

COUNTY COUNCIL LOCAL COMMITTEE FOR SOUTH LAKELAND

Minutes of a Meeting of the County Council Local Committee for South Lakeland held on Thursday, 28 November 2019 at 10.00 am at Council Chamber, County Offices, Kendal

PRESENT:

Mr N Cotton (Chair)

Mr B Berry
Mr M Brereton
Mr W Clark
Mr SB Collins
Mr GD Cook
Mrs S Evans
Mrs BC Gray

Mr C Hogg
Mr P McSweeney
Mr P Thornton
Mr WJ Wearing
Mrs J Willis
Mr M Wilson

District Council

Mr J Brook

Parish Councils

Mr J Saunders

Officers in Attendance

Mr A Brown - Senior Manager - Asset Infrastructure and Transport

Mr P Hosking – Highways Network Manager

Mrs K Johnson - Area Manager, South Lakeland

Mrs V Upton - Team Leader Traffic Management – South

Also in attendance:

Mr R Ingham – Bicycle Mayor for Cumbria County Council

Public Participation:

Mr J Chapman, Mr G Kilner, Mr P Smillie and Mr G White

PART 1 – ITEMS CONSIDERED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

Apologies for absence were received from Mr G Archibald, Mr J Airey, Mr R Bingham, Mr J Bland and Mrs S Sanderson.

44 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

1 Request for a pedestrian link alongside the A6, Shap Road, Skelsmergh

Mr Graham White handed over a petition with 31 signatures on it, on behalf of the local community. A footpath was requested and this was supported by the Parish Council.

Mr John Chapman – Chairman of Skelsmergh and Scalthwaiterigg Parish Council (in supporting the petition) made the following points in his statement:

- The parish of Skelsmergh and Scalthwaiterigg straddles the A6 to the north of Kendal from the town boundary to the Selside boundary approximately 3 miles north.
- The current year's precept was £4661 of which a substantial part is committed to staff costs and standing expenditure. The statutory maximum permitted amount for Section 137 discretionary spending is £3,101.84.
- Efforts by the parish council to establish a surfaced path date back to the consultation by SLDC on the application to convert redundant agricultural buildings in 2000. The parish council's recommendation was disregarded at the planning stage.
- County Councillors Thornton and Collins had provided financial support when the parish council tried to revive the establishment of a surfaced path, the total cost of which was over £60,000.
- The establishment of a surfaced path was the solution to which the parish council and the residents remain committed and they will continue to argue for
- In the interim, a measure the residents would be prepared to accept was a mown strip but this, too, has been denied by highway managers, allegedly to comply with conservation measures.
- Research has identified that a relatively cheap and easy solution could be found by the use of free-draining Terram 'Grass Protecta' matting, the sort of product which is used extensively for surfacing car parks at venues and events. This is held in place by ground staples and permits grass to grow through.
- We have no estimate for labour as yet but if it were to equal the cost for materials the whole project could be realised for less than £10,000. The main issue is the need to have the approval of highway engineers.
- We believe that the works would have no measurable effect on the adjacent highway and we also submit that it should be paid for as a minor highway improvement.
- We think that there is a good case so residents of Kiln Croft can have access to local shops on foot. We ask officers to consider the proposal and ascertain its feasibility and ask that the County Council funds the footpath.

The Chair thanked Mr Chapman

Mr White then made a statement covering the following points:

