

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 8TH NOVEMBER, 2021

REFERENCE FROM COMMUNITY LIAISON COMMITTEE: 4TH OCTOBER, 2021

“436 REQUEST FOR CONSIDERATION – EWENNY COMMUNITY COUNCIL – RURAL ROADS POLICY –

The Operational Manager for Engineering provided a PowerPoint [presentation](#) to the Committee setting out the current arrangements for managing the local road network in accordance with the Council’s statutory duties as follows:

- To maintain highway to ensure safe passage as far as reasonably practicable,
- To ensure traffic moves freely and reduce congestion where practicable, and
- Take steps to prevent accidents occurring.

The Officer referred to the relevant legislation used by the Council to set standards of highway maintenance and depict investment in highway infrastructure as well as the reviews process for prioritising funding for future safety improvement schemes.

In summary to the presentation, the Officer advised that the management of individual roads within the Vale of Glamorgan was undertaken based on the Council’s statutory duties and that the current procedures in place already considered the nature and character of each road. That ensured that the limited capital monies available were allocated appropriately to both the urban and rural network.

Councillor Perry then began the debate by questioning if road noise levels would be included in the next review of the Council’s Highway Maintenance 3 Year Plan as one of the prioritisation scoring factors when deciding upon infrastructure investment. In response, the Officer advised that the criteria set out in the current Highways Maintenance Plan did not include noise level action and there was no legal requirement for the Council to take such action however, the Council would consider the types of materials used to complete road resurfacing works to reduce the impact of road noise where possible. There were no current plans to introduce noise levels as a scoring factor within the Highways Maintenance Plan, but this could be reviewed by the Council were it deemed appropriate and reasonable in the future.

As a supplementary point, Councillor Perry then referred to pg. 25 of the Welsh Government Active Travel Guidance Booklet which stated that consideration should be given by the Council to active travel infrastructure alongside improvements to highways infrastructure. This was pertinent to the St. Nicholas and Bonvilston area that had a large amount of narrow public footways. In response, the Officer advised that the Council ethos was to encourage active travel where possible, but it was necessary for the Council to balance infrastructure works against funds available.

The highways budget was very limited and the process for extending pavements was costly, but the Council was actively seeking additional active travel grant funding from Welsh Government to be used across the Vale of Glamorgan.

Councillor Morgan then acknowledged the Council's restrictions with regards to funding and legislation but asked what, if anything, the Council could do to in the future to improve the quality and safety of country lanes throughout the Vale of Glamorgan that were not designed to be used by modern vehicles in the first instance. By way of an example, Councillor Morgan then described a journey through his local ward that involved a variety of speed restrictions as the type of road infrastructure changed and queried if there was anything in policy that could support the Council to lobby for a restriction in speed limits on roads not wide enough to have two vehicles travel side by side yet deemed as the national speed limit. This would help to slow some drivers who unfortunately did not adhere to the national limits set. Councillor Morgan then raised a secondary point and acknowledged that active travel infrastructure was more relevant to more urban areas of the Vale of Glamorgan but queried if it was possible for the Council to create a policy for the future to allow residents in more rural areas of the Vale of Glamorgan to travel safely on either foot, bicycle, car, or horseback between villages.

In response to Councillor Morgan's comments, the Officer recognised the Councillor's concerns regarding speed limits not being followed by drivers and stated that this was an unfortunate fact on both urban and rural roads. The speed enforcement authority for the Vale of Glamorgan was the Police Service so setting speed limits was a matter for the Police rather than the Council. The Officer also acknowledged the narrow nature of many rural roads within the Vale of Glamorgan and noted that drivers should be driving responsibly based on the nature of the road they are using but this was a near impossible factor to Police. The only approach the Council could possibly take would be to widen the infrastructure however, this would significantly impact on the character and nature of the area and cost a significant amount of money.

Councillor Baker then expressed her significant disappointment over the Council's lack of response and respect given to the concerns of the Ewenny and Corntown community regarding road safety and infrastructure in relation to the following:

- Cars speeding through the village above the 30mph limit,
- Large lorries from the quarry businesses at either end of the village travelling through the village to avoid congestion on the A48,
- The loss of a bus service from the village which was essential for elderly or visually impaired residents unable to drive, resulting in residents having to take a long journey on foot on a road without footpaths and a 60mph car speed limit,
- Several near car collisions at several junctions in the area and in particular the junction at the end of Wick Road (outside the Garden Centre),
- Vegetation on Wick Road not being removed despite being requested to improve visibility,
- Many parts of Wick Road only being wide enough to accommodate one vehicle but a heavy flow of traffic having to navigate pedestrians, cyclist, and horse riders,

- Eroded road verges and road edges as a result of cars driving on them to pass each other on a road not wide enough to accommodate two vehicles, and
- HGV Lorries using routes labelled as not appropriate for that type of vehicle.

