indicator on Eon Energy’s days taken to repair street lighting places the Authority amongst the worst in the country. Departmental officers reassured the Committee that Eon Energy’s performance was improving and that an important factor had been the appearance of Eon Energy representatives at the Environment and Sustainability Select Committee under the former system of Scrutiny. The Select Committee recommended that, since Scrutiny Committees no longer undertook an ongoing monitoring role, Cabinet itself should take a close interest in the efforts of Eon Energy to meet its performance indicators and where necessary invite them to attend Cabinet to explain their shortcomings. The Select Committee also identified street lighting as a possible area to be examined in the future by a Topic Select Committee.

Road Safety Performance

6. 2005 saw a significant reduction in numbers of killed and seriously injured (KSI) – down from 677 in 2004 to 593 in 2005. Meaning that the Public Service Agreement (PSA) stretch target of 599 has been exceeded. Numbers of children killed or seriously injured were also down from 89 to 80. The Select Committee commended this excellent work and hoped that it would continue.

Highways Asset Management

7. On 9 October 2006 the Select Committee received evidence from Phil Rankin, Head of Highway Policies and Programmes regarding the procurement of the computerised Highways Asset Management System (HAMS).
8. The HAMS system has cost £500,000 and includes modules for dealing with:
 - Customer Relations
 - Inventory
 - Inspection
 - Bridges, Streetworks and Pavement Management

The system also contains optional modules for Street Lighting and Works Ordering. The Department intends to move towards a fully integrated computerised system in the future and will therefore utilise the optional modules in due course.

Transport Asset Management Plan

9. The Select Committee heard from Ross Marshall, Principal Partnerships Officer, regarding the Transport Asset Management Plan, the purpose of which is to undertake “lifecycle plans” for significant assets. The work on traffic signals, bridges and structures is substantially complete; work on carriageways and footways was anticipated to be completed in December 2006 and street lighting in March 2007. There will be considerable work over the next 12-18 months in order to implement the plan. There are gaps in data knowledge which will be addressed by national research, the results of which will inform the asset management process.
10. The Select Committee recognised the value of this important work around the management of significant assets and recommends that any remaining gaps in knowledge are filled as a matter of priority; likewise the net should be cast wide in terms of identifying best practice around asset management issues.

Nottinghamshire Highways Partnership

11. The Select Committee were briefed on the Nottinghamshire Highways Partnership, in particular, the ten year agreement that is in place with Tarmac and will result in £8-10m worth of work to be carried out each year. In addition, significant work has been carried out to ensure that NCC procedures and processes are compatible with those of our partners. The Select Committee also heard how the Manage and Operate Partnerships (MOPs) with Ashfield DC, Broxtowe BC and Mansfield DC were now well established. The Select Committee recommended that the operation of MOPs be reviewed as soon as possible.
12. The Committee felt, based on their collective experience of dealing with District and Borough Councils in relation to highways issues, that there was insufficient recognition of the County Council’s status as the senior partner within these partnerships. The Select Committee recommends that measures be put in place to allow Members to strongly advise and influence District and Borough partners on works to be undertaken with a view to satisfactory outcomes being achieved.

Pedals (Cycling Issues Group for Greater Nottingham)

13. On 9 October 2006 the Committee received evidence from Mr Hugh McClintock of the Pedals group, which represents the interests of cyclists in the Greater Nottingham area. The Committee heard that

Pedals welcomed route development for cyclists, such as, the Beeston Canal towpath and the Sustrans routes in the east of the County. The Select Committee also learned that a five year cycling strategy was currently being put together by the County Council.

14. Pedals also supports the Ridewise project which is intended to build confidence and skills in adult cyclists. In addition, Pedals campaigns generally for advantage for cyclists – e.g. advance stop lines at junctions and quicker and safer routes. However, one of the main issues for Pedals was the necessity of a swift response to highways defects. Mr McClintock emphasised that potholes were potentially lethal for cyclists.
15. In further discussion of cycling issues, the Committee identified a problem associated with advance stop lines and cyclists. While cyclists obviously appreciate the positional advantage they receive from advance stop lines it may be that it is not in the best interests of cyclists to be positioned directly in front of cars that are about to move off. In the event of an advance stop line being used by several cyclists at once there would seem to be the potential for driver frustration resulting in collisions. The Select Committee recommends that levels of accidents at advance stop lines involving cyclists be closely monitored with a view to judging whether or not they best meet the needs of cyclists as vulnerable road users.
16. The Select Committee fully accepts the danger of potholes to two-wheeled traffic and cyclists in particular.