- On the face of it, the petition appeared simple – a request to have a verge cut along a stretch of the A6
- The petition was the latest act in exasperation after nearly 20 years of campaigning for a footpath alongside the stretch of road
- He had documentation in support of the campaign starting with a please to Skelsmergh Parish Council dated September 2000 which included letters of support from current and previous MPs
- It was a busy stretch of trunk road and the lack of path put pedestrians at risk from traffic travelling at the national speed limit
- The route of the footpath was explained in detail
- The area was traditionally rural but in the 1960s Skelsmergh Hall had been split into 2 residences, then further properties were built along the access road to the farm
- In 2002 Kiln Croft was created by development of the far buildings into 11 properties. Further properties had been built with more in the process of being built.
- The area now had 26 properties and over 50 residents including families with children
- Every time a planning application had been considered by the Council, there had been an opportunity to insist on a pedestrian access along the A6 but this had never materialised
- 6 years ago SLDC agreed that a path would be appropriate and offered a grant of £21,000 which was dependent on the community raising £40,000 to meet the cost of the work.
- This was unachievable which meant that pedestrians walked a dangerous path or used the uneven verge and due to the Council decision to stop regularly mowing verges this was no longer an option as the verge was overgrown
- Members were asked to note the number of signatories but represented virtually everyone in the community. Members were asked to note the comments
- Mr Thornton talked about redeveloping the already existing piece of footpath down the A6 and had said that the County Council should be putting in place measures to enable every child to walk or cycle safely to school. He asked about the children of Skelsmergh as there was no footpath at all.
- The petition asked for grass cutting but what residents wanted was a footpath

The Chair read out the following response:

Thank you for presenting your petition to Local Committee today. As you say the local desire for a footway provision at this location has been evident for some time with this last being looked at in detail in 2014. At that time the estimated cost of the project was indeed £65,000 for a traditionally constructed footway.

I note that you are now requesting that Cumbria Highways consider an alternative matting approach to be laid on the verge rather than a traditional footway construction. We will consider this solution and respond to you in due course regarding its suitability in this location taking into account any future maintenance implications. If this option is considered viable a cost for the works will be developed and funding will need to be sought from funds other than the Local Committee's devolved highway maintenance funds.

Mr White asked whether the Committee would consider funding of a footpath rather than the Terram 'Grass Protecta'. The Highways Network Manager stated that this was requested in the submission to the Committee and that in order to deliver the provision of a footpath, a funding stream would need to be made available. It was queried whether Community Infrastructure Levy funding had been used. It was confirmed that it had not.

2 Petition regarding the cessation of the 552 Bus Service

Mr Peter Smillie, the Chair of Arnside Parish Council presented a Petition with 1021 signatories. The petition urged the County Council to reconsider its decision to stop subsidising public transport and work with bus companies to find a way to fully reinstate the 552 bus service in order to provide daily access to local villages, the town of Kendal and other key locations such as Westmorland General Hospital. The petition was signed by people who lived along the old 552 bus route. This had been recently terminated by Stagecoach as it had lost the school bus contract.

Mr Smillie made the following points:

- Residents needed the bus service for work, there used to be a 6 days a week bus service
- Mark Hodgkiss had managed to retain a Monday to Wednesday service on a once a day basis
- There were 3000 residents in the area who thought they deserved more than a 3 days a week, once a day bus service
- People would use the service if one was provided
- People couldn't use the current service to get to work due to the timings of the service
- With regard to hospital visits, stops could be made on request but appointments were not allocated around the bus timetable
- A bus service fit for purpose was required

The Chairman read out the following response:

The County Council is very pleased that a new operator has stepped in to maintain the service particularly that they have now decided to maintain the service for Sedgwick and Natland

We would encourage all those who signed the petitions to make use of the service, even on an occasional basis, to help ensure that the operator finds the route viable to maintain, and potentially in future restores to running six days a week.

If anyone has feedback or suggestions how the service can be made more attractive to potential new users, I would encourage them to contact the operator or the County Council's Public Transport team.

Discussion ensued on the contract requirements during the tender process. Mr Smillie advised on the reasons for the Stagecoach contract being terminated. A member asked that during the tendering process, officers give consideration to the wider implications to the community of bus companies losing contracts. The Cabinet Member for Finance commented on the strict regulations in the contracting process which the Chair acknowledged.

3 The recreational 'off road' use of county roads, particularly UCR 5015 (Borwick Ground-High Oxen Cross) and county responsibilities in the matter.

Mr Kilner made the following statement:

My name is Graham Kilner. I am a resident of Hawkshead Hill and I recently circulated a note to the Chairman and members of your Traffic and Transportation Working Group requesting a meeting to discuss the issue of recreational 'Off-Road' use of County Roads. But as I have received neither an acknowledgement nor response, it seemed right that I should make a brief statement to this committee.

