

## Highways Select Committee Survey January 2007

**66 forms were sent out, a total of 20 forms were returned making a response rate of 30%. One form was completed by a Parish Council Member.**

**Not all Members answered every question.**

- 1) Do you feel that your views as an elected Member are properly taken into consideration in relation to highways and road safety issues?

*Only 20% of Councillors felt their views were properly considered, 30% felt they were not. One Member felt they were "the last point of contact and in my view local knowledge and opinion is not taken seriously" and another commented "I am not consulted unless I raise the question or it is procedure to get members consent". The remaining Members felt they were occasionally listened to but that officers were constrained by criteria.*

- 2) When you pass on complaints about highways or road safety issues to the department do you feel that they are dealt with effectively? How do you think this could be improved?

*The majority of respondents felt complaints were dealt with effectively but that officers were some times constrained by "criteria".*

*Of those who did not agree one Member commented that "a pro-active rather than negative attitude is required". It was felt by some Members that it would be helpful to receive confirmation by e mail or letter when a complaint has been resolved and that "more consultation from officers to members responding on major issues in their divisions would help"*

- 3) Are there places within your electoral division where you feel that there is an "accident waiting to happen"? Please provide details.

*All Members felt there were places in there district where there was an accident waiting to happen.*

- 4) Does the council have any highways or road safety policies which you think need changing? Please provide details.

*Road safety policies Members felt needed consideration:*

- *Collision accidents, usually in places where “accidents are waiting to happen” locations.*
- *The criteria for pelican crossings “criteria which say, in effect, someone has to die before we can do anything.”*
- *HGV restrictions – any village bordering Leicestershire should be allowed HGV restrictions.*
- *Departmental budget control overruling area managers*
- *Grass cutting – if not more often cut shorter, hedge cutting – cut both sides where appropriate*
- *The ability to act on aesthetics or property damage grounds*
- *More interactive signs, more crossing patrols for school children*
- *Monitoring of parking orders*
- *The criteria for setting and adjusting speed limits, “accident must happen before changes can be made”.*
- *More space be made available for parking.*

- 5) Do you think that the views of local people are properly taken into consideration regarding highways or road safety issues that affect them? Please give examples.

*The majority of Members felt the views of local people were not taken into consideration and there were many examples of issues being raised repeatedly and nothing happening. On occasions where the views of local people were considered there was often no solution due to lack of budget provision.*

- 6) How could we improve the ways in which we listen to people?

*Suggestions for improvement include:*

- *Highways forums in electoral divisions – village walks (by managers), councillors and residents*
- *Interact with people concerned, on a face to face level*
- *Keep interested parties in the loop with decision making and action taken*
- *By noting what is said and responding appropriately within a defined period of time*

- *A bigger budget.*

7) Do you think that enough is done to improve the safety of vulnerable road users (e.g. cyclists, motorcyclists and disabled people)?

*The majority of Members felt that that enough is being done especially for cyclists and motor cyclists but there are some site specific problems and that improvements were still needed for the disabled. Cycle routes were highlighted as a problem and this did not encourage usage.*

8) What would improve road safety for vulnerable users in your area?

*Members consider the following improvements would help vulnerable users:*

- *More funding for pavement repairs in general, less potholes*
- *Re-siting of some pedestrian crossings*
- *Slower speed limits through villages*
- *More mobile speed detection units – currently small villages don't qualify*
- *Centre road refuges (with road widening if necessary), more efforts to slow traffic – rumble strips etc. 20mph speed limits*
- *Better driver/rider training*
- *Fixed period licences and re testing of drivers*
- *Improved footpaths which are overgrown and water logged*
- *Listen to members/residents comments.*

9) How effective is roads policing? What issues/problems do you feel it should concentrate on to obtain maximum casualty reduction?

*35% of Members surveyed felt there was no effective roads policing and one member commented that more specialist traffic officers and more police on foot were needed.*

*Members felt that:*

- *traffic needs to be taken off the roads – particularly freight lorries*

- *need more awareness of children on the roads*
- *need more driver education*
- *enforcement of illegal parking regulations*
- *speed limits need to be enforced*
- *there should be less road signs but more interactive signs.*

*Two Members felt there was too much reliance on speed cameras.*

- 10) Do you feel the loss of dedicated police traffic officers has led to a decline in road safety? Are there any specific problems that you feel need addressing?