In response, the Officer thanked Councillor Baker for her comments and noted that the Council was already aware of the Community Council's concerns as a result of previous conversations. The Council respected all feedback it received and tried its best to mitigate concerns. Unfortunately, the Council had high demands for road safety and maintenance works across both urban and rural areas but limited funds and grants available to apply for. Therefore, the Council was forced to make difficult decisions based on priorities. With regards to speed limits, a community was able to set up a speed watch initiative to report data to the Police Force Go Safe Speed Watch Team to help the force to allocate speed watch vans to specific areas. With regards to concerns about HGV vehicles, the Council did have the power to put vehicle weight restrictions in place on certain roads in the authority via legal orders, but this would require support from the police who did not currently support environmental weight limits due to resources and difficulties enforcing such measures.

Councillor Jefferies, representing St. Donats Community Council, then echoed Councillor Baker's concerns and added the following matters of concern:

- quality of road verges,
- quality of road laybys,
- number of potholes,
- the Council's unwillingness to take part in a site visit despite an invitation being extended.

In response, the Officer advised that a site visit would be arranged following the meeting and added that the size and sheer amount of traffic having increased incrementally over the years had had a detrimental effect on road verges across the Vale of Glamorgan. However, the Council would inspect and make any repairs where feasible.

Councillor Barnaby then thanked the Officer for his recent attendance at a meeting of the St. Athan Community Council to discuss traffic issues within the area and added the following points:

- The Wellbeing of Future Generations Plan as adopted by the Council in response to the Act was not being applied correctly with regards to housing development planning and therefore pre-planning for road infrastructure was more of a concern than subsequent repairs, and
- Recent housing development plans, in more rural areas, set out main routes that prospective homeowners would use to travel around the Vale of Glamorgan but in reality, the smaller and more rural lanes, were being used.

In response, the Officer advised that transport assessments were carried out as part of the planning application process and improvement works put on the relevant developer by condition if required. Unfortunately, the Council was unable to control

which routes car users chose to take which would often be the route the individual deemed was the easiest and quickest. This however was not always the case on smaller rural roads / lanes.

In conclusion, Councillor Barnaby then added that transport assessments should be based on realistic and not idealistic planning.

Councillor Parker then enquired after progress made regarding the study to rationalise speed limits across the entire length of the A48 and as a supplementary point thanked the Officer for his very competent support of the planning application process in relation to highways matters and the implementation of the 20mph speed limit put in place within the St. Hilary area. In relation to speed limits along the A48, the Officer advised that there was a range of different limits along the major road based on the residential and / or infrastructure along the route and the Council would continue to listen to any concerns regarding speeds along the route. The Officer then apprised the Committee of the Welsh Government proposal to implement a default 20mph speed limit throughout Wales by April 2023 and advised that the Council was actively consulting with Welsh Government on how the proposal would affect parts of the Vale of Glamorgan road network.

Councillor Cave then stated that, from the debate witnessed during the meeting, there was an obvious consensus that a Rural Roads Policy for the Vale of Glamorgan was required and would be helpful to marry the Council's duties with the issues being experienced by many of the Community Councils and this in turn would help to support the Council's Highways Team in their work. Taking an innovative approach, using the Town and Community Councils as a knowledge asset, would help to combat some of the common issues being experienced. The Councillor also acknowledged the difficulties the Council faced in obtaining relevant funding for road improvements but highlighted that Town and Community Councils could also be an asset in the process of applying for relevant grants if that was indeed possible. In response, the Officer stated that the Council did acknowledge that the character and nature of the roads across the Vale of Glamorgan did vary and this was taken into consideration when reported issues were being assessed. The issues discussed during the meeting in relation to rural roads could also be associated with urban roads and therefore a specific rural roads policy may be difficult for the Council to justify above and beyond the policies already in operation. The Council would always welcome support from the Town and Community Councils to access funding. Councillor Cave then added a supplementary point and advised that Town and Community Councils were very aware of issues in their local area and were very often able to offer good practical solutions so a collective Rural Roads Policy would provide the Council with the mechanism to gather said specialist knowledge and drive progress forward.

In response to Councillor Perry's request that Section 106 monies be prioritised for use on highways infrastructure, Councillor Parker advised that Section 106 funds were obtained for a particular purpose and therefore could not be transferred between purposes.

In support of Councillor Cave's comments, Councillor Cuddy (Penarth Town Council) advised the following formal structures were coming into play shortly which could help to legitimise a Rural Road Policy for the Vale of Glamorgan:

1. The 20mph Welsh Government Consultation, and
2. The Vale of Glamorgan Local Development Plan Review Consultation.

Councillor Robertson raised the final comments during the debate by highlighting that, with the increase in residential developments in the rural parts of the Vale of Glamorgan, the area was becoming less rural. An integrated policy from Welsh Government between transport and housing development would be very welcome. The Officer subsequently added that in the current climate emergency, it was not feasible for the Council to continue to work on the assumption that cars would be the primary mode of transport by residents and congestion was already a significant issue in key areas of the Vale of Glamorgan. Therefore, promoting active travel and the use of public transport would continue to be a focus for the Council going forward.