I live by, and am a regular user of, the unclassified road between Borwick Ground and High Oxon Fell, which is the road running to the north of Tarn Hows. This road, Unclassified County Road 5015, is heavily used by visitors; no longer used by horses because it is unsafe; and heavily used by off-road vehicles and motorcycles. Once used by regular local traffic, it has been systematically destroyed by inappropriate use. It is one of your approved HOTR routes.

You will all be aware that following representations from residents in Little Langdale concerning the nuisance and damage caused by off-road vehicles, the issue was considered recently by LDNPA, who decided that it wasn't much of a problem. This was not entirely unexpected because the NPA will usually support any 'commercial adventure attraction' in the Lake District. And it can afford to be indifferent to the impact on these roads because it is not responsible for their maintenance -you are.

A range of euphemistic expressions is used to describe these unclassified county roads. They are called 'trails', 'tracks', 'green roads', or 'un-surfaced'. None of these are legal terms, and none are correct. But they serve to provide the impression that they are un-made or un-metalled roads. They are not. They are, or were, metalled roads for which you are responsible -and responsible for maintaining. Legally, they are no different to the A590 – they are roads '*maintainable at the public expense*'. And this is not permissive. Under section 41 of the 1980 Highways Act you are bound to maintain them.

41 (1) the authority who are for the time being the highway authority for a highway maintainable at the public expense are under a duty..... To maintain the highway.'

Note the word, duty. You have failed to maintain these roads, failed to undertake your duty, so, have effectively abandoned them– which is illegal. Furthermore, in encouraging ‘off-roader’ use with its inevitable consequential damage to the structure of these roads, (which is an offence (Highways Act S131)), I believe you are treading on thin ice.

In addition, as these are county roads, you are liable for any loss to a member of the public as a result of your failure to maintain. (Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1961)

It is also known that under the ludicrous ‘consensus management’ arrangements, third parties have been unofficially carrying out ‘so called’ maintenance on some of these roads. This is also illegal (Highways Act Section 131).

Importantly, in failing to maintain these roads you have failed to maintain the value of the asset, a key objective of any maintenance system. So, abandonment of your duty has led to public financial loss with a consequential cost to put right which will be a charge on the public purse- a point that the District Auditor has been known to take an interest in.

It is incredible that any County Council could get itself into such a position. Off-roading is defined as the driving over challenging terrain. How could any self-respecting highway authority ever permit any of its roads to be described as ‘challenging terrain’?

However, how you got yourself into to such a position is history, and the decisions which led to it probably long pre-dated the involvement of any current member or officer of the Council. But, of course, once you know-you know. And you know there is a problem.

So, where do you go from here? I assume that, if you don’t already know, you will seek to confirm that what I assert is correct. And if confirmed, and because no public authority can knowingly act illegally, you will need to seek solutions to the problem.

For the last eight months I have been trying to engage with your officers on this issue, without success. Letter have either been ignored, or have simply stated County Policy, which suggests that officers know exactly what the problem is but prefer to keep their heads in the sand. The simple underlying position is that these unclassified roads are your roads, your responsibility, and your duty to maintain.

You have acted illegally in abandoning them; permitted third parties to commit offences of damaging the highway; permitted unlawful works on the highway; failed to secure the value of the highway asset, and put the Council at financial risk through consequential accidents.

It is time to act. The first responsible response should be to prevent further deterioration and damage to this and other similar roads by making appropriate

temporary traffic restriction orders. This will give you breathing space to consider ways to remedy the situation.

The Chair read out the following response:

Within Cumbria there are some 390km of unsurfaced minor roads, of which approximately 158km, or 40%, falls within the South Lakeland area.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 redefined the network of routes available for recreational green road driving. Since the 2006 Act routes shown on the Definitive Map as Public Footpath, Public Bridleway and Restricted Bridleway do not have any public motor vehicle rights of way.

