

## **ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL 3 OCTOBER 2017**

### **FOOTWAYS**

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#### **Summary**

1. The Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel will receive an update on:
  - implementation of the recommendations made by the Interim Footways Scrutiny Task Group
  - the additional £6million funding – allocation and councillor involvement
2. The Council's Manager for Highways Operations and Public Rights of Way has been invited to the meeting, as well as one of the Council's Public Health Consultants.
3. The Cabinet Members with responsibility for Highways and also for Environment have also been invited, as well as any members of the original Footways Scrutiny Task Group who are not on this Panel.

#### **Background**

4. In a notice of motion agreed at Council in November 2014, Council recognised the importance of walking as part of a healthy lifestyle and that in addition safe footways were especially important for the elderly to access local shops and services. At the time, there were concerns that the County's footways revenue budget of £800,000 in 2014/15 and beyond would be inadequate to maintain footways and that the inspection criteria was insufficiently rigorous to identify where the surface was unsafe for less able walkers.
5. As a result of the concerns expressed by the Council and the Budget Scrutiny Task Group, a proposal for a Scrutiny Task Group to examine in detail the issue of Footways was approved on 8 June 2015.
6. Unfortunately, due to matters arising including staff resources and changes in task group membership, the Scrutiny Task Group failed to reach a consensus over the content of the final report and it was agreed that an interim report be published and reviewed. The interim report was considered and agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board on 18 January 2017 and considered by Cabinet on 2 February 2017.
7. The County Council has invested £2.5m for core asset based maintenance of footways for 2017/18. In addition, the current administration has invested an additional £6m over a two year period for the improvement of footways. This additional funding is asset based and also leverages the experience and knowledge

from each local member to provide a tailored and focussed approach around areas of greatest need in each Division

8. A copy of the Footways Scrutiny Task Group Interim Report is attached at Appendix 1. The Council's Manager for Highways Operations and Public Rights of Way has prepared an update on work in response to the recommendations contained in the report, attached at Appendix 2.

### **Purpose of the Meeting**

9. Following the discussion, the Scrutiny Panel is asked to:

- agree any further information or scrutiny work required at this stage
- agree any comments to be forwarded to the Cabinet Member/s whose remits are relevant to footways.

### **Supporting Information**

Appendix 1 – Interim Report of the Footways Scrutiny Task Group (January 2017)

Appendix 2 – Update on the response to the Scrutiny Task Group's recommendations

### **Contact Points**

County Council Contact Points

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Specific Contact Points for this report

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### **Background Papers**

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Head of Legal and Democratic Services) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

Agenda and Minutes of

- Council on 13 November 2014 and 14 January 2016
- Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board on 8 June 2015 and 18 January 2017
- Cabinet on 2 February 2017

All Agendas and Minutes can be found on the County Council's website:

<http://worcestershire.moderngov.co.uk/uucoverpage.aspx?bcr=1>