

**REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT
COMMITTEE AND THE CHAIRMAN OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S
COMMITTEE**

**RESPONSES TO PETITIONS PRESENTED TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE
COUNTY COUNCIL**

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to inform Council of the decisions made by the Transport and Environment Committee and the Children and Young People's Committee concerning issues raised in petitions presented to the Chairman of the County Council on 25 March 2021.

Information

Petitions considered by Transport and Environment Committee

A. "Make Ambleside, Gamston, Safer" (Ref:2020/0409)

2. A 69 signature petition was presented to the 25 March 2021 meeting of the County Council by Councillor Kay Cutts.
3. The petition requested that traffic calming features and a weight restriction be installed on Ambleside at Gamston; in addition to the road being resurfaced.
4. The Authority actively promotes road safety on the County's network and has previously implemented a number of features on this stretch of road in a bid to lower traffic speeds and improve safety. Examples of these are 'Children' warning signage, white centre line hatching, SLOW road markings, a signalled crossing facility, pedestrian refuges and an interactive speed sign.
5. Following a recent assessment of Ambleside, its current safety record, at the present time, does not warrant any intervention measures such as physical traffic calming. This will however, continue to be monitored.
6. Environmental weight restrictions had in the past been implemented in urban residential areas, but there are exemptions that apply to HGVs accessing the area for delivery purposes. In this instance, if a weight restriction were to be in place on Ambleside, HGVs using the route for deliveries within the housing estate would be exempt therefore not achieving the desired result and disproving any illegal usage would be extremely difficult in terms of the level of enforcement required.
7. In relation to the request for Ambleside to be resurfaced, the road features on the candidate list for inclusion in a future financial year's resurfacing programme.

8. It was agreed that the lead petitioner be informed accordingly.

B. Trial Road Closure in West Bridgford (Ref:2020/0411)

9. A 22 signature petition was presented to the 25 March 2021 meeting of the County Council by Councillor Jonathan Wheeler requesting a trial closure for through traffic on Devonshire Road at West Bridgford.

10. The petition has been raised by local residents who have concerns regarding the volume and speed of traffic that utilises the road, conflict of two way traffic due to the presence of the railway bridge; in addition to safety worries for cyclists that use this route. Residents also feel that closing the road will encourage locals to walk or cycle, instead of using their cars.

11. Nottinghamshire County Council takes road safety very seriously and has consistently invested in highway improvements in a bid to reduce accidents and increase safety on the County's network for drivers, pedestrians and cyclists.

12. The Council are unable to accede to the closure requested, as Devonshire Road provides one of only two points south of Melton Road where the highway crosses the former railway line and its closure would cause significant severance to cyclists, as well as other road users. It would also have significant adverse impacts on the Melton Road and Musters Road junction. In addition, a closure would also cause difficulties for vehicles, due to the lack of turning area available on the road and the inability to create such an area.

13. The Council have however previously implemented features on this road in a bid to lower traffic speeds. For example, a mandatory 20mph speed limit was recently introduced in order to incorporate the road in our strategic cycle network. This is in addition to 'children' warning signage incorporating a 'school' plate. A traffic count to monitor the effectiveness of these measures would be undertaken.

14. It was agreed that the lead petitioner be informed.

C. Resurfacing Surgeys Lane (Ref:2020/0413)

15. A 162 signature petition was presented to the 25 March 2021 meeting of the County Council by Councillor Michael Payne requesting that Surgeys Lane in Arnold be fully resurfaced as a matter of urgency.

16. The petition states that Surgeys Lane is a thoroughfare to hundreds of homes in Arnold and also serves as part of a major bus route meaning it is subject to a high volume of vehicular traffic. It also states that Surgeys Lane is covered in a patchwork quilt of repairs and potholes and seriously defected at intervals along its entire stretch.