The Hierarchy of Trail Routes approach is County-wide and provides the basis for a sustainable management regime for mechanically propelled vehicles on legal routes, including unclassified county roads. The Hierarchy of Trails information is available on the Cumbria County website, providing extensive information to those wishing to use the routes.

The Hierarchy of Trail Routes is a management approach for the level of activity on green roads through voluntary restraint rather than statutory legislation.

The aim of the Hierarchy is not to promote or stop use but to eliminate irresponsible use. Between 1995 and 1997 over 100 unsealed unclassified roads (UCRs) and Byways Open to All Traffic (BOATs) were identified and surveyed by Rangers and local users, and then categorised by overall condition, likelihood of conflict with other users, proximity to buildings and livestock, and narrowness.

There is a three-colour code system which is explained on the County's website but essentially

- Green routes - proceed with caution:
- Amber routes - proceed with special care and attention and follow advice given by signs:
- Red routes - proceed only with great care and follow advice on signs explaining special controls in place:
Experience significant use, attract the greatest number of complaints regarding vehicular use, under the greatest pressure and are subject to the greatest conflict between users and users and the environment. Some routes cross the high fells and are badly eroded. Recreational vehicle users are asked to comply with voluntary restraint controls. For example 4x4s will be advised not to use certain routes, one way traffic will be recommended on others or users may be asked not to use a route between holiday dates when it is heavily used by walkers and horse-riders.

It is widely recognised that everyone should have an equal opportunity to enjoy the benefits of countryside access.

Management of routes includes maintenance and repair, such as large-scale drainage and re-surfacing projects by field teams and private contractors. Maintenance tasks are carried out by volunteers and local users acting as voluntary lengths men.

Turning now to the U5015. This is categorised as a red route on the Hierarchy of Trails. When the level of use was monitored between August and November 2000 this road had the highest level of use of any unsealed road in the LDNPA area at that time. Between 2003 and 2005 it was the second busiest road of the 20 surveyed at that time, according to figures supplied by the LDNPA. No more recent figures are available.

In your statement you mentioned that you had been in contact with Officers regarding this route. The Local Area Network Manager did inform you that the road would be surveyed to establish its current condition. The outcome of this survey is as follows.

The surface is a mixture of hard packed and loose stone with bedrock visible in some places. Within the last 3 years some minor works have taken place to reduce the difference in height between the packed stone surface and the exposed bedrock. There has been work undertaken by the LDNPA and user group maintenance. Works have also been undertaken to improve the drainage in some areas.

The survey shows that road is in the early stages of needing some works in targeted areas to include the placement of aggregate. The drainage is need of some clearance works and a further detailed culvert survey is required to establish the condition of these drainage systems.

Far from being unusable the route is still serviceable and the works identified will be prioritised for repair alongside other reported highway defects taking into account the road network hierarchy and the funding available.

Mr Kilner then stated that the response missed his point and that this was an important problem as the County Council had acted ultra-vires. He considered the response to be a 'hand off' to what was an important matter of principle. He stated that if the County Council did not act then he would take the matter further.

45 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that, the press and public not be excluded from the meeting for any items of business.

46 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

During the public participation item relating to the recreational 'off road' use of county roads, Mr Hogg advised that he was currently a member of the Lake District National Park Authority and at this meeting, he would only be listening to the information presented by the member of the public.

47 MINUTES

Correction: Page 9, Minute 29, Public Participation, 1st paragraph, last line, remove the word 'which'.

RESOLVED that, subject to the correction above, the minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

48 PRESENTATION: BICYCLE MAYOR FOR CUMBRIA

Mr Richard Ingham, the Elected Bicycle Mayor for Cumbria, gave a presentation on 'Bicycle Mayor of Cumbria – an ambition to change the way people of Cumbria travel'. Mr Ingham outlined the history behind his appointment as Cumbria's Elected Bicycle Mayor and talked about the importance of health and wellbeing, how the Elected Bicycle Mayor was a global initiative, the promotion of cycling as a mode of transport to be a catalyst for change, his support from all six MPs in Cumbria for the scheme, the election process and his remit. He reported on how he made his journey from Carlisle to Kendal to get to the meeting.

