

HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHWAYS WATFORD JOINT MEMBER PANEL

12 JULY 2011

Present: Cty Cllr Giles-Medhurst (Chair)

Borough Councillor A Wylie (Vice-Chair)

Cty Cllr Bell, Cty Cllr Brandon, Cty Cllr Oaten and
Cty Cllr Watkin

Borough Councillors S Rackett, S Johnson, A Burtenshaw,
A Forrest (for minute numbers 6 to 12.) and A Khan (for
minute numbers 7 to 12.)

Officers:	David Swan	Hertfordshire Highways
	Andy Melville	Hertfordshire Highways
	Nick Gough	Hertfordshire Highways
	Stewart Liddle	Hertfordshire Highways
	Andy Smith	Watford Borough Council
	Jodie Kloss	Watford Borough Council

1 ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

RESOLVED –

1. that County Councillor Giles-Medhurst be elected Chair for the 2011/12 Municipal Year.
2. that Borough Councillor Wylie be elected Vice-Chair for the 2011/12 Municipal Year.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor Scudder.

There was a change of membership for this meeting: Councillor Burtenshaw replaced Councillor Sharpe, Councillor Khan replaced Councillor Dhindsa and Councillor Forrest replaced Councillor J Brown

3 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS (IF ANY)

County Councillor Brandon declared a personal interest as he said that he may be buying a property on the Leggatts Campus site. The Panel agreed that he could stay and discuss the items.

During the discussions of minute number 6, Borough Councillor Johnson declared a personal interest as he lived in Ridge Lane.

4 **MINUTES**

It was agreed that since the minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2011 had not been available online for Members to read that they would be signed at the next meeting.

5 **MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

6 **PETITIONS AND LOCAL ISSUES**

The Panel received a report of the District Manager setting out the current status of petitions and local issues.

Petition – Courtlands Drive/A411 Hempstead Road junction

The District Manager summarised the report and said that the lead petitioner had made some suggestions for improving the junction which officers would investigate and report back to both the lead petitioner and the Panel in the autumn.

The County Councillor for Nascot Park said that this was the first time that he had heard of the option of revoking the no right turn into and out of Ridge Lane and consultation was imperative. He felt that it was important that the matter was resolved as soon as possible.

A Member agreed and expressed his concern that the option had been brought to the Panel prior to officers investigating the proposal.

The Vice-Chair observed that it was important to remember why the no right turn had been introduced in the first place; traffic was backing up to turn right and it was used as a rat-run to get to Courtlands Drive.

Later in the meeting, the County Councillor for Nascot Park informed the Panel that he had spoken to the lead petitioner who had been present during the discussion about the petition. The lead petitioner had confirmed that he had not suggested changing the access into and out of Ridge Lane.

RESOLVED –

that officers should not pursue the option of revoking the no right turn into and out of Ridge Lane.

Petition for permanent pedestrian crossing on Horseshoe Lane near northerly junction with Boundary Way

The Chair reported that he had undertaken a site visit and that a CS99 application had been submitted. Officers were happy for a pedestrian crossing to go ahead at this location.

RESOLVED –

that the report be noted.

Local issues- Woodmere Avenue width restriction scheme

The Chair referred Members to the briefing note in Appendix A. The issue had been covered by the Watford Observer.

The District Manager reported that Herts Highways had received 70 complaints since March and 11 insurance claims, all of which had been rejected. He reiterated that the restriction had been in place for many years, it was well-signed and it was up to each driver to consider whether to proceed through the restriction.

The Chair advised the Panel that since the last meeting officers had established that the cost for CCTV was prohibitive; at least £30,000.

The Vice-Chair advised the Panel that there was an error in the press statement in Appendix A; the sentence read “there have been posts, seven feet apart, at this site for many years”. This should read “seven feet six inches apart”.

The County Councillor for Meriden Tudor commented that there had never been such a controversial issue in the division but that the number of complaints was reducing. The local residents’ association was in favour of the width restriction.

The County councillor for Vicarage Holywell said he supported the restriction as it is.

RESOLVED –

that the report be noted and that no changes be made to the width restriction.

Local issues- Radlett Road/ Eastfield Avenue Thames Water Flood Alleviation Scheme

The Chair referred to Appendix B which showed that Thames Water was not planning to take any action and stated that further pressure was needed. He suggested that a meeting with Thames Water, the Elected Mayor, Ofwat and Stuart Pile from Herts County Council should take place.