17. The most recent condition survey of the County's Unclassified road network has shown that resurfacing work is required on some major sections of Surgeys Lane. All sites are assessed for a variety of observed damage, including cracking, rutting, subsidence, patching, crazing (so-called 'crocodile cracking'), chipping loss and general ride quality. All sites which required work will be subsequently prioritised (assessed against similar sites) and priority given to those locations which already attract a significant amount of reactive maintenance (potholes) and provide the highest usage (measured by traffic counts, bus routes, number of commercial, retail and domestic properties) along with their amenity value in terms of the location of schools, health centres, emergency services and so on.

18. This is not to say that those streets which do not have high amenity value or usage are simply left behind as the process requires us to strike a balance between the percentage of the site which is in poor condition alongside the overall usage. Lower amenity sites will still score highly if the overall condition is poor enough.
19. Surgeys Lane does not currently feature in the Capital Maintenance Programme for 2021/22, however, it may still be near the top of the prioritised listings once the process is completed. It should be borne in mind that the prioritisation of all sites is the only fair way in which the County Council is able to allocate available funds to the correct sites, in the correct order.
20. Until such time as Surgeys Lane can be resurfaced, it will continue to be inspected regularly and any safety defects attended to in line with the County Council's 'Highway Inspection & Risk Manual'
21. It was agreed that the lead petitioner be informed.

D. Request to fully resurface Lodge Farm Lane in Redhill (Ref:2020/0414)

22. A 59 signature petition was presented to the 25 March 2021 meeting of the County Council by Councillor Michael Payne requesting that Lodge Farm Lane in Redhill is fully resurfaced as a matter of urgency.
23. The petition states that Lodge Farm Lane is a thoroughfare to hundreds of homes in Redhill and subject to a high volume of vehicular traffic, covered in a patchwork quilt of repairs and potholes and seriously defected at intervals along its stretch.
24. The most recent condition survey of the County's Unclassified road network has shown that resurfacing work is required on Lodge Farm Lane. The worst section appears to be the opening 280m or so from Redhill Road up to Houldsworth Rise. All sites are assessed for a variety of observed damage, including cracking, rutting, subsidence, patching, crazing (so-called 'crocodile cracking'), chipping loss and general ride quality.
25. All sites which required work will be subsequently prioritised (assessed against similar sites) and priority given to those locations which already attract a significant amount of reactive maintenance (potholes) and provide the highest usage (measured by traffic counts, bus routes, number of commercial, retail and domestic properties) along with their amenity value in terms of the location of schools, health centres, emergency services and so on. This is not to say that those streets which do not have high amenity value or usage are simply left behind as the process requires us to strike a balance between the percentage of the site which is in poor condition alongside the overall usage. Lower amenity sites will still score highly if the overall condition is poor enough.
26. Lodge Farm Lane does not currently feature in the Capital Maintenance Programme for 2021/22, however, it may still be near the top of the prioritised listings once the process is completed. It should be borne in mind that the prioritisation of all sites is the only fair way in which the County Council is able to allocate available funds to the correct sites, in the correct order.
27. Until such time as Lodge Farm Lane can be resurfaced, it will continue to be inspected regularly and any safety defects attended to in line with the County Council's 'Highway Inspection & Risk Manual'.

28. It was agreed that the lead petitioner be informed.

E. Request for a pedestrian crossing on Wellin Lane, Edwalton (Ref:2020/0412)

29. A 342 signature petition was presented to the 25 March 2021 meeting of the County Council by Councillor Jonathan Wheeler requesting the installation of a zebra crossing on Wellin Lane, Edwalton near Edwalton Primary School.

30. Wellin Lane has a school crossing patrol site near the school but unfortunately the site has been vacant for some time. A school crossing patrol, operating at the start and end of the school day, is still considered to be the most appropriate form of crossing to help Edwalton Primary School pupils cross at this location. Via EM Ltd has therefore worked with the school and advertised locally around the site and on its website, but have so far been unsuccessful in finding a replacement patrol. In the future Via EM Ltd are looking to develop a technique using social media adverts targeted at local areas, key demographics and times of day. In the meantime Via EM Ltd will look to include the school patrol position in their next round of recruitment advertising.