The presentation covered the following:

- Healthy Transport = Healthy Lives
- Emissions data for Oxford
- How to get the most from Kendal X cycle infrastructure
- Kendal X Cycle Plan
- Moving the Nation – a joint report
- Getting the best from Shap Road Cycleway
- Actions needed to achieve best value

Members welcomed the presentation and made a number of comments on cycling in general and provided specific examples of their experiences with cyclists in their divisions. Members commented on their support for sustainable public transport and the Healthy Ways to School initiative.

One member commented on a local issue where cyclists belonging to a social media page aimed to attain the fastest speed through a local village and wore dark clothes so they were therefore difficult to see. He commented on their use of bad language and asked Mr Ingham, as their representative, to encourage cyclists to have more considerate behaviour. Another member commented on similar cyclist behaviour but acknowledged it was not all cyclists. He referred to locked bicycle storage facilities at a car park in Kendal.

Another member commented on the lack of provision for bicycles on and the difficulty of booking space on trains. He asked Mr Ingham to lobby train companies to improve this situation. Mr Ingham stated that he would be addressing this and reported that in other countries, park and ride schemes were successful with bicycles available at train destinations.

A member expressed her opposition to the Shap Road Cycleway, detailing her objections. She commented on the inadequate width of the cycleway, it wasn't designed to a high standard and part of the route was very dangerous which could leave the County Council open to claims if someone was hurt. She did however, support safe routes.

In reporting on injuries sustained by a resident following a collision with a cyclist in his division a member asked Mr Ingham to ensure a full programme of education was available and that he lobbied for cycle ways which were fit for purpose.

One member considered that setting clear priorities was essential for the future to ensure people were more active and improved their mental health. The member emphasised the need for all schools to have a robust Travel Plan.

In response to members' points, Mr Ingham commented that bad behaviour was a snapshot of small numbers of cyclists and encouraged members to see the wider picture as there was a low number of cyclist/pedestrian accidents compared to high numbers of vehicle/pedestrian accidents. In terms of Shap Road Cycleway, Mr Ingham could not comment as it was not in situ but did advise that cycle routes were being designed using 1980s' guidance which was not fit for purpose, however this was being updated using best practice from other countries. Mr Ingham talked about his ambition for all secondary schools to be connected by a safe cycle network and on the behaviour change needed to encourage cycling as an option for short journeys.

In closing, Mr Ingham reported that to get a mass switch from vehicle to bicycle use, routes fit for purpose were needed and if increased plans were made for vehicle use, it would encourage further use. What was needed was a sustainable and balanced approach to travel.

Mr Ingham offered to escort members on a local bicycle tour.

The Chair thanked Mr Ingham for his presentation.

49 AREA PLANNING - SOUTH LAKELAND

A report was considered from the Executive Director – Corporate, Customer and Community Services regarding Area Planning in South Lakeland. The report provided service information and offered recommendations to South Lakeland Local Committee for approval from the Strategic Planning Working Group meeting held on 28 October 2019 and the Children and Young People's Working Group meeting held on 16 October 2019. The report also provided Local Committee with an update on activity against agreed priorities and provided an overview of the current budget position.

The Area Manager guided members through the activity undertaken since the last meeting of the Committee and drew members' attention to Ulverston's nomination to the Borderlands Board for inclusion in the Place Programme. The Local Member for

Ulverston East welcomed the nomination and reported on initiatives in the area such as Healthy Town initiative and on the strong network of interest groups which would work towards the success of the Place Programme. The nomination was supported by the Committee and a suggestion was made that the Local Committee hold a meeting in Ulverston.

Discussion turned to the work of the Children and Young People's Working Group. The Area Manager commented on the effectiveness of the work of the Group and advised that the Working Group would continue to support the Local Committee's agreed priorities but that not all of the additional funding may be spent. Mrs Evans thanked the Committee for the £10,000 to be vired into the 0-19 budget for investment in the priorities for young people. She invited members to the meeting of the Children and Young People's Working Group in January where young people would be attending.