Gravelly Hollow Temporary Closure, Calverton

17. The Select Committee heard from Councillor Mark Spencer about the closure of Gravelly Hollow near Calverton at its junction with the A614. Councillor Spencer acknowledged that the junction was a dangerous one and that there had been three fatal accidents. Members heard that the closure disrupts the direct route to the M1 at Junction 27 and may lengthen the time taken by the emergency services to respond – although Councillor Spencer did not wish to overplay this point. The closure also affects the residents of Epperstone, Gonalston and Thurgarton and causes ‘doubling back.’
18. Councillor Spencer estimated that the closure caused local residents to have to drive an additional two miles each day – residents could therefore be potentially driving an extra 500 miles a year – a lot of additional miles and additional petrol consumption. Councillor Spencer’s preferred solutions were a roundabout or traffic lights.
19. Councillor Spencer indicated that the Gravelly Hollow closure was the main issue for people in Calverton. However, in further discussion with the departmental officer it became apparent that only 12 letters of objection had been received by the authority – although a petition with 130 signatures had also been received.

20. Chris Charnley, Highways Manager South, explained that the closure could not be made permanent until all of the objections had been considered. There is a standard list of consultees on changes of this nature, including the emergency services. However, the level of consultation in this case is not so great because the closure is experimental.
21. Suzanne Heydon, Accident Investigation Manager, explained that vision at the junction could not be improved because the forest “could not be touched” – due to its status as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The ideal solution would be an off-line roundabout, but this would cost in the region of £2 million.
22. Ms Heydon emphasised that, in terms of accident migration, a year’s worth of data would be needed in order to conduct an analysis (the police provide accident data with a three or four month lag). There will also be an examination of the re-routed traffic and how it is directed around the network.
23. The Select Committee appreciated that the Authority must make difficult or unpopular decisions sometimes in order to reduce the numbers of people killed or seriously injured (as with the closure of Gravelly Hollow). While the Authority should never shy away from making difficult decisions it should take pains to win over the public, where possible. This is perhaps best done by explaining that a concern for the preservation of human life is the motivation for the decision rather than any technical or statistical considerations. The public will find local road closures inconvenient, but convenience is a secondary consideration when compared to the preservation of life. It is ironic that while the Authority is criticised for failing to take action at locations where there is perceived to be “an accident waiting to happen” it is also criticised for taking action at a location where there is a long history of accidents.
24. The closure of a road to prevent accidents is susceptible to a ‘reductio ad absurdum’ argument – why not close all roads? Society has accepted the risks inherent in motoring and to the general populace – without the benefit of the analysis of the statistics – one road junction is unlikely to be thought of as much more dangerous than another. With this in mind, the public may not have an appreciation of some of the complexities (and expense) of engineering solutions; the public may draw the conclusion that obvious solutions are being overlooked when the obvious solutions are inappropriate.
25. When taking unusual/unpopular action, such as closing a road, the Authority should measure carefully the state of public opinion and where necessary take steps to properly explain the rationale behind

decisions and why apparently obvious solutions are not appropriate or feasible. The obvious answer would seem to be better publicity and consultation. At Gravelly Hollow the public may be unwilling to get involved in consultation since the “temporary” solution looks so permanent.

26. How should the experimental closure best be judged? The end of the experiment is still some way off but the Authority should only judge it (or future similar closures) a success if it is apparent that the accidents have not simply been displaced and are occurring at other nearby junctions in the locality.
27. The safeguarding of human life should, naturally, be a central principle of this authority’s policies. Where other government policy – such as that in relation to sites of Special Scientific Interest is in conflict with possible solutions which could be used to reduce numbers of killed and seriously injured; then considerations of human life should take precedence. Where necessary this issue should be addressed by lobbying central government or legal challenge.

Newark Town Council Perspective – “All Roads Lead to Newark”

28. The Select Committee heard from Councillor Harry Molyneux about traffic problems in Newark. The increased traffic from new industry and housing was resulting in worsening congestion, there were also issues of congestion around the level crossing, and the abuse of blue badges. Councillor Molyneux also felt that Newark’s congestion problems could be eased by a one way system.
29. Mr Charnley explained that the because of its location the level crossing was a difficult problem to solve. A one way system would involve long routes around the town centre and be inconvenient for residents and other traffic.
30. The Committee observed that there were many towns in the county suffering from similar problems – there is an extent to which such problems cannot be solved by engineering solutions because of the lack of road space within historic towns.
31. The Select Committee agreed that departmental officers should listen and take on board the views of elected members because of their detailed local knowledge – especially if working on likely solutions to long-term problems. Elected Members should be perceived as a valuable resource to inform local decision making and problem solving – their views require more than mere lip-service.

Village Gateways versus Interactive Signs

32. The Select Committee received a departmental report on Village Gateways and Interactive Signs and viewed a specially commissioned video of gateways and different sorts interactive signs.

