

Notes of a Public Meeting to discuss the Leashaw Landslip

Wednesday Feb 5th 2025

Florence Nightingale Memorial Hall

There were 37 parishioners present plus 9 Parish Councillors and Clerk; in addition, Cllr David Taylor, Cllr Cupit (DCC Cabinet Member Highways Assets and Transport and Julian Gould (Dir of Highways).

1. **Introduction.** The chair, Joy Stevenson, introduced herself and the DCC representatives and invited Cllr Cupit to update parishioners on the current status of the Leashaw Landslip remediation project.
2. **Cllr Cupit:** In the last few months the ground survey has been completed and an initial final design produced. The design will involve mini-piling. The next task is to consult with landowners and with Severn Trent and then to progress with a pre-construction engineering company to refine the design and draw up a construction method. Given the constraints of the site regarding access, the bulk of the required machinery and weight restrictions in a fragile area, these processes were likely to take 3 to 4 months (ie to June 2025). There could be slippage taking this out to 6 months. The current view of likely costs were in the region of £1m.
3. **Questions/statements** from the floor:

Q: The road has been closed for over 2 years: medical staff from Crich cannot access the villages without a lengthy detour. When can we expect a start?

A: Given that June 2025 would be too late a date to tender and procure the project for a summer 2025 start, the project could not commence until summer 2026. Finance remains an issue:

St: Many of us pay substantial sums in Council Tax: it raises questions about what we are receiving for it.

A: We will not be able to clear all the legalities (open tendering etc) to start any earlier than stated. Leashaw is a priority for the Council. We continue to press the East Midlands Mayor for support and central government for DCC's particular issues with landslips.

Q: What has changed since last year? Then you said you would start in 2025.

A: We did not offer any guarantee of a 2025 start: ground conditions were not fully known and understood and finance was too uncertain.

Statement: I cannot understand why consultation with landowners and ST has not been done in parallel with design work.

A: DCC cannot consult until it has a design upon which to base discussions.

Q: But surely there was scope to do some of these tasks in parallel, and not sequentially? What gives us assurance that we will not be hearing about the same slippage next year?

A: DCC is being honest and straightforward about the position we are in and our planning.

Q: It was stated last year that funding had been earmarked. Has that changed?

A: DCC Cabinet has agreed that this is a priority and must be funded.

St: DCC had rejected the Parish Council's Fol request and had asked it not to invoke its right to complain to the Secretary of State about not fulfilling its duties under the 1980 Highways Act. Could this be viewed as stalling the process?

A: Its as pointed out that Fol enquiries are dealt with by lawyers, not individual members or officers. DCC has a record of open communication and responsiveness to all the questions raised by the PC. DCC's view of any potential 1980 Act formal complaint was that this would only divert energy and resources from dealing with the matter in hand.

Q: Was the funding required for the project definitely earmarked? Could it be delivered in 2025/6 funding?

A: DCC stated that the EM Mayor had not formally informed them of their allocation (which it is understood is c£37m). If this figure is correct it is our base figure with no addition for special projects. DCC continues to push for additional funds.

St: DCC informed the meeting that they were still awaiting final survey and procurement information and that access to land issues will be dealt with during the procurement process - not after it.

Q: The role of ST is unclear: they handed the project back to you. Why?

A: ST finally made the judgement that they could not undertake the project because it was too specialist for them. Additionally, they felt that they could divert part of their supply through a separate branch if required. ST favoured using very large equipment, the feasibility of which on this site was not clear.

St: it was stated that unless DCC acted more urgently, two local businesses were at risk.

The **Chair** intervened as there were only twenty minutes remaining and asked DCC to summarise their definitive timeline from this point.

A: DCC stated that the processes that they have been taking forward are not moveable. ST did not carry out sufficient ground surveying and more was required. DCC's aim is a permanent fix: there is no room for error or repetition.

Q: It was felt that we already had a design last May and that progress since was too slow.

A: DCC did have a design then but it was only a draft design: it required much more refinement.

St: There were then a number of statements about delays over the past year, the Fol response, the non-compliance with statutory duties and whether there were guarantees that the £1m would still be available into 2026/7. Were we being asked to accept that as this was an old country road, that it had very low priority?

A: DCC pointed out that all roads were of priority: there was no hierarchy. The landslip was the No 1 priority on the current list.

St: It was pointed out that we were now approaching six years of disruption. Had the response been urgent enough? Cllr Taylor responded.

Q: There are cracks in the road and pavement further along Leashaw. Is the site still moving? There are still issues with water and drainage.

A: The site is not slipping further at the current time. The design will allow water to pass through it. We are liaising with ST about avoiding their asset. There will be drains running through the piling and there will be a wall on top.

Q: Is the final design now complete or not?

A: We have an outline design concept but it needs a dynamic solution that uses smaller, specialist equipment. The 'constructibility' of the project is being further refined.

Q: ST's original timeline was that it could be done by Nov 2023. Would it not be possible to do it by Nov 25 if all the stops were pulled out?

A: ST's proposal was never deliverable. If we thought we were completely ready to go, we would, but we have explained the constraints. If things free up suddenly then it may be possible but this doesn't look likely from here. The pre-construction contractor will take 3-4 months to work up the plan. We have value-engineered the scheme and brought down the estimates from c£2m as ST estimated it, to £1m.

Q: How long will the construction phase take, once the site is accessed?

A: Between 3 and 6 months. It would have to be done in summer.

DCC closed by saying that they were very happy to share the draft final plan and current timeline as both were nearing completion. The full Critical Path Analysis for the programme, the final deliverable design and the overall project plan would also be shared once it had been honed by the pre-construction contractor.

The meeting closed at 8.00pm with the Chair thanking DCC representatives for their attendance and for the support of parishioners.