In discussing the draft Minutes of the Windermere Ferry Advisory Group, it was moved and seconded that the wording in the report before the Local Committee (at 4.13(ii)) be amended to remove 'reduction' and replace it with 'review of'. This was agreed by assent of the Committee. A member commented on the recent changes to charges and advised that the County Council had not been adversely affected by the changes.

In relation to Working Together, the Area Manager reported on the lack of resources issue raised by members at the 30 September 2019 meeting. As agreed, she had informed the Executive Director – Economy and Infrastructure of members' concerns and additional resources had been put in place to enable the service to be effectively rolled out.

A member commented on the library review and emphasised their essential role as a central hub in the community. He asked for a full list of libraries. The library report would be circulated to the Committee by the Area Manager.

A short discussion took place on the importance of Parish Meeting members being invited to the South Lakeland Association of Local Councils meetings as well as Parish Councils. It was confirmed at the meeting that they were able to be a member of CALC if they wished.

RESOLVED that,

- 1.1 Members note the budget update for 2019-20 including the commitments and expenditure to date, Appendix A of the report.
- 1.2 Members note the work of the Strategic Planning Working Group as set out at paragraphs 4.1 through to 4.11 of the report.
- 1.3 Members note that Ulverston is the nominated town to be submitted to the Borderlands Board for inclusion in the Place Programme.

Children and Young People's Working Group

- 1.4 Members note the work of the Children and Young People’s Working Group as set out in the minutes at Appendix B of the report.
- 1.5 Members agree to vire £10,000 from the General Provisions budget to the 0-19 budget for investment in the priorities for young people.

Windermere Ferry Advisory Group

- 1.6 Members note the draft minutes of the Windermere Ferry Advisory Group (Appendix C to the report).
- 1.7 Members note the proposal of the Windermere Ferry Advisory Group regarding the review of the future pricing structure with paragraph 4.13 (ii) of the report being amended to remove ‘reduction’ and replace it with ‘review of’ and refer this to the Executive Director Economy and Infrastructure for consideration as part of the recommendation to Cabinet.

50 2019/20 HIGHWAYS DEVOLVED REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET UPDATE REPORT

An update report was considered from the Executive Director – Economy and Infrastructure regarding the 2019/20 Highways Devolved Revenue and Capital Budgets. The report presented the Highways Revenue and Devolved Capital and Non-Devolved Capital Budget finance reports and updated members as to current progress on the budget lines as detailed in the appendices attached to the report.

The Highways Network Manager explained that the figures in the report were to the end of September 2019 and therefore were slightly out of date. He asked members to contact him directly with local queries.

For the January 2020 meeting, he advised that the 2019/20 Highways Devolved Revenue and Capital Budget Update Report would be despatched after the Agenda was published to ensure the most up to date figures were included.

RESOLVED that, Local Committee notes the revenue and capital budget allocations for 2019/20 and the commitments and expenditure recorded to the end of September 2019 and shown in Appendices 1, 2 and 3 of the report.

51 HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION WORKING GROUP MEETING 16TH OCTOBER 2019

A report was considered from the Executive Director – Economy and Infrastructure regarding South Lakeland Local Committee’s Highways and Transportation Working Group meeting on 16 October 2019. The report provided the Minutes of the meeting of the Highways and Transportation Working Group (the Working Group) held on 16 October 2019 and asked Local Committee to note the Minutes.

The Chair of the Highways and Transportation Working Group guided members through the business conducted at the meeting held on 16 October 2019. He talked about the presentation from the County Bridges Manager which had been most informative as it had outlined the comprehensive work undertaken by the team and highlighted the team's commitment to bridge work in the county. The Chair considered that jet patching work would be beneficial on rural roads.

Mr Clark thanked Rob Huck and the Highways Team for the work undertaken on the overnight closure of Waterhead as all of the work had been completed on time.

