

Paul Gadd County Councillor Update

Saffron Walden Town Council – Planning and Transport Committee

8/6/23

[Note, items in italics are repeats from last month, still unresolved]

1. Flooding and drainage issues:

- a. *[Essex Highways have programmed in the South Road blocked drain for major investigative work in early January 2023; This was meant to start on 9/1/23, but there is no sign of activity so I've chased] [13/4/23 - BT Openreach have now admitted their responsibility – they laid a cable through the drainpipe! In theory they are repairing it, but seem to be taking a long time – I'm chasing] [8/6/23 – I'm still chasing, and ECC are chasing Openreach]*

2. LHP schemes:

- a. *[The LHP goes from bad to worse - the usual March meeting has now been postponed to some unspecified time in May, we haven't been told what the budget will be for 2023/24, most of the schemes I put forward which should have been completed by 31/3/23 still haven't, and I haven't heard of any progress on any of the outstanding validations][8/6/23 – Sorry but still the same. I've chased again, but still no budget, still no meeting date and still no schemes being validated.*

b. In terms of the LHP schemes that were due for delivery by 31/3/23:

- i. the following have gone in: Lankester bollards; the town centre 20mph and the dropped kerbs;
- ii. the following should have been completed but haven't:
 1. the TPOs for the market square regularisation and pedestrianisation – ECC have clearly only just started looking at them. Georgia and Terry had a zoom with the design engineer so hopefully progressing;
 2. George St / Hill St builds out – they initially produced a design study just for George St, but are now producing the one for Hill St. On the George St one, I've had a number of comments about blockages on George St when people park badly in the loading bays on the south side, so I've asked Essex Highways to reduce the enlarged pavement width by 20cm, which I don't think will affect pedestrians materially. The scheme will need Environment Agency consent as the culvert sits beneath it;
 3. Review of SW cycle scheme options and Gt Chesterford to SW cycle path – I've now had both back. Instead of the review of SW cycle scheme options requested, Sustrans have done a quick and dirty LCWIP, which doesn't cover most of the schemes we requested them to look at, and overlaps with the LCWIP that UDC have commissioned; I've asked for an explanation of why we haven't got the report I asked for. The Gt Chesterford to SW cycle path report is very un-user friendly – there's no summary of the scheme or explanation but instead a suite of documents totalling 180Mb! I've sent them to Georgia if anyone would like to see them. Georgia is also going to organise a meeting with the various other

parish councils on the route for us to discuss the scheme collectively – the Sustrans scheme was prepared without any reference to anyone locally;

4. *[Path on the west side of Thaxted Rd from Bellway to Peaslands Rd – now sometime this year]* 8/6/23 – no update
 5. *[Street clutter – I still can't get a date for when this will happen]* 8/6/23 – no update
 6. *[Water Tower Place – design work apparently now being carried out but I can't get a date for completion;]* 8/6/23 – no update
- c. In terms of the schemes which hadn't even got to validation, I'm still chasing on the various zebra crossing requests and whether we can use the Linden Homes money for some of them and am still waiting for answers. I haven't yet had any new validations. The LHP officer said that all LHP schemes were deliberately paused for about 6 months to save money, although we were never told that, and that Essex Highways are now trying to get the design team to full strength to focus on validations, but I've been told that at least 3 times in the last 9 months by the Cabinet Member for Highways, including when I wrote to him this time.
3. Highways matters affecting the parish
- a. Lots of reports of broken street lights, which I'm trying to chase, some slowly being mended;
 - b. The pothole situation is obviously still awful. I've reported the worst potholes in the various streets which are riddled with potholes (particularly South Rd, Rowntree Way, Peaslands Rd), and have had some small success on the very worst potholes, but most – including the worst ones on Rowntree Way still haven't been addressed.
4. Cycling, walking and other sustainable transport:
- a. LHP schemes – see above;
 - b. *UDC have commissioned the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, so that's progress;* [8/6/23 – still ongoing. I'm keen also that it includes the SW / Ashdon former railway line as a future walking / cycling scheme]
 - c. Nothing positive from ECC on sustainable transport – the Place Services Scrutiny Committee that I'm on is due to have a presentation on 22 June 2023 on Essex Highways' "Road Hierarchy Review", so I hope that may shed some light on their future proposals.