

BRAINTREE LOCAL HIGHWAYS PANEL MINUTES – 16th January 2025 at 5.00pm

Meeting held ‘In Person’

Chairman:	Councillor C Siddall (Chairman) (ECC)
Panel Members:	Councillor L Bowers-Flint (ECC) Councillor G Butland (ECC) Councillor P Schwier (ECC) Councillor P Thorogood (ECC) Councillor K Bowers (BDC) Councillor R van Dulken (BDC) Councillor J Coleman (BALC) Councillor K McDonald (BALC)
Officers:	Jennifer Boxall - Highway Liaison Officer (EH). Dan Maclean – Highway Liaison Team Leader (EH) Esme McCambridge – Operations Strategy and Business Support Manager (BDC)
Secretariat:	Alison Webb – Governance and Members Officer (BDC) (EH – Essex Highways) (ECC - Essex County Council) (BDC - Braintree District Council) (BALC - Braintree Association of Local Councils)

Item		Owner
1.	Welcome: Councillor C Siddall, Chairman, welcomed all attendees to the meeting and he invited everyone to introduce themselves. For the information of members of the public who were in attendance at the meeting, Councillor Siddall outlined the process which was followed for submitting proposed highway improvement schemes to Braintree Local Highways Panel, how these were processed; and the ability of the Panel and Essex County Council’s Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Sustainable Transport to approve such schemes.	
2.	Apologies for Absence, Declarations of Interest and Public Questions: Apologies for Absence:	

	Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J Ayten (BDC), Councillor K Barnes (BALC), Councillor T Cunningham (ECC), Councillor D Louis (ECC), Councillor R Playle (ECC), and Councillor G Spray (BDC). An apology for absence was also received from Lisa Hinman, Area Manager (North Essex Parking Partnership) Declarations of Interest: There were no interests declared. Public Questions: The meeting was not held in public, but Councillor Siddall, the Chairman, allowed Mr A Panton, Mr D Price and Mr P Ridley to each make a statement, the details of which are summarised below. <u>Statements by Mr A Panton, Mr D Price and Mr P Ridley</u> Messrs Panton, Price and Ridley referred to problems associated with the use of Bulford Mill Lane, Cressing, which was a narrow, bending lane situated between Cressing and Black Notley. In particular, reference was made to the increased use of the lane by vehicles and HGVs trying to avoid traffic congestion on the A120 at Galleys Corner roundabout, Braintree and use by residents of new housing developments recently constructed nearby. It was reported that vehicles sometimes became stuck in the lane and had to be recovered. There had also been a number of accidents along the lane, and it was often difficult for emergency vehicles to gain access. The lane was also subject to flooding, drainage channels had become blocked, and the condition of the lane was deteriorating. Although there was not a footpath along the lane, it was used by pedestrians, particularly people walking to and from Cressing railway station, which posed a danger. It was stated that the issues affecting the lane had been discussed for many years, but nothing had been done to rectify the situation. Messrs Panton, Price and Ridley asked Members of Braintree Local Highways Panel to support scheme LBRA242020 - Traffic calming measures at Bulford Mill Lane, Cressing, which had been submitted for consideration by the Panel. Members of the Panel noted that this scheme had been validated, but that it had been categorised as 'red'. Essex Highways' Design Team had concluded that there was nothing that could be done from an engineering perspective to improve	
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	the condition of the lane and they had recommended that the proposed scheme should not be taken further. Whilst Members of the Panel sympathised with residents of the lane, it was acknowledged that the Panel had limited resources, that its decisions had to be based on guidance and data, and that funding was limited. It was noted that some small scale improvements had already been implemented in the lane. It was also reported that a reduction in the speed limit would not necessarily provide a solution, that people should drive according to the conditions of the road, and that it was for the Police to enforce use of the highway. Furthermore, it was noted that flooding issues and the erosion of kerbs were maintenance matters, which were outside the scope of the Panel. However, it was possible that funding was available to deal with flooding. In addition, it was reported that matters falling outside the remit of the Panel could be referred to Essex County Council's Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Sustainable Transport. The Chairman thanked Messrs Panton, Price and Ridley for attending the meeting and he indicated that he would pursue the matter on their behalf and discuss it with Essex County Council's Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Sustainable Transport. Messrs Panton, Price and Ridley left the meeting at this point together with other members of the public, who had attended to observe.	
3.	Minutes: The Minutes of the meeting of Braintree Local Highways Panel held on 29th August 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.	
4.	Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting Held on 29th August 2024: Dan Maclean, Essex Highways, provided an update on matters which had been raised at the last meeting. Particular reference was made to one matter and the following update was provided: - <u>Minute 4 - Matters Arising from the Minutes of the meeting held on 29th April 2024 (Minute 5 - 'Funded Schemes 2023/24)</u> LBRA162029 – 'Quiet Lane', Water Lane, Shalford Estimated Cost: - £1,250	