RESOLVED that, Local Committee notes the Minutes of the Working Group meeting of 16th October 2019 which are attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

52 HIGHWAYS ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Members received a presentation from the Senior Manager - Asset Infrastructure and Transport which covered the following:

- The 2015 Highways Asset Management Strategy
- Highways Asset Management Strategy 2020-2025
- Highways' vision
- Highways Delivery Plan
- Highways Service customers
- Working together
- Enterprise and efficiency
- Prevention and Early Intervention
- Digital Transformation
- Proposed timetable for the new Strategy

In concluding the presentation, the Senior Manager - Asset Infrastructure and Transport asked members for any feedback on the Delivery Plan, either directly or through Mr Collins, the Committee's representative on the Highways Improvement Board.

Members welcomed the improved focus on customers. Members talked about the importance of them being informed in good time about work that had been undertaken and future planned work in their own and adjoining electoral divisions. It was essential that they were fully informed about highways work in order for them to be able to pass on information to Parish Councils and residents.

It was queried whether a system could be developed that could inform members about works in all divisions. A member thought this kind of system would also benefit officers. Members considered themselves to be key to customer service delivery as use could be made of their local knowledge and they could disseminate information in their divisions.

Discussion took place on members being treated as special customers in the Strategy. The Cabinet Member for Customers, Transformation and Fire and Rescue considered that members were customers like the public and therefore should be

treated similarly. The Senior Manager - Asset Infrastructure and Transport acknowledged that members should be included in the Strategy and be integral to Highways processes.

It was acknowledged by members that customer service had improved in 2019 as email feedback and automated responses to customers had improved.

A short discussion took place on including the Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership in the Strategy. A query was raised on whether progress had been made with the Utility Permit scheme and how customers would benefit from the scheme. The Senior Manager - Asset Infrastructure and Transport explained that the scheme was scheduled to be implemented in February 2020, would cover all works on the highway and give permits to dig. It was confirmed that permitting information could be shared with the public and that penalties would be in place in order to hold organisations to account for work not completed on time.

After a member talked about the commercialisation of local authority services and asked about training for highways staff due to their changing roles, the Senior Manager - Asset Infrastructure and Transport reported on the work undertaken with other local authorities in order to share best practice. The County Council also worked with ADEPT who undertook research and collated examples of other authorities' work. He reported that the County Council was at the forefront of some work practices such as undertaking digital surveys. He confirmed that the County Council was assessing training need and undertaking staff training. A member suggested training for members also.

The ability to be able to report linked and multiple faults on HIMS was requested. The Cabinet Member for Customers, Transformation and Fire and Rescue explained how the HIMS package was originally implemented for officers managing highways issues and this had been extended to be public facing. She acknowledged that an efficient public facing system was required. The Senior Manager - Asset Infrastructure and Transport explained that members would be informed of a new Highways system at future meetings of Local Committees.

One member considered that the new Strategy gave additional opportunities for Working Together. He thought that everyone should be able to see current or programmed works and that information should be gathered from multiple sources and shared with everyone.

With reference to the Public Participation item heard earlier in the meeting relating to the recreational 'off road' use of county roads particularly the UCR 5015 (Borwick Ground-High Oxen Cross), it was requested that this be considered at a future meeting of the Local Committee's Highways and Transportation Working Group.

RESOLVED that, the recreational 'off road' use of county roads particularly the UCR 5015 (Borwick Ground-High Oxen Cross) be considered at a future meeting of the Local Committee's Highways and Transportation Working Group.

53 PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

a Outside Bodies

Mr Wilson talked about the Veterans and Armed Forces Covenant work. He considered that it would be useful to work with organisations to see if special events such as the hosting of breakfasts (which were successful in other areas of the country) could take place.

As the Committee's Autism Champion, Mr Wilson was pleased to report on the excellent work going on around the county which was helping families with education and the diagnosis of autism.

b Children's Champion

Mrs Evans reported on a current Christmas collection for Care Leavers. Members were asked to leave their donations in the Area Team office with the Area Manager and Community Development Team.

54 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Committee would be held on 29 January 2020 at 10.00am at County Offices, Kendal.

The meeting ended at 12.30 pm