

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 28TH FEBRUARY, 2022

REFERENCE FROM ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE: 18TH JANUARY, 2022

“752 RURAL ROADS POLICY –

The Operational Manager for Engineering (Neighbourhood Services and Transport) provided a PowerPoint presentation setting out the current arrangements for managing the local road network in accordance with the Council’s statutory duties which were 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 Operational Manager referred to the relevant legislation used by the Council to set standards of highway maintenance and to determine investment in highway infrastructure as well as the reviews process for prioritising funding for future safety improvement schemes.

In summary to the presentation, the Operational Manager 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 networks.

Councillor M. Morgan stated that this matter came out of a meeting of the Community Liaison Committee last year where a Community Council raised the need for a Rural Roads Policy in the Vale. This was referred to Cabinet, who decided that there was no need for a separate Rural Roads Policy because all roads were the same. Councillor Morgan added that pedestrian health and safety on the roads was a common concern raised by Community Councils, so he wanted the Committee to look at what could be done in the future to devise or improve the specific policy for the rural roads so that it's safer for people and road users.

In being asked to respond, the Operational Manager advised that it was fully accept that all roads were different. For example, there were different types of rural lanes and there were different types of urban roads. These all had slightly different characteristics and quirks. Therefore, the Council would try to assess issues on a case-by-case basis. He added that issues on the roads were common to many roads in the Vale, whether that be rural or urban. For example, speeding was an issue in both rural and urban areas, but the residential areas were where most of the

issues and concerns were. The Council therefore had measures in place to address these, such as by working with the Police.

In terms of collisions and accidents, the Operational Manager advised that data was collated and assessed, but the Council also look at concerns raised separately with issues dealt with as best the Council could within the limited budget available.

Councillor G. John raised the issue of large quantities of mud on roads, which could in the main be attributed to farming activities and tractors. He also referred to farm trailers not being properly covered when carrying material. This would often lead to large deposits onto roads. In addition, Councillor John raised the issue of the poor condition of rural roads which meant that they were prone to flooding. This also meant that it could be easy for vehicles to aquaplane. These issues needed to be addressed.

In reply, the Operational Manager accepted Councillor John's points as these were health and safety concerns. These represented difficult challenges for the Council, for which there were limited resources available. The drainage of rural roads was a specific issue as the infrastructure was limited to provide positive drainage and at many locations fields adjoining the highway were at a higher level and discharged surface water onto the highway compounding the situation.

In being invited to comment, Councillor P. King (Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and Transport) referred to the piloting of 20mph zones in 3 locations in the Vale. These were aimed at changing the behaviours of motorists, and the pilots were appearing to be having a positive impact. The Cabinet Member added that most of the concerns raised by the Committee Members existed in towns as well as rural villages, which was why he stood by the comments of the Operational Manager. He stated that he believed that the Vale's Road Policy was the best that could be offered, which was based on the resources available.

Councillor Morgan commented that people who lived in the rural communities felt that there was a need for a different policy. He recommended for this matter to be referred to Cabinet to ask if it could be considered again as the issues would only become worse.

The Chair, Councillor Brooks, in closing the debate, seconded the recommendation of Councillor Morgan, and she commented that if a separate Policy was not possible, then perhaps the current Policy could be reviewed, based on the concerns of communities in the rural Vale. This was accepted by the Scrutiny Committee.

Subsequently, it was

RECOMMENDED – T H A T Cabinet be requested to revisit their decision not to implement a separate Rural Roads Policy or for the current Policy to be reviewed to reflect road safety concerns raised by residents in the rural Vale.

Reason for recommendation

Following views expressed to the Scrutiny Committee regarding road safety in rural parts of Vale relating to the poor condition of parts of the network, the need for better road signage and the importance of addressing high speeds and the impact of heavy vehicles.”

Attached as Appendix: Presentation to Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee: 18th January, 2022

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