	It had been reported, that although this scheme had been completed, it was unlikely to allay the concerns of local residents about the use of the lane. The lane was a single track with a 60mph speed limit, and it was used as a 'rat run' if there was traffic congestion elsewhere. Dan Maclean, Essex Highways, had been asked to review the scheme to determine if anything could be done to alleviate the issues affecting the lane and he had spoken to Officers within Essex Highways' Design Team who had suggested that a speed and volume survey could be carried out to ascertain whether the 'Quiet Lane' status of Water Lane was relevant. Members of the Panel had agreed that the speed and volume survey should be carried out. <u>Update:</u> - Dan Maclean, Essex Highways, reported that the speed and volume survey had not been carried out yet. In discussing this issue, Members of the Panel were advised that the 'Quiet lane' status of Water Lane, Shalford could be used as an example to illustrate the effectiveness of 'Quiet lanes'. Dan Maclean, Essex Highways, reported that steps had been taken to implement all other action points referred to in the Minutes of 29th August 2024.	
5.	Funded Schemes 2024/25: Consideration was given to a report on the Panel's Funded Schemes for 2024/25, which had been recommended for approval. The report provided an update on the current position of all schemes in the 2024/25 programme of work. Members of the Panel were advised that funding of £203,894 had been allocated to Braintree Local Highways Panel for the year 2024/25 and that the schemes which had been approved had a total value of £184,738. A sum of £19,156 remained available for expenditure. However, it was not proposed that this sum should be allocated at this time. Members of the Panel were reminded that a Chairs' Panel comprising Essex County Council's Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Sustainable Transport and the Chairmen of each Local Highways Panel across the County had been established to consider larger scale and more expensive highway schemes and to determine if these should be funded. Details of the schemes within the Braintree District which had been approved by the Chairs' Panel were set out in the report. These schemes had a total value of £117,000. Specific reference was made to scheme LBRA163006 – (Walking) Footway, Boars Tye Road, Silver End Estimated Cost: -	

Jennifer Boxall, Essex Highways, to amend the description of scheme LBRA212038 from the provision of 'gateway features and a footway' to the provision of a 'vehicle activated sign' and to arrange for a speed survey to be carried out.

When discussing scheme LBRA202020 – (Traffic Management) Traffic management improvements, Braintree Road, Gosfield, Estimated Cost:- Not applicable (in validation), it was reported that this scheme had been approved by Essex County Council's Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Sustainable Transport in accordance with a Cabinet Member Action, subject to the results of the latest speed survey to be carried out complying with the criteria for a reduced speed limit. Jennifer Boxall, Essex Highways, to implement scheme LBRA202020, subject to the results of the latest speed survey complying with the criteria for a reduced speed limit.