Ravenshead	Typical gateway with “dragon’s teeth”, 30 mph roundel and “Please Drive Carefully” sign
Rainworth	Gateway – accident remedial scheme (marker posts with narrowing and refuge). Can reduce speed by up to 6 mph.
Hockerton	“Old style” gateway
Southwell	Very “fancy” gateway
Burton Joyce	Interactive Sign with flashing “wig-wags” (Indicating “Your Speed”)

33. The Select Committee heard from Mr Charnley that interactive signs such as the ones at Burton Joyce are extremely popular with communities and are much in demand. So far, there have been no studies into the likely effects of the proliferation of interactive signs. However, the Transport Research Laboratory has indicated that interactive signs result in an average speed reduction of about 4 mph (subsequent evidence to this Committee from Norwich Union in relation to their Pay as You Drive GPS based insurance system indicated that interactive signs have an effect on speed “downstream” of where they are sited).
34. Mr Charnley explained that the maintenance costs on interactive signs were £150 per year and the cost £8000 per pair. Members of the Select Committee noted that in their opinion interactive signs were far more effective than traditional measures such as 30 mph roundels painted on the road and “crocodile teeth” – they also represented better value for money. Anecdotal and limited quantitative evidence would seem to suggest that interactive signs are highly popular and highly effective – we would seem to be a long way from the point at which they are so numerous that their effectiveness could be compromised. In short, interactive signs received the Select Committee’s ringing endorsement – available monies should be spent on interactive signs rather than village gateways.
35. The Select Committee recommends that the Authority investigates ways in which the effect of proliferation of interactive signs could be measured and then undertakes a quantitative analysis of proliferation compared with diminishing returns.

36. Linked to the analysis above, the Authority should also examine whether or not it would be possible to relax the criteria for the installation of interactive signs in rural villages when external funding is available and look into the possibility of greater use of mobile interactive signs.
37. During the course of this review the Select Committee learned that a report on the issues around interactive signs and village gateways was to be sent to the Portfolio Holder. As a general principle of Scrutiny, the Committee recommends that reports germane to the subject matter of a review currently being conducted be forwarded to the Select Committee for comment, as a matter of courtesy. There may be occasions when, if appropriate, a Select Committee will request a decision related to their review be held in abeyance so that the Select Committee's final report can inform the decision making process.

Kings Clipstone “Pinch Point”

38. The Kings Clipstone Road and Traffic Safety Campaign group provided evidence to the Select Committee on 27 November 2006 and described in detail the problems associated with the B6030 “pinch point” in the centre of the village. There is a potential for accidents because of the narrowness of the road (5.6 m) and it is also a blind bend. Lorries pass through well over the white line. Since there is no footway, pedestrians must walk in the road without a proper view of what is ahead.
39. It is interesting to note that 1938 census data recorded 1,010 vehicles per day passed through Kings Clipstone's ‘Ratholes’ – in 2006 a traffic count indicated that 1,086 vehicles passed through per hour.
40. A possible solution to the congestion in Kings Clipstone suggested itself when temporary lights were installed at the pinch point to facilitate the external redecoration of a cottage. This seemed to ease problems but there is some doubt that such a scheme could be installed on a permanent basis.
41. An independent witness presenting to the committee on road safety commented on the cordial state of relations between departmental officers and Kings Clipstone campaigners – the frustrations surrounding such a campaign can often lead to bitterness and resentment. The campaigners were obviously dedicated and enthusiastic and sought to approach the issue in a highly analytical fashion – which is to be commended. Departmental officers had engaged highly effectively with this campaign group and maintained a successful dialogue to the extent that the Select Committee should

identify this as good practice and a model/reference point for communication with campaign groups in the future.

42. There are some similarities in the presentation of the issues around the Gravelly Hollow closure and the Kings Clipstone pinch point to the Highways Select Committee and how Community Call for Action (as described in the recent Local Government White Paper) may operate in the future. The Community Call for Action process would allow local residents to raise concerns about persistent or serious problems in their area or influence policies. A last resort within this process is the local Councillor asking Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) to investigate. Once the OSC has investigated it may consider, reject or make recommendations which are in turn, considered, accepted or rejected and responded to by the council executive/local partners (as appropriate).
43. Although the Highways Select Committee was not compelled to draw up recommendations on these issues in the way it would have to in an actual Community Call for Action the presentations were perhaps a useful 'dry run' or window on how this system may operate. It is interesting to note that members of the public in this instance did not balk at making a presentation in public to elected members and officers; and welcomed the Authority's willingness to listen.