AGREED – T H A T Cabinet be requested to consider the establishment of a specific Rural Roads Policy for the Vale of Glamorgan area and its content compiled in collaboration with all Town and Community Councils.

Reason for Recommendation

To ensure that matters of concern regarding road structure, maintenance, and safety, as listed in the minute above, are considered and actioned upon by the County Council within the remit of the new Policy as advised by Town and Community Councils with specialist knowledge of the concerns.”

Attached as Appendix: Request for Consideration to Community Liaison Committee:
4th October, 2021

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

COMMUNITY LIAISON COMMITTEE

REQUEST FOR CONSIDERATION OF A MATTER BY THE COMMITTEE
(*TO BE MADE BY THE TOWN / COMMUNITY COUNCIL VIA THEIR CLERK*)

Date: 06.06.2021

Name of Town/Community Council: Ewenny Community Council

It is requested that the Community Liaison Committee consider the following matter. (N.B. Items that are site specific should be referred to the appropriate Council department):

The Ewenny members recognise that rural roads are not the same as those in towns and the VoGC roads policy discriminates against rural roads by the very fact that they do not distinguish between the two.

Reason(s) for request:

The Community Council are calling on the VoGC to adopt a rural roads policy so that the Community Council can have an understanding that the VoGC has a better understanding of the differences between rural and town roads and has an appropriate strategy as how they intend to meet these different needs going forward (because they have not been adequately been met now or in the past).

Please could you add the matter to the next Community Liaison Committee meeting?

PLEASE RETURN TO:

**Room 26
Democratic and Scrutiny Services
Directorate of Resources
The Vale of Glamorgan Council
Civic Offices
Barry
CF63 4RU**

FOR COUNCIL USE ONLY:

Date Received: 06 June 2021 at 17:30.

Subject Matter: Rural Roads Policy.

Copy of request passed to Director(s)/Officer(s):

Miles Punter – Director of Environment & Housing Services.
Emma Reed – Head of Neighbourhood Services & Transport.
Mike Clogg – Operational Manager for Engineering.
07 June 2021 at 09:22

Copy to Chair/Vice Chair **YES/NO**

FOR COMMITTEE AGENDA **YES/NO**

If yes: ~~Report / Slide Presentation~~ / Verbal Update

If no please state reason:

09 June 2021 08:36 - Due to present a report to Cabinet after the Summer recess on the Road Inspection Regime for the Vale of Glamorgan. Request raised that as part of said report this matter be considered. Report to be referred to CLC from Cabinet.
21 September 2021 17:36 – Report not provided to Cabinet Officer in time for referral.
27 September 2021 12:15 – Verbal response from Operational Manager for Engineering confirmed for 4 th October meeting.

Managing Director's comments:

In agreement with the Officer's approach of providing a verbal response to the points raised by Ewenny CC in their request.

Date of written response to Town/Community Council:

Acknowledgement of receipt: 07 June 2021 at 09:24 to Ceri at ewennycc@gmail.com from A. Rudman.

Meeting intention: 10 June 2021 at 16:46 to Ceri at ewennycc@gmail.com from A. Rudman.

REQUEST FOR RURAL ROADS POLICY PRESENTATION

Current Arrangements

- Manage Local Road Network in accordance with Statutory Duty
- To maintain highway to ensure safe passage as far as reasonably practicable – S41 Highway Act 1980
- To ensure traffic moves freely & reduce congestion where practicable – Traffic Management Act 2004
- Take steps to prevent accidents occurring – S39 Road Traffic Act 1988

Maintenance of the Highway

- Highway Safety Inspection Manual
- Council sets its own standards based on network hierarchy
- This generally recognises the nature and character of individual roads to ensure maintained effectively
- Hierarchy also differentiates based on volume of traffic & usage – varies monthly / 3 monthly / 6 monthly
- Intervention levels are currently the same for all roads

Investment in Highway Infrastructure

- Highway maintenance 3 year Plan
- Prioritisation scoring system – considers 8 separate factors
- Main criteria visual assessment, engineer assessment & maintenance costs
- Annual works programme limited by budget available

Safety on Local Highway Network

- Review collisions on local highway network – police duty to investigate
- Use the above review to prioritise funding for future safety improvement schemes
- Also, review highway safety concerns raised on a case by case basis & consider how best to deal

Summary

- The management of individual roads is based on statutory duty
- The procedures in place generally already consider the nature and character of each road
- The above ensures that the limited capital monies available is allocated appropriately to urban & rural network