*50% of Members agreed that the loss of dedicated police officers has led to a decline in road safety although some agreed that they had no real evidence. Reasons for feeling this included:*

- *Parking chaos- the loss of parking controls in villages where double yellow lines are no longer respected*
- *Inappropriate use of bus lanes*
- *Speeding.*

*Other members disagreed and felt that “patrol cars were an excellent deterrent to careless driving/speeding”.*

- 11) Are police forces using technology led enforcement as an alternative to roads policing? Which do you feel has a greater impact?

*The use of technology was seen as a positive method of enforcement but there was no substitute for a police presence. One member felt that technology was only effective in the towns and cities, another that cameras should not be sited for financial reasons and another commented that the use of technology is to the detriment of law abiding motorists.*

- 12) Do you think that safety cameras are an effective means of reducing excessive speed on Nottinghamshire's roads?

*50% of Members felt that safety cameras did reduce excessive speed, 25% felt they didn't. Others felt there were problems with the siting of cameras, that they may reduce speeding in*

*particular localities but not generally and that often motorists slow down for the camera and then speed up.*

- 13) Do you think the interactive signs will become less effective because of over proliferation and should their use therefore be restricted?

*The majority of Members felt that the use of cameras should not be restricted, "they are effective and should be used more often". Concern was raised about the calibration of some cameras and issues about enforcement.*

- 14) The Community Speedwatch programme is proving to be very popular in rural areas. What are the benefits and problems of initiatives like this?

*Generally seen as a good scheme however there were some problems:*

- *Not all villages meet the criteria for the scheme*
- *Finding organisers and volunteers to operate consistently*
- *Not taken seriously by the police.*

- 15) What improvements could be made to road safety campaigns run by the County Council?

*Ideas suggested by Members include:*

- *Take all unauthorised signs of the roads and keep signs clear.*
- *Better signing.*
- *Restrict parking and reduce speeds outside schools*
- *Localised user friendly campaigns*
- *Reduce "Think Bike" campaigns, should be aimed at bikers to "think others"*
- *Concentrate on known roads where accidents happen.*

- 16) Do you think there should be more road safety education in schools? How do you think this could be improved?

*Members felt road safety programmes in school were already good and in the main proving to be beneficial. It was felt that involving the police and parents in addition to devising interesting stimulating programmes would help.*

- 17) Will the decriminalisation of parking help to lower rates of illegal parking or will it be seen as a means of increasing revenue?

*All Members felt that the decriminalisation of parking should lower the rates of illegal parking if it was properly enforced. Concern was expressed that it could/would be seen as a means of raising revenue and would have to be introduced sensitively.*

- 18) Do you feel the condition of the roads is better or worse than it was five years ago?

*Opinion was divided about the condition of roads. Some Members felt that overall they were worse particularly on A, Band C roads; others felt they were marginally better.*

- 19) What do you think the County Council could do to encourage its employees to use different forms of transport to get to work thereby cutting congestion and helping the environment? What schemes do you feel to be most effective?

*Suggestions for schemes to encourage staff to use public transport included:*

- *Bus, train and tram passes*
- *Reduced rate travel*
- *Encouraging people to drive a diesel engined car*
- *Discounted cycles, cycle racks and changing accommodation*
- *Supporting car sharing.*

- 20) Do you think a zero tolerance policy for drinking and driving should be introduced?

*Opinion was divided on this question, some Members felt it should not be introduced and would be difficult to enforce. Other Members felt it would be a good idea and should also include the use of drugs. As this is a new concept it was suggested that before it was introduced information should be gathered from other countries already enforcing the scheme.*

21) Do you have any other comments on highways or road safety issues?

- *Funding must be made available for “accident waiting to happen” sites.*
- *Need to look at devolving budgets to local areas – more local prioritising. This would help to involve and inform local people.*
- *Keep road signs clear.*
- *The biggest work load of councillors is the poor state of the roads and pavements*
- *The road surfacing material (sma) causes hazards as it matures*
- *Need to change the behaviour of some drivers*
- *Need to enforce regulation regarding mobile phones and drug use.*
- *Would like to nominate one road per year that meets the lower criteria for resurfacing on behalf of local residents.*
- *Improve the relationship between councils and the Highways Agency*
- *The Highways Managers of the region should consult with Members on an annual basis about the most “important” issues in the division and develop a budget and 2-3 year plan of improvement updated annually*
- *I have been impressed by the recent work of the Highways South Customer Service. Highways can be an emotive issue and need to consider the needs of all.*