Road Safety Adviser – Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents

44. On 27 November 2006, the Select Committee received evidence from Kevin Clinton of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents and noted its concerns on a large range of issues including the following:
Driving at work:-
 - Health and Safety law applies to on-the-road activities as to other work activities and the risks should be effectively managed within a health and safety system.
 - Work-related road safety can only be managed if it is integrated into your arrangements for managing health and safety at work
 - Drivers with a high percentage of work related driving have 53% more crashes.
 - Company car, van truck and lorry drivers have a high 'blameworthiness' ratio.
45. The Select Committee was informed by Liz Rickards, the Principal Road Safety Officer that the Authority is currently developing a policy for driving at work. The Select Committee recommends that the Authority invites RoSPA's experts to review the policy once it has been developed. The Select Committee believes that it would be of benefit for RoSPA's free guides to employers on such topics as safe journey

planning, safer speed policy and use of mobile phones be made generally available to the managers of those who drive at work.

Information from the Chief Constable of Nottinghamshire:-

Partnerships and Prevention

46. The Chief Constable attended the Select Committee on 18 December 2006. The Chief Constable explained that a large number of uninsured vehicles are involved in serious collisions. Nottinghamshire Police are therefore taking off the road and crushing uninsured vehicles. This year 2500 vehicles have been crushed.
47. Operation Mermaid has been a programme of stopping goods vehicles to check their safety. Every force in the country stops good vehicles – it can also be useful in terms of counter-terrorism and the detection of people smuggling.
48. In addition, there are growing concerns about stretch limousines – they are potentially “an accident waiting to happen” since they are not regulated and there is no framework for Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checking of drivers.
49. The Chief Constable felt that sometimes there was unwillingness on the part of the County Council to enter into partnership working – such as with the City Council in relation to the Safety Camera Partnership.
50. Heidi Duffy, Traffic Management Officer Nottinghamshire Police (accompanying the Chief Constable), stated that road safety partnerships were data led and centred on casualty reduction; for instance, the “Shiny Side-Up” initiative which was triggered by the deaths of twenty-six motorcyclists. An innovative aspect of this initiative is the involvement of super-bike champion John Reynolds, a figure likely to be listened to and respected by motorcyclists. Another initiative, “Bare Bones” focuses on encouraging young people to wear proper protective clothing when using mopeds/motor-cycles. This initiative includes sending text message reminders to young people over the summer months when they are more likely to dispense with protective clothing.

Enforcement

51. The Chief Constable also made reference to the levels of enforcement within the County:
 - 70,000 fixed penalty tickets for speeding are issued each year
 - 8000 breath tests were conducted last year, 2500 of which were positive
 - 2500 seat belt offences were prosecuted last year and 3800 this year

- 1600 offences in relation to driving while using a mobile phone were prosecuted last year and 2000 this year
52. The Chief Constable stated that there were no “joined up” performance indicators for the police and the County Council and this resulted in the figures painting very different pictures of the two organisations. In addition, the Chief Constable raised the questions of whether or not police and County Council strategies interlocked sufficiently and how points of interlock could be built on. Naturally, any development of strategies would involve discussions with Nottingham City Council.
 53. The Chief Constable said that he was concerned about the ownership of collision data. There is also a lag in the processing of road accident data of up to one month – the Chief Constable would have preferred a single database to which the partner organisations could have access; this could facilitate a more timely deployment of resources.
 54. The Select Committee registered a concern that insufficient notice was taken of accidents where there were no deaths or serious injuries. Only accidents involving injuries are passed to the Accident Investigation Unit. It is possible that an accident without serious consequences might in certain circumstances be a presage to a fatal collision – in which case an early warning sign would have been ignored.
 55. The Chief Constable indicated his support for the Community Speedwatch initiative and Ms Duffy pointed out that Leicestershire County Council had paid for the creation of a post to administer the Community Speedwatch scheme.
 56. The Chief Constable also indicated his support for driver improvement courses and would welcome the opportunity for Nottinghamshire Police to get involved with them. Chief Inspector Andy Charlton (accompanying the Chief Constable) emphasised that the Road Safety Bill (which contains legislation in relation to driver improvement courses) has not come into force yet. Financing and responsibility around driver improvement courses is currently an issue. Suzanne Heydon of the Accident Investigation Unit, NCC made the Select Committee aware that in April 2007 funding of speeding enforcement will completely change and instead come through the LTP settlement, with this in mind, the Authority is looking into developing an over-arching partnership with the City of Nottingham, the Police and the Fire Service.
 57. The Select Committee recommends that the Authority campaign via the Local Government Association for the responsible authorities to include stretch limousines within a proper and appropriate regulatory regime with a view to improving safety for passengers and other road

users – such regulation should include compulsory CRB checking of drivers because of the potentially vulnerable nature of limousine passengers.

