
UNADOPTED ROADS IN HULLBRIDGE

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks Members' support for a Hullbridge Parish Council initiative to achieve the improvement of unmade and unadopted roads in Hullbridge.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Hullbridge Parish Council has made a number of requests to Essex County Council for a way to be found to improve the many unmade and unadopted roads in Hullbridge. However, despite various ideas and suggestions that might 'kick start' a programme of improvements, no progress has been made.

- 2.2 The rules relating to the make up of unadopted roads are complicated, but in essence there is a requirement for a substantial part of the funding to come from the frontagers. The arrangements can be summarised as follows:-

- County Council consults all frontagers in a street and seeks a view of their willingness to pay for the improvements.
- If more than 50% of frontagers respond positively to the consultation then arrangements can be put in hand to implement the works.
- The County Council calculates the cost of the works on a standard cost per metre basis.
- If the actual cost exceeds the calculated cost, then the additional funds would need to be found by the County Council.
- The cost of any off site works cannot be charged to frontagers and would need to be funded by the County Council – it is likely that all road schemes will require off site works to deal with surface water drainage.
- Some roads may require widening or the installation of approved turning heads and this could result in the need for compulsory purchase of land from frontagers.

- 2.3 Very few street work improvement schemes have been carried out in recent years by Essex County Council, but Hullbridge Parish Council is keen to see if it is possible to develop a programme of works that would see a gradual improvement in the quality of roads within the village.

3 DISCUSSION

- 3.1 The legal procedures for making up unmade roads to an adoptable standard are complex and involve consultation with frontagers. If frontagers decide they do not want road improvements, then no further action is likely. On the

other hand, if more than 50% of frontagers are in favour a scheme of improvement might go ahead, but the apportioned costs of the works would be charged to all frontagers, whether they supported the scheme or not.

- 3.2 As might be expected, frontagers often vote against road improvement schemes because of the costs, but also because the unmade roads provide a natural mechanism of traffic calming, which would be removed after the works were completed. In some instances there would also be a requirement for compulsory purchase to bring land into the highway to enable the correct configuration of a road, eg, creation of turning heads.
- 3.3 There is little doubt that road improvement schemes are far from being cost neutral for the County Council. Aside from the requirement for any off site works to be paid for, these schemes are very bureaucratic and involve much officer time to handle the consultation arrangements. Furthermore, some schemes could require land to be compulsory purchased leading to significant delays and substantial additional costs.
- 3.4 Hullbridge has a significant number of unmade roads and dealing with these would involve a considerable investment in time and resources and of course there are many other parts of the county that have unmade roads, including elsewhere in Rochford district.
- 3.5 All that having been said, unmade roads can cause problems and there is, of course, in theory an ongoing maintenance obligation for the frontagers that would be eliminated if roads were adopted by the Highway Authority.
- 3.6 Members will need to decide whether the aspirations of the Parish Council to see improvements to the condition of roads in Hullbridge merits support sufficient to justify lobbying Essex County Council to develop a scheme that would lead to a programme of improvement works throughout the village.
- 3.7 In reaching a decision, Members will of course need to bear in mind that any scheme would only be capable of implementation if there is adequate support from the frontagers. On balance, it is considered that the Council should lend its support to Hullbridge Parish Council to see what can be achieved, accepting that a comprehensive scheme for all roads is unlikely to be achievable.

4 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Bringing roads to adoptable standard can result in visual improvements to the street scene.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None for the District Council.

6 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There is a formal legal process, as explained in the report, that must be followed to bring unadopted roads to an adoptable standard. Consultation with frontagers is a key element of the procedure.

7 PARISH IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Hullbridge Parish Council is keen to see unadopted roads in the town improved for the benefit of residents.

8 RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

That support be given to Hullbridge Parish Council to lobby Essex County Council to develop a programme to bring unadopted streets in Hullbridge to an adoptable standard.

Shaun Scrutton

Head of Planning & Transportation

Background Papers:-

Letter from Hullbridge Parish Council dated 8th December 2006

For further information please contact Shaun Scrutton on:-

Tel:- 01702 318 100

E-Mail:- shaun.scrutton@rochford.gov.uk