A County Councillor recommended that John Wood, the Director of Environment at Herts County Council should be included.

RESOLVED –

that a higher level meeting be arranged with Thames Water to discuss the issue.

SECTION 106 CONTRIBUTIONS

The Panel received a report of the Area Highway Development Control Manager including the financial position and proposed uses for Section 106 (S106) monies held by Hertfordshire County Council.

The Chair informed the Panel that he had had meetings with officers regarding the ringfencing of £1.55million in S106 funds for the Croxley Rail Link. Of the six county divisions in Watford, four would have no S106 monies available to them if the ringfencing went ahead.

The Area Highway Development Control Manager informed the Panel that in the last quarter four developments in Watford had raised approximately £19,000 in S106 funds. The best and final business case for the Croxley Rail Link was to be presented to the Department for Transport in September. The more third party funding that was identified, the more viable and robust the bid would be. He added that further S106 funding would come in for the scheme between now and the completion of the Croxley Rail Link.

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) would be replacing the system of S106. Under the CIL regime authorities would only be able to pool funds from up to five projects from S106 payments received from June 2010. It was hoped that funds from larger developments, such as the Health Campus, could be reserved for the Croxley Rail Link to free up funds from smaller developments.

He added that developments in Hertsmere, and particularly Bushey, should contribute S106 funds to the Croxley Rail Link as residents in Bushey were also likely to benefit from the scheme. However, this had not yet been discussed with Members.

There had been successful bids to the Local Strategic Transport Fund, which had freed up some S106 funds and made the Clarendon Road project possible.

The Chair reported that officers had ringfenced £1.3 million in January 2011 and this had now increased to £1.55 million. The West Herts College and Leggatts Campus developments had contributed to the Croxley Rail Link while funds had not been available to ameliorate the effects of the developments themselves. Residents were not happy when S106 funding was used in a different ward from the development. He suggested that at least £200K from the ringfenced amount should be retained for use in local schemes and that the wording of at least two Section 106 schemes, Leggatts Campus and West Herts College, supported that.

A County Councillor expressed his concern that the ringfenced amount had increased from £1.3 million to £1.55 million and that this was likely to increase further. It was a sensitive issue in Nascot where a lot of S106 funding had been generated but no improvements had been made. There was a risk of turning residents against what was a good scheme.

The Vice-Chair expressed the view that £1.55 million was a small amount compared to the overall cost of the Croxley Rail Link. The comparatively small amounts in question would not make a substantial difference to the success of the bid.

A Borough Councillor commented that developers wanted to make a positive impact on the area and ringfencing the funds undermined the planning officers' negotiations with the developers.

The Area Highway Development Control Manager reminded Members that strategic schemes were the County Council's priority for S106 spend. Officers were aware of the potential for legal challenge and funds were allocated carefully. He added that the Croxley Rail Link had been identified as a possible scheme for S106 funds in reports for several years, even though a total value had not been identified. He reminded the Panel that S106 funding for education was dealt with separately to the funding for transport and the ringfencing had no effect on schools provision.

The Vice-Chair stated that he considered there to be a democratic deficit in the whole area of allocation of S106 funds. The public expected Members to have democratic control and this was an issue for county councillors to pursue more generally.

The following motion was proposed:

"that the Panel agrees to maintain support for the Croxley Rail Link but believes a sufficient sum of money should be made available to mitigate the effects of developments."

On being put to the Panel this motion was AGREED.

RESOLVED –

that the Panel maintains their support for the Croxley Rail Link but believes a sufficient sum of money should be made available to mitigate the effects of developments.

The Panel then considered other aspects of the S106 report.

In response to a query from the County Councillor for Meriden Tudor, the Area Highway Development Control Manager explained that with the Sun Chemical site £107k had been used on the Watford Junction National Station Improvement Programme scheme leaving £26k for use locally.

The Chair commented that Three Rivers District Council was more successful at adding more specific contracts with developers regarding S106 funding, and agreeing at an earlier stage the strategic and local uses for S106 funding.

A Borough Councillor stated that he was a member of the Development Control Committee and it would be useful to think about S106 allocations in this role as well.

RESOLVED –

that the report and the Panel's comments be noted.