58. The Select Committee recommends that the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships be consulted on whether or not Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's) could assist Community Speedwatch groups with their enforcement activities – through training, co-ordination, "quality control" and administrative support. This might go some way to ameliorate the accusations of "vigilantism" that are sometimes directed at such groups. If it is not appropriate for the PCSO's to engage in administrative support work, the County Council should investigate whether or not the associated administrative tasks could be absorbed within existing County Council posts (or new posts if possible within budgetary constraints). This issue is especially important since the Police will cease to use handheld safety cameras on 1 April 2007.
59. The Select Committee also recommends that the Chief Constable authorise PCSO's to engage in traffic enforcement duties (e.g. fixed penalty notices).
60. The Select Committee considered carefully the Chief Constable's thoughts on the hesitancy of the County Council to engage in partnership working and does not find them to be justified. The County Council works successfully with a great many partners. Partnership working, by its nature, should be entered into carefully and only once the necessary groundwork has been laid. A desire to get things right should not be mistaken for an over abundance of caution.
61. The Select Committee found that Nottinghamshire County Council itself is perfectly clear on its understanding of the ownership of collision data. The Chief Constable "owns" all the collision data – NCC collates, validates and processes road accident collision data on behalf of the Police, the City Council and the Highways Agency. As a result all partners have the same information on the same database and are working hand in glove to achieve the same set of nationally set targets.
62. The Select Committee invites the Chief Constable to identify more explicitly (perhaps via a detailed analysis or audit) any areas where Police and NCC strategies do not properly "interlock" – with a view to dialogue with the Authority on how these issues might best be addressed.

Carers' Federation

63. On 15 January 2007 the Select Committee received evidence from Julia Tabreham, Chief Executive of the Carers' Federation. The Carers'

Federation was formed in 1992 and provides a support and information service for carers and the people for whom they care.

64. Ms Tabreham indicated that crossing patrols were greatly valued by carers and urged the Authority to fill crossing patrol vacancies as swiftly as possible. The Select Committee heard from Liz Rickards, Principal Officer Road Safety, that across 150 sites in the County the vacancy rate was currently 20%.
65. It would also be beneficial to carers for there to be longer crossing times at pelican crossings and more audible beeps. However, the Select Committee recognised that louder beeps were often unpopular with local residents.
66. In subsequent briefing from departmental officers on the use of Red/Green Man signals in Nottinghamshire, the Select Committee learned that newer forms of crossings incorporate pedestrian detectors for crossing zone and waiting areas which will automatically vary the length of time allowed for people to cross and this may be of benefit to older and disabled people. However, the Select Committee had concerns about the future breed of crossing since they favour nearside signals. Nearside pedestrian signals do not provide sufficient reassurance to people crossing the road since the red/green man signal is not within the pedestrian's line of sight once crossing the road commences. This places pedestrians at a disadvantage compared to motorists; additionally, pedestrians will not be aware when crossing of whether they are at an old style time limited crossing or one of the newer style ones with a variable time limit – with the signal outside of their line of vision they may therefore rush unnecessarily and there will therefore be an increased risk of trips and falls on crossings. In addition, where crossings are heavily used, the kerbside view of signals may be blocked by fellow pedestrians.
67. The Select Committee believes that the national movement towards nearside signals is essentially a mistaken one. The old style farside mounted pedestrian signals with audible beeps are superior for pedestrians in general and the visually impaired.
68. Ms Tabreham thought that there was a need for greater education of the public generally – for instance people often park too close to allow wheelchair users easy entry and egress from their vehicles.
69. Ms Tabreham also felt that road works did not allow for wheelchair users; in addition pedestrian refuges were seldom wide enough for wheelchairs. Departmental officers indicated that accommodating wheelchairs might mean widening the road and moving utilities.
70. Finally, Ms Tabreham highlighted the difficult issue of cared for people wandering onto very busy roads and indicated that additional barriers

might be a possible solution. While the Select Committee and attending departmental officers were naturally sympathetic the solution seemed impractical – even if it were possible the heavy use of barriers could effectively trap people on the carriageway once they had strayed onto it.

Nottinghamshire Motorcycle Forum

71. On 15 January 2007 the Select Committee received a presentation from Liz Rickards, Principal Officer, Road Safety, NCC on the work of the Nottinghamshire Motorcycle Forum and also its work with members of the forum.
72. The forum is a partnership between NCC and local motorcyclists. Its work includes the Shiny Side Up casualty reduction scheme and the Bare Bones initiative – which seeks to encourage young people to wear proper protective clothing (e.g. Kevlar lined jeans) and reminds them to do so over the summer months via an innovative text messaging service.
73. Dave Laughton of the forum explained about the “assessment rides” organised at Holme Pierrepont, these encouraged motorcyclists to take courses through the Institute of Advanced Motorists.
74. The Select Committee commended the “assessment ride” events and recommended that they receive greater publicity, ideally through the County Council’s own newspaper. The Select Committee also felt that the assessment rides were sufficiently important that County Councillors should be encouraged to donate some of their local initiatives money to support it.
75. Chris Baggaley of the forum felt that key issues for motorcyclists included: a lack of dedicated motorcycle police, a lack of recognition of motorcycles as a green form of transport and confusion between legitimate motorcyclists and unlicensed off-riders, diesel spillages and publicity for the forum.

