

**Wellington & Wiveliscombe LCN Highways Working Group Report for LCN**  
**Meeting on 27.4.26**

We continue to meet as a group on a 6-week basis, alternating between in person and online. We engage with SC Officers and Councillors at these meetings and have the current items on our agenda.

1. Obtaining clarification on how parish and town councils can lawfully engage with the Enhance Highways Maintenance Scheme for councils with and without the General Power of Competence and the extent to which any funds these councils make available must come through s137 allocations. We now have two letters from Somerset Council. The first, dated 19.6.25, listed the various statutory powers available and the second, dated 8.4.26, detailed the process councils should follow. A review of any limitations, etc that this arrangement may have will shortly be checked with SALC as a part of a final due diligence exercise. Clarity on timescales and the extent of parish council input for the work to proceed is being sought, noting that many parishes have limited administrative capacity.
2. We were very pleased to hear of Somerset Council's recent decision to make additional funds available 'to deliver additional, high visibility highway maintenance activity'. These funds will be directed by a Steering Group consisting of a combination of Somerset Councillors and Officers 'informed by reporting, local intelligence and asset data'. We do, however, have a few queries:-
  - a. How do we, as an LCN and a Working Group best engage with the Steering Group to ensure that they take the concerns of the LCN area into account? What influence will the LCNs have? Any chance of any budget being allocated to LCNs as the original idea of LCNs was that they would have some funding? I can but ask!
  - b. Many parishes in Somerset are small and cannot raise funds themselves to deal with issues in their area and are, no doubt, hopeful that this funding may allow these issues to be addressed. How will the Steering Group prioritise the additional works?

I appreciate that it is early days, but would be grateful if we could have some engagement with the Steering Group to better understand how this funding may impact on our area.

3. The Highways Group is collating the reported road issues in the area to track progress. We cannot sensibly take defect issues on unless they have been reported formally through the Somerset Council reporting tool. However, there are items, for example, related to traffic management, or of a wider nature, that do not sit within the reporting tool, that we are discussing directly with SC Officers. The purpose of this is to keep people who report items updated and,

where possible, explain to them why works have not yet been done. In this way, we hope to keep them engaged and to continue to inform Highways teams where defect issues are located to enable SC resources to be better focussed. Hopefully, Michelle will be able to access (as view only) the SC defect database to obtain the necessary update information. We are also keen to fully understand road and pothole repair strategies, so we can advise our residents and manage their expectations directly.

4. We are grateful to Somerset Rivers Authority for their engagement with the Group to offer advise regarding possible grant funding that may be available to help with drainage matters.
5. We note that the car parking survey work is due to start soon to establish the extent of applying charges. The surveys will establish the tiering for each car park, reasonably representative times for the surveys to take place and the suitability of on-street parking charges. Survey outcomes will be shared with local councils.