

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 11TH OCTOBER 2018

**Question to Helen Fisher
Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport**

By Simon Tagg

Question

Can the Portfolio Holder update the Council on her attempts to resolve the longstanding staffing issues that prevent the effective running of the 'Community' Highways team in Newcastle? This has led to delays in the implementation of Members' Divisional Highway Plan priorities and great frustration for the public at the lack of action on important highway issues that in this case do not result from any cuts to funding.

Reply

The Community Highways team perform a number of significant and strategic functions within the Infrastructure+ Partnership, which include: promoting the council's People Helping People initiative; enabling the transformation to digital Highways information; ensuring local insight informs the development of forward programmes of work, policies and procedures; and dealing with substantial volumes of correspondence day-to-day from a variety of stakeholders.

An extremely important element of the role is also to work with Members, inviting comment and challenge on strategic programmes of work and to facilitate the delivery of local community highway priorities through the Member's Divisional Highways Programme. There are just four local Community Infrastructure Liaison Managers across the county leading this work and every effort is made to ensure that the near 100 locally prioritised DHP initiatives are delivered, through a variety of delivery partners, within each financial year.

Our workforce is the most important asset we have for making a positive difference in the lives of Staffordshire people and they will continue to be supported with the skills, tools and confidence to do their jobs well. Plans have been developed to restructure the team, enable effective succession planning and to resolve a number of longstanding vacancies and staff absences within the team. However, progression is currently subject to resources being available within the council's support services functions.