Royal Automobile Club (RAC)

76. On 12 February 2007, the Select Committee received evidence from Gill Kerr of the RAC who shared details of the RAC’s annual survey of 1000 drivers and their attitudes.
77. Ms Kerr highlighted the “schizophrenia” of some drivers’ attitudes as revealed by the survey. While 84% of motorists regard themselves as law abiding, 48% admit to exceeding the speed limits “most days” – and perhaps most shockingly, 19% admit to drink driving on “rare occasions.” In addition, 21% believe that they won’t get caught if they break “most motoring laws.”

78. Drivers do however support a severe clampdown on drink driving with 81% backing compulsory dashboard alcolocks and 88% supporting robust roadside tests for drug drivers.
79. It is also interesting to note that 70% of drivers support the use of vehicle activated interactive speed signs but this popularity is undoubtedly linked to their non-punitive nature.
80. The Select Committee suggested to RAC that their own patrol operatives would be a valuable source of information of driver attitudes and an appropriate survey should be addressed to them.
81. The Select Committee noted the RAC's support for driver improvement and speed awareness courses as an alternative punishment (except for repeat offenders). The Select Committee recommends that the Police, NCC and other partners liaise closely and develop an action plan to put such courses in place in Nottinghamshire as soon as is feasible.

Norwich Union – Pay As You Drive Insurance

82. On 12 February 2007, the Select Committee heard from Chris Elliot of Norwich Union regarding their innovative Global Positioning System (GPS) based insurance system, Pay As You Drive (PAYD) which is able to charge drivers a monthly premium based on how much they drive.
83. The system had been piloted in 2003-2004 and trialled with young drivers in 2005. Drivers were charged on the basis of how far they drove and at what time of day – the peak charge being at night when young drivers were most likely to have accidents.
84. The system collected highly detailed information on driver behaviour (e.g. patterns of braking at junctions) which might be highly useful to a highways authority in terms of identifying accidents hot spots. NB – the system had also produced limited quantitative data on the positive effective of interactive speed signs “downstream” of where they are sited.
85. In further discussion, the Select Committee, aside from obvious accident reduction benefits, also noted the potentially Orwellian nature of this technology since it records such detailed data on driver behaviour. It is impossible to imagine a future where safety cameras are redundant and all information on a driver's behaviour (i.e. speeding) is uploaded once a month to a central computer and necessary fines dispatched!
86. The Select Committee recommends that once use of the Pay As You Drive system extends sufficiently to be of use to the Authority it negotiates with Norwich Union to obtain such data as might be useful for the purposes of highways management and accident reduction.

Speed Management

87. On 12 February 2007, the Select Committee received a briefing from Gary Wood, Team Manager, Traffic Services on the County Council's various speed management initiatives. These include:
- Variable 20 mph limit outside schools (pilot)
 - Traffic calming for accident reduction and to improve the local environment
 - Speed limit reductions for casualty reduction and route management
 - Safety cameras – where no other can be used to address the road safety problem
 - Vehicle activated interactive signs
 - Safer routes to schools – road engineering measures in the vicinity of schools
 - School Travel Plans – measures to reduce to number of cars making the school run and thereby ease congestion.
88. While the Select Committee recognised that Members could be disappointed when it was not possible to put a 20 mph limit in place near a school; the Select Committee also understood that schools could be areas of comparatively low numbers of accidents. Problems were more likely to be related to congestion and parking. With this in mind the Select Committee recommends that School Travel Plans are strengthened and methods of potential enforcement identified in order to greatly reduce parking in the vicinity of schools.
89. The Select Committee recommends that the issue of streamlining the process for the variation of traffic orders be raised at a national level. The Select Committee felt that it ought to be less cumbersome to make a minor variation to a speed limit, for instance, when moving a speed limit by 100 metres or so (e.g. in instances where the natural envelope of a village has changed due to building development).

Leicestershire Weight Limits

90. On 5 March 2007, the Select Committee received evidence from Chris Charnley, Acting Group Manager (Highway Management) regarding a number of weight restrictions on Leicestershire roads which impact on roads within Nottinghamshire (i.e. the restrictions in question generate additional HGV traffic on Nottinghamshire roads).
91. The Select Committee was concerned to hear that reports on which Leicestershire County Council has based weight restriction decisions have not properly reflected NCC perspectives and concerns even though they were made properly aware of them. The Select Committee recommends extremely close liaison with LCC (and other adjoining

authorities) on matters relating to weight restrictions so that the people of Nottinghamshire are not unduly inconvenienced in this regard.

