

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Response to Approach for Finchampstead Parish Council on Footways, Kerbsides and Road Sign Issues</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Community & Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 10 <sup>th</sup> September 2018
<b>WARD</b>	None specific;
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Josie Wragg, Director of Environment;
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	Norman Jorgensen & Anthony Pollock, Executive Members for Environment & Highways & Transport

## **OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

**To listen, engage and respond to Parish and Town Councils on specific highway concerns in their respective areas. And to recognise the part they can play on helping us improve.**

## **RECOMMENDATION**

- 1. To note the progress in dealing with the initial issues raised at the June Committee meeting;**
- 2. To look at strengthening the relationship between service delivery and the Parish & Town Councils.**

## **SUMMARY OF REPORT**

This report provides the actions taken following the approach from Finchampstead PC in relation to ongoing issues such as:

- Dirty highway signage
- Damaged highway signage
- Street cleansing
- Footpath encroachment
- Highway drainage
- Obscured signs

This report also sets out the importance of engagement to develop a better understanding of available resources and what the respective services should deliver and what issues such as private vegetation may not be as easy and quick to resolve.

## **Background**

The Council were approached by Finchampstead Parish Council on various highway issues and attended Overview & Scrutiny on 18<sup>th</sup> June when they presented various

issues as detailed above. To gain further understanding a meeting was arranged on 12<sup>th</sup> July which included representatives from; Cleaner & Greener, Traffic Management and Highway Drainage. This meeting was part meeting and part tour of the area. Following the meeting an Action Plan was drawn up that addressed the issues raised and is attached below.

### **Analysis of the Issues**

Dirty / damaged highway signage – Highway signage should be spotted through the normal highway inspections and where a sign cannot be read properly an order is raised to have it cleaned or even replaced.

Street cleansing – Street cleansing is a statutory function and in general residential roads are swept every six weeks but some main roads are swept every four weeks with some rural roads only being swept every ten weeks. This should include the removal of all litter and detritus for the carriageway and footway. However, weeds are not removed during a scheduled sweep as these are treated three time a year with a non-residual weed killer with the weeds gradually being removed during following sweeps. On some occasions when the spray doesn't work we do carry out a manual removal of weeds.

Footpath encroachment – This happens mainly on rural pathways where a sweeper cannot gain access and we see a gradual encroachment of detritus and ensuing vegetation thereby reducing the width of the footway. The situation is worse on footpaths that have vegetation on both sides and results in the manual removal of the established vegetation.

Highway drainage – Highway gullies (drains) are cleared/cleaned every six months to a year depending on road use with A roads being done every six months. The cleansing includes removing all liquid and detritus, then refilling and ensuring the drain is running away. If there's a problem they will either clear it whilst there or report it for further investigation/action.

Obscured signs – This is a serious issue and falls into two distinctive areas as detailed below:

- a) Vegetation that is owned / maintained by the Council or
- b) Vegetation that is privately owned

In relation to both a) and b) we recommend that residents call Customer Services to report this. If it falls under a) then Cleaner & Greener will instruct Grounds Maintenance Contractor, Tivoli to attend within a timescale depending on the urgency. If it falls under b) then Highways will write to the property concerned asking them to clear their vegetation (most residents respond to this) if this isn't acted on then a second, individually addressed letter is sent which generally has the desired result. However, we do have the option to remove the vegetation and recharge the work but this does require a third letter.

Please note that the above also applies to overhanging / encroaching vegetation.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION**

***The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.***

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	0	0	0
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	0	0	0
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	0	0	0

**Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision**

The current monitoring, inspection and operational resources deliver the current service and whilst we're always looking to improve the services we provide, any increases in these would require increased funding.

**Cross-Council Implications**

Highlights the importance of partnership working across the Council and with the Parish & Town

**List of Background Papers**

None

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