

Paul Gadd County Councillor Update

Saffron Walden Town Council – Planning and Transport Committee

9/11/23

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

1. Flooding and drainage issues:

- a. *[South Road broken drain – Essex Highways are still chasing Openreach to effect a repair]*

You may have seen this in the Walden Local last week – I'm still chasing

2. LHP schemes:

- i. At the LHP meeting which we finally had in July (the first since January 2023), we were told that a cabinet decision on the budget would be made by the end of July to allow us to carry over the unspent budget from 2022/23. This was unspent because of the continuing failure of Essex Highways to progress the schemes we had requested. At 31/3/23, schemes representing £485,000 out of a total budget for the 2022/23 year of £780,000 had not been completed, and were frozen. This year the Essex Highways funding for the LHP is only £320,000, all of which was allocated on re-funding most of the unfinished 2022/23 schemes rather than have them delayed still further.
- ii. We have now had an indication of this year's budget and it looks as though it will effectively be negative! We're still waiting for confirmation, but it looks as though ECC is refusing to carry over the schemes from last year, and it looks as though the new money being offered this year will be considerably less than the value of the schemes now being cancelled. We have been promised a breakdown of the budget so we can understand how much money is available, but we are still waiting for it;
- iii. I have put in a new request for a scheme to install a cycle / pedestrian path along Audley End Road on the south side from the entrance to SWCHS to the zebra crossing and on the north side from the zebra crossing to Saxon Way;
- b. In terms of the LHP schemes that were due for delivery by 31/3/23 but weren't delivered:
- i. the following should have been completed but haven't:
1. the TPOs for the market square regularisation and pedestrianisation – I've chased yet again for Essex Highways to let us have a method statement for SWTC to agree to for the road closures, which seems to be the only hold up. In the meantime we have had a draft TRO for the market square regularisation (they refuse to do both schemes in one TRO), which was incorrect, but have just had a corrected one
 2. *[George St / Hill St build outs – they have produced a design now for both build outs which I've shared with Cllr Eke. 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. I've also now had confirmation from the fire service that they are happy with built out pavements as long as they don't have bollards on them;] The LHP have allocated funding for this scheme so in theory it should happen this year

3. On the Great Chesterford to SW cycle path, the Sustrans scheme was on the west side of the B1383 because ECC Highways hadn't told Sustrans that there were s.106 arrangements to bring a path from Great Chesterford to Little Chesterford on the east side of the B1383. I'm now trying to get the LHP to re-commission the design of the scheme so that the Little Chesterford to Littlebury section is also on the east side;
 4. *[Street clutter – I still can't get a date for when this will happen] [8/6/23 – no update] [13/7/23 – seems to have gone nowhere – I'll chase][9/11/23 – I still can't get a date]*
 5. *[Water Tower Place – design work apparently now being carried out but I can't get a date for completion;] [8/6/23 – no update][13/7/23 – seems to have gone nowhere – I'll chase] [I received a draft update raising issues including that the ramp was in a conservation area – I've pointed out that it's next to but not in a conservation area and asked them to progress the design!*
- c. *[8/6/23 - 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.] [13/7/23 – no change; still no new validations][11/8/23 – no change][9/11/23 – still no change I'm afraid]*
3. Highways matters affecting the parish
 - a. I'm now onto my second tranche of 18 potholes, although I think some of the first tranche still haven't been fixed, so let me know any you would like me to nominate. When you do, please include location, at least 2 photos and the reference number from when it has been reported – if any haven't been reported, please report them first - [Tell us - Essex County Council \(essexhighways.org\)](mailto:Tellus@essexhighways.org);
 - b. I've talked to Essex Highways about speed cameras; unhelpfully, their rules seem to preclude speed cameras pretty much anywhere. I've asked them to see whether they can install one anywhere on the B1383 through Great Chesterford, on the basis that if they won't do that, I can't see them doing any in Saffron Walden
 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. *[8/6/23 - 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.][13/7/23 – the presentation was cancelled! Now to be in October 2023]
[9/11/23 – cancelled again – now to be November 2023 in theory]*

- d. Chesterford Research Park have an outline permission for 4 new buildings and have agreed to provide only the cycle path section to link Little Chesterford with Great Chesterford – Essex Highways back-tracked and refused to ask for anything more. However, UDC have agreed that a new s.106 should be agreed for each building when detailed consent comes forward so there may still be a chance to get meaningful contributions;