92. In addition, the Select Committee recommends that requests for HGV weight restrictions from residential areas with a history of complaints about HGV usage be viewed sympathetically and criteria sufficiently flexible for such requests to be potentially eligible.

Noise from Road Surfaces

93. On 5 March 2007, the Select Committee heard from Bernard Younger, Team Manager, Network Management regarding policies connected with noise from road surfaces. Mr Younger explained that petitions are received for low noise surfacing to be provided on noisy roads; however, while statutory requirements exist for new roads this is not the case for existing roads and there are no Best Value Performance Indicators in relation to road noise. Roads merely need to be maintained to an acceptable standard.
94. The Select Committee felt that quality of life issues around noise should be taken more seriously and that this was another area where the lead was being taken erroneously from performance indicators rather than the people of Nottinghamshire.
95. The Select Committee recommends that very noisy roads which are causing degradation to people's quality of life be considered for inclusion in the resurfacing programme, if at all possible.

Highways Management Budgets

96. On 5 March 2007, Mr Charnley explained to the Select Committee how the Highways Divisions budgets are no longer held by an Area Manager but instead pooled and managed by Highways Operations.
97. The Select Committee recommended that Area Managers be allowed a small discretionary budget to meet local need; and the effectiveness of current arrangements be closely monitored.

Highways Select Committee Survey

98. Aside from taking evidence from witnesses, the Highways Select Committee also conducted a survey of Members' views on highways and road safety issues. A summary of responses is attached at Appendix A.
99. Members' responses included the following:
 - 30% of Members felt that their views on highways and road safety issues were not properly taken in consideration

- The majority of respondents felt that complaints were dealt with effectively but that officers were sometimes constrained by criteria
- All respondents felt that in their electoral division there were places where “an accident was waiting to happen”
- 50% of respondents thought that safety cameras were effective in reducing excessive speed on Nottinghamshire’s roads.

Summary of Draft Recommendations

100. A summary of the Highways Select Committee’s draft recommendations appears in the table below:

Recommendation: 1	The Select Committee recommends that within existing budgetary considerations an essential maintenance programme is developed for the rural footway network as a whole.	Page 2 Para 4
Recommendation: 2	Since Scrutiny Committees no longer undertake an ongoing monitoring role, Cabinet itself should take a close interest in the efforts of Eon Energy to meet its performance indicators and where necessary invite them to attend Cabinet to explain their shortcomings.	Page 2, Para 5
Recommendation 3	With regard to Transport Asset Management, the Select Committee recommends that any remaining gaps in knowledge are filled as a matter of priority; likewise the net should be cast wide in terms of identifying best practice around asset management issues.	Page 3 Para 10
Recommendation: 4	In relation to Highways Partnerships, the Select Committee recommends that measures be put in place to allow Members to strongly advise and influence District and Borough partners on works to be undertaken with a view to satisfactory outcomes being achieved	Page 3 Para 12
Recommendation: 5	The Select Committee recommends that levels of accidents at advance stop lines involving cyclists be closely monitored with a view to judging whether or not they best meet the needs of cyclists as vulnerable road users.	Page 4 Para 15
Recommendation: 6	The Select Committee recommends better publicity and consultation when taking unusual or unpopular action (e.g. closure of a road for accident reductions reasons).	Page 6 Para 25

Recommendation: 7	The Select Committee recommends that the Authority should only judge the Gravelly Hollow closure (or future similar closures) a success if it is apparent that the accidents have not simply been displaced and are occurring at other nearby junctions in the locality.	Page 6 Para 26
Recommendation: 8	The Select Committee recommends that instances where Sites of Special Scientific Interest seem to take primacy over the preservation of human life there should be legal challenge and the lobbying of central government as appropriate.	Page 6 Para 27
Recommendation: 9	The Select Committee recommends that available monies should be spent on interactive signs rather than village gateways.	Page 7 Para 34
Recommendation: 10	The Select Committee recommends that the Authority investigates ways in which the effect of proliferation of interactive signs could be measured and then undertakes a quantitative analysis of proliferation compared with diminishing returns.	Page 7 Para 35
Recommendation: 11	The Select Committee recommends that the Authority should examine whether or not it would be possible to relax the criteria for the installation of interactive signs in rural villages and look into the possibility of mobile interactive signs.	Page 8 Para 36
Recommendation: 12	The Select Committee recommends that departmental reports prepared for a Portfolio Holder germane to the subject matter of a scrutiny review currently being conducted be forwarded to the Select Committee for comment, as a matter of courtesy. There may be occasions when, if appropriate, a Select Committee will request a decision related to their review be held in abeyance so that the Select Committee's final report can inform the decision making process.	Page 8 Para 37
Recommendation: 13	The Select Committee recommends that the Authority invites RoSPA's experts to review NCC's driving at work policy once it has been developed.	Page 9 Para 45

