

## COUNCIL 8 SEPTEMBER 2022 - AGENDA ITEM 9 – QUESTION TIME

Questions and written responses provided below.

**QUESTION 1** – Cllr Josh Robinson will ask Cllr Mike Rouse:

*“Can an update be provided on the planned new footpath connecting Norton Farm with Elm Grove, Bromsgrove?”*

### **Answer**

The plans for a footpath through Uplands Park met with some early resistance, with concerns from residents whose properties back onto the park (in relation to anti-social behaviour). To mitigate this, Worcestershire County Council is proposing an improved planting scheme to offer additional protection to boundary fencing.

Engagement regarding the new proposals will be undertaken during September with the intention to commence construction later in the Autumn. The plans for engagement are:

- Letter drop surround properties
- Engage with Councillor Robinson to help share plans via local neighbourhood, social media groups etc.

Officers will contact Cllr Robinson directly to discuss this matter further.

### **Supplementary question**

It was requested that the work on the planned new footpath be completed before the winter months. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways and Transport responded that every effort was made to keep the work to a tight schedule but there were circumstances outside the Council’s control which could delay work so he was unable to give such an assurance.

**QUESTION 2** – Cllr Martin Allen will ask Cllr Marcus Hart:

*“With the delay in the issue of Veterans Identity Cards to Veterans who live in Worcestershire, will the Cabinet Member kindly write to the Government Minister with responsibility for our Worcestershire Veterans to ask for the process to be speeded up and request for a date when Veterans in Worcestershire can expect their Identity Card?”*

### **Answer**

Thanks for your question Cllr Allen, the answer to your question is yes.

### **Supplementary question**

The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Communities agreed to meet Cllr Martin Allen to discuss the Veterans Identity Cards before the letter was sent to the Government Minister in order to discuss this motion and a similar issue he raised at a previous Council meeting.

**QUESTION 3** – Cllr Dan Boatright will ask Cllr Mike Rouse:

*"Back in January the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways and Transport gave us the welcome news that the contractor for Spitfire Homes in Eckington would be suspended from using their statutory right of access to the Highway as a result of their behaviour and damage to Eckington and the surrounding area. They seem to have re-surfaced in Pershore after their suspension, working on Station Road for Persimmon. There has been no regard for the safety of pedestrians and cyclists and the chaos of the road closure has been for all to see. Given their work remains poor, and they clearly have not learnt from their previous suspension, can we now look at a permanent ban from the Highway?"*

**Answer**

L Healy Ltd were given a six month suspension between January 2022 and the end of June 2022 because of illegal works in Fernhill Heath and poor works in Hallow and Eckington. On August 15th 2022, L Healy Ltd were discovered working illegally, without a licence and without the correct traffic management on the public highway on behalf of Piper Homes. This site is currently under investigation through the Health and Safety Executive and also Wychavon District Council. WCC Highways have made the area of works safe with water filled barriers and are currently assessing the next steps which is likely to include a further ban for L Healy Ltd.

Please note that there are separate works for Persimmon Homes which are being undertaken by Shannonside under a road closure further north on Station Road.

Supplementary question

A request was made for an investigation into the actions of both the contractor and the developer. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways and Transport explained that the contractor and developer were currently under investigation. The problem with the introduction of a total ban on the contractor was that it created an issue where a company folded and then re-registered under a different name. By taking this approach, the Council could hold the developer to account for the illegal and poor work of their contractors. Officers in Streetworks were using all the available legal avenues to ensure that these issues did not continue or escalate.

**QUESTION 4** – Cllr Josh Robinson will ask Cllr Mike Rouse:

*"Can an update be provided on the works to the public right of way between the Alcester Road to the A38 in Lickey End, Bromsgrove?"*

**Answer**

The public rights of way team have been liaising directly with Cllr Robinson regarding this issue, it is very emotive and has involved officers from the Police and the County Council. The issues have now been resolved, however; if there are any detailed, or specific matters of concern, I suggest Cllr Robinson contacts the appropriate Public Rights of Way Officer, who will be able to assist.

Supplementary question

The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways and Transport undertook to liaise with Cllr Josh Robinson to discuss whether all the issues around the public right of way between the Alcester Road to the A38 in Lickey End, Bromsgrove had been resolved.

**QUESTION 5** – Cllr Martin Allen will ask Cllr Mike Rouse:

*"Does the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport agree with me that the use of VASS devices is part of an important strategy of helping to reduce speeding on our roads and that VASS Poles should be installed quickly and efficiently within 3 months of a Parish*

*or Town Council requesting them if the locations are acceptable to the Highways Department?”*

**Answer**

VAS's are a useful educational tool that remind drivers of the posted speed limit and the need to adhere to it, however they are not a form of enforcement. Speeding enforcement falls under the responsibility of the Police, but we strive to do what we can to try and ensure safer roads with the use of these devices and we know that Local Members are keen to use these in their Divisions. Following assessment, we would hope to be in a position to install the posts quickly and usually within a three-month period. Regrettably, sometimes this work falls outside the three-month period due to more urgent work affecting the works programme; where this is the case, we will endeavour to ensure that you are updated where possible.

Supplementary question

The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways and Transport undertook to arrange for the VAS poles installed at the wrong height in Upton-upon-Severn to be removed and re-installed at the correct height.