8 **JMP DISCRETIONARY BUDGET AND LOCAL WORKS PROGRAMME**

The Panel received a report of the Lead Assistant District Manager which provided information about local works programmes that were client managed by the Hertfordshire Highways Watford area team, including Discretionary Budget, approved Section 106 funds for local schemes and the Super CAT2 maintenance budget.

Discretionary Programme 2011/12

Scheme 5- Francis Road and Percy Road one ways

The Chair informed the Panel that the work would allow for the creation of four extra parking bays.

In response to a question from a County Councillor, the District Manager explained that an incorrect list had been sent out to Members which included last year's schemes.

Scheme 7- Dell Road and Elm Grove one way system

The District Manager informed the Panel that there were two main options for this scheme; widening the two roads at their junctions with Gammons Lane, and a one-way traffic management option for the two roads. Widening the road would mean reducing the footpath near a school and would be more expensive and so the traffic management option would be recommended.

The County Councillor for Callowland Leggatts said he did not understand the Design Team's reasoning and would like to meet them to discuss the scheme.

A Borough Councillor for Leggatts stated that it was crucial to consult with residents and he had found that opinion was divided at present.

Scheme 9- North Western Avenue Vehicle Activated (VA) signs

The District Manager reported that fixed warning signs had been erected in May. There was money available from S106 monies to fund this.

A Borough Councillor referred to the speeding on North Western Avenue, it was extremely difficult for those visiting the Mosque to cross the road safely.

The District Manager responded that they were aware of the issue and although there had been accidents, there had to be a certain number before speed cameras could be considered. The current government had also said they did

not want any additional cameras to be installed. It was a main corridor into Watford but it was important that speeds were reduced.

The Chair said that the VA signs were needed as soon as possible after the speed survey in September.

It was agreed that Panel Members would be sent copies of the results of the survey as soon as possible, as well as the results being sent to all Borough Members for Stanborough and Leggatts.

Scheme 14- Waterfields Recreational Ground

The District Manager reported to the Panel that Herts Highways had agreed a good price from a supplier for lighting enhancement on Waterfields Recreational Ground which had provided a saving of £2,600.

The Chair said that he was aware of the lighting issues on Reeds Walk and Bushey View where the lights were in need of upgrading. He recommended that the money saved should go towards this work.

On being put to the Committee, this was AGREED.

Scheme 15- Greenbank Road

The District Manager informed Members that it had been agreed by Chair and Vice-Chair at the pre-meeting briefing that the Members' discretionary budget should provide a maximum of 50% funding and Watford Borough Council had agreed to pay for the parking measures but there was still £10,000 that needed to be found.

A Borough Councillor for Nascot noted that it had been a significant problem for some time and a multi-agency steering group had been set up. He was concerned that there were no S106 funds available to meet the shortfall.

The Transport and Infrastructure Section Head informed the Panel that the brief had been to create a sterile area in front of the school and put restrictions in place. There was always a problem with displacement with parking schemes.

The Chair said that funding from Safer Routes to Schools and S106 was being pursued.

Scheme 17- Old North Western Avenue

The District Manager explained that the report on the Old North Western Avenue would be released in the coming weeks. Accidents were caused by vehicles speeding, motorists driving on the wrong side of the road due to parked cars and poor visibility. A traffic calming scheme was being considered with road humps, speed cushions and a central island to separate traffic.

Members discussed the problems regarding lorries speeding into Leggatts Campus and residents were keen for a scheme to be put in place.

RESOLVED –

that the report and Panel's comments be noted.

SuperCAT2 works

The report set out the suggested SuperCAT2 works for 2011/12.

RESOLVED –

that the report be noted.

Jet Patching in Watford

In response to a Member's question regarding outstanding schemes from March, the District Manager explained that these works were carried out by a sub-contractor who was given a free rein in carrying out the work. The sub-contractor decided the volume of work to be undertaken each day to obtain best value and so some streets reported in March were still outstanding.

The District Manager reported that more jet patching was scheduled for August; the sub-contractors would be working in Watford, Three Rivers and Dacorum.

A Borough Councillor said that Oakdene Road was a problem and should be prioritised. The Chair asked officers to prioritise all areas that were outstanding since March.

Members also commented that there was often detritus left after jet-patching had taken place.

RESOLVED –

that the Panel's comments be noted.

9 FORWARD WORKS PROGRAMME

The Panel received a report of the District Manager including comments from Members. The District Manager informed the Panel that the comments would be presented at a meeting with the Integrated Works Programme team.

RESOLVED –

that the report be noted