In discussing scheme LBRA232088 – (Traffic Management) Speed reduction and weight limit, B1053 Braintree Road between Wethersfield and Shalford, Estimated Cost: - Not applicable (status assessed as 'red'). It was agreed that this scheme, which had been assessed as 'red' as it did not meet the criteria, should be removed from Braintree Local Highways Panel's list of potential schemes and that Wethersfield Parish Council should be advised about its removal and the reason for it. Jennifer Boxall, Essex Highways, to inform Wethersfield Parish Council that scheme LBRA232088 has been removed from Braintree Local Highways Panel's list of potential schemes on the basis that it has been assessed as 'red' as it does not meet Essex Highways' criteria.

Reference was made to scheme LBRA242020 – (Traffic Management) Traffic calming measures, Bulford Mill Lane, Crossing, Estimated Cost: - Not applicable (status assessed as 'red'). In view of the discussion earlier in the meeting (Minute 2 (Public Question) refers), it was agreed, that despite being categorised as 'red' as it did not meet Essex Highways' criteria, this scheme should remain on the schedule of 'Schemes Awaiting Funding' to enable further investigation to be undertaken.

DECISION: That it be recommended that the following schemes, the status of which has been assessed as 'red' as they do not meet Essex Highways' criteria, are removed from Braintree Local Highways Panel's list of potential schemes: -

Traffic Management

	LBRA222080 – Speed reduction measures, School Lane, Foxearth Estimated Cost: - Not applicable LBRA242015 – Speed reduction measures, A131 Bulmer Tye j/w Hedingham Road, Church Road and Ryes Lane, Bulmer Tye Estimated Cost: - Not applicable LBRA232085 – Traffic calming measures and speed limit reduction, London Road, Kelvedon Estimated Cost: - Not applicable LBRA232088 – Speed reduction and weight limit, B1053 Braintree Road between Wethersfield and Shalford Estimated Cost: - Not applicable LBRA242012 – Raised kerbs at Bennett junction, Fiveash Lane/Ash Lane, Bradwell Estimated Cost: - Not applicable LBRA242018 – Traffic calming, B1508 Colchester Road btwn Eight Bells House and Normandie Way, Bures Hamlet Estimated Cost: - Not applicable LBRA242022 – HGV signage, Maltings Lane, Witham Estimated Cost: - Not applicable LBRA242023 – Traffic calming measures, Colne Road, Halstead Estimated Cost: - Not applicable <u>Walking</u> LBRA213001 – Footway improvements to provide pedestrian route to Colne Valley Railway, Yeldham Road, Castle Hedingham Estimated Cost: - Not applicable Action By: J Boxall, Essex Highways, as indicated.	
7.	Any Other Business: <u>Greenway North Essex Cyclepath</u> The Chairman referred to a letter, which he had received from Mr P Kohn providing an update on the Greenway North Essex Cycle path project. This scheme had previously benefitted from funding approved by Braintree Local Highways Panel.	J Boxall (HLO)

	It was reported that a revised planning application for the length of cycle path running between Coggeshall and Earls Colne had been granted in December 2024 and that steps were being taken to raise money for the scheme. It was agreed that a copy of the letter should be circulated to Members of the Panel. Action By: A Webb, Braintree District Council, to circulate a copy of the letter received from Mr P Kohn to Members of the Panel. <u>Braintree Local Highways Panel – BALC Membership</u> It was reported that there was currently a vacancy on Braintree Local Highways Panel for a representative of Braintree Association of Local Councils (BALC). Four representatives in total were permitted. BALC is invited to appoint a representative to fill the vacancy.	A Webb (BDC) BALC
8.	Date of Next Meeting: The next meeting of Braintree Local Highways Panel is scheduled to take place ‘in person’ on Thursday, 27th March 2025 at Causeway House, Bocking End, Braintree starting at 5.00pm. Future meetings of the Panel are scheduled for Thursday, 26th June 2025 and Thursday, 25th September 2025. Both meetings will be held ‘in person’ at Causeway House starting at 5.00pm. The meeting commenced at 5.00pm and closed at 6.20pm. Councillor C Siddall (Chairman)	

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