31. The County Council receives far more requests for pedestrian crossings (such as puffin or zebra crossings) than it is able to fund and therefore requests for crossings are prioritised based on the number of people crossing, the volume of traffic and other relevant factors such as accident history at a proposed location so that the available funding helps the greatest number of people. For road safety reasons formal crossings are also currently only installed where they are used by pedestrians throughout the day.

32. A pedestrian and traffic survey will therefore be undertaken to determine whether a pedestrian crossing at this location should be prioritised for future funding. At locations where formal crossings aren't provided, alternative measures are also considered to help overcome issues raised. The Council will therefore also carry out an assessment of the site to determine if there are alternative options to a formal crossing that could be considered for inclusion in a future years' highways programme.

33. It was agreed that the lead petitioner be informed.

Petition considered by the Children and Young People's Committee

F. Petition against the closure of the residential unit at Fountaindale Special School (Ref:2020/0415)

34. A petition with over 1,700 signatures was presented to the 25 March 2021 meeting of the County Council by Councillor Samantha Deakin against the closure of the residential unit at Fountaindale Special School which took place at the beginning of January 2021.

35. The decision to close the residential unit was taken by Children and Young People's Committee on 30th November 2020 following a consultation process approved by the Committee on 21st September 2020, which followed the Department for Education's statutory guidance on making significant changes to maintained schools.

36. Fountaindale Special School joined the Evolve Multi Academy Trust on 1st April 2021, becoming the Harlow Academy.

37. The petition raised several issues not covered in the original Children and Young People's Committee report which approved the closure of the residential unit. These issues relate to:
- the original consultation and decision-making process
 - a statement made by the then Leader of the County Council dated 20th January 2021
 - the timing of the information provided to parents and carers about the change in governance status of the school.
38. The Department for Education's guidance on 'Making significant changes to maintained schools' clearly identifies the Local Authority as the decision maker regarding the proposed closure of the residential unit. The consultation process followed the Department for Education's guidance and the responses considered by Elected Members when making their decision.
39. The letter from the then Leader of the County Council dated 20th January 2021 did accurately state that the residential provision at Fountaindale Special School was not specifically named in the provision included in the Education, Health and Care Plans of students attending the school who lived in Nottinghamshire. All the other relevant local authorities were contacted as part of the consultation process on the unit's closure and no objections were received.
40. Parents and carers were aware of the proposed change in governance arrangements of the school following the Ofsted inspection in February 2020, which judged the school to be Inadequate. Once a school is judged to be Inadequate by Ofsted, an Academy Order is issued by the Secretary of State for Education. Governing bodies as a result lose their powers to decide the future of the school. At the time of the consultation the school was under an Academy Order. Details of the Evolve Trust's involvement could not be shared due to commercial sensitivity at the time.
41. Although the Evolve Academy Trust sought confirmation about the status of the residential unit, the County Council has had no discussions with the Trust about keeping the residential unit open beyond January 2021. The decision about how best to use space previously used for the residential unit lies with the Harlow Academy and the Evolve Academy Trust.
42. The Committee agreed that
- 1) the contents of the report be noted, underlining that due process was followed and the original decision was appropriate;
 - 2) the lead petitioner be informed accordingly;
 - 3) the outcome of the Committee's consideration be reported to Full Council.

Statutory and Policy Implications

43. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Statutory and Policy Implications

3. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

RECOMMENDATION/S

It is recommended that the contents of the report be noted.

Councillor Neil Clarke MBE – Chairman of Transport and Environment Committee
Councillor Tracey Taylor – Chairman of Children and Young People’s Committee

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Background Papers and Published Documents

- Responses to Petitions Presented to the Chairman of the County Council – Transport and Environment Committee, 15 June 2021 (published)
- Closure of Residential Unit at Fountaindale Special School – Response to Petition – Children and Young People’s Committee, 21 June 2021

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All