Recommendation: 14	The Select Committee recommends that RoSPA's free guides to employers on such topics as safe journey planning, safer speed policy and use of mobile phones be made generally available to the managers of those who drive at work (within NCC).	Page 10 Para 45
Recommendation 15:	The Select Committee recommends that more account is taken of serious road traffic accidents where there have been no deaths or serious injuries since such accidents might represent a warning of fatalities to come.	Page 11 Para 54
Recommendation 16:	The Select Committee recommends that the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships be consulted on whether or not Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's) could assist Community Speedwatch groups with their enforcement activities.	Page 12 Para 58
Recommendation 17:	The Select Committee recommends that if it is not appropriate for the PCSO's to engage in administrative support work for Speedwatch, the County Council should investigate whether or not the associated administrative tasks could be absorbed within existing County Council posts (or new posts if possible within budgetary constraints).	Page 11 Para 58
Recommendation 18:	The Select Committee recommends that the Authority recognise the superiority of "old style" far-side pedestrian signals with audible beeps over the nearside signals currently in vogue	Page 13 Para 66
Recommendation 19:	The Select Committee recommends that Nottinghamshire Motorcycle Forum's Assessment Ride events receive greater publicity, ideally through the County Council's own newspaper.	Page 14 Para 74
Recommendation 20:	The Select Committee recommends that the Police, NCC and other partners liaise closely and develop an action plan to put speed awareness courses in place in Nottinghamshire as soon as is feasible.	Page 15 Para 81
Recommendation 21:	The Select Committee recommends that once use of the Pay As You Drive system extends sufficiently to be of use to the Authority it negotiates with Norwich Union to obtain such data as might be useful for the purposes of highways management and accident reduction	Page 15 Para 86
Recommendation 22:	The Select Committee recommends that	Page 16 Para

	School Travel Plans are strengthened and that the Authority proactively seeks ways to eliminate the problems caused by parking in the vicinity of schools.	88
Recommendation 23:	The Select Committee recommends that the issue of streamlining the process for the variation of traffic orders be raised at a national level. The Select Committee felt that it ought to be less cumbersome to make a minor variation to a speed limit, for instance, when moving a speed limit by 100 metres or so.	Page 16 Para 89
Recommendation 24:	The Select Committee recommends extremely close liaison with Leicestershire County Council (and other adjoining authorities) on matters relating to weight restrictions so that the people of Nottinghamshire are not unduly inconvenienced by the negative impact of restrictions within Leicestershire.	Page 17 Para 91
Recommendation 25:	The Select Committee recommends that requests for HGV weight restrictions from residential areas with a history of complaints about HGV usage be viewed sympathetically and criteria sufficiently flexible for such requests to be potentially eligible.	Page 17 Para 92
Recommendation 26	The Select Committee recommends that very noisy roads which are causing degradation to people's quality of life be considered for inclusion in the resurfacing programme, if at all possible.	Page 17 Para 95
Recommendation 27:	The Select Committee recommends that Area Highways Managers be allowed a small discretionary budget to meet local need; and the effectiveness of current arrangements be closely monitored.	Page 17 Para 97
Recommendation 28:	The Select Committee recommended that the operation of Manage and Operate Partnerships with the Districts and Boroughs be reviewed as soon as possible.	Page 3 Para 11
Recommendation 29:	The Select Committee recommends that the Authority campaign for the responsible authorities to include stretch limousines within a proper and appropriate regulatory regime with a view to improving safety for	Page 12 Para 57

	passengers and other road users – such regulation should include compulsory CRB checking of drivers because of the potentially vulnerable nature of limousine passengers	
Recommendation 30:	The Select Committee recommends that the Chief Constable authorise PCSO's to engage in traffic enforcement duties (e.g. fixed penalty notices)	Page 12 Para 59

Recommendation

The Select Committee is asked to consider this draft report, including draft recommendations, and then agree a final report and recommendations which will be sent to Council Cabinet in April 2007.

COUNCILLOR THE HON JOAN TAYLOR CHAIR OF HIGHWAYS SELECT COMMITTEE

Background papers: Agenda papers and minutes of the Highways Select Committee – 11 September 2006, 9 October 2006, and 6 November 2006, 27 November 2006, 18 December 2006, 15 January 2006, 12 February 2006, 5 March 2007 and 26 March 2007.

Members of the Highways Select Committee:

Councillor the Hon Joan Taylor (Chair)
Councillor Andy Stewart (Vice Chair)
Councillor Jen Cole
Councillor Bruce Laughton
Councillor Jim Napier
Councillor Philip Owen
Councillor Sheila Place
Councillor Ken Rigby
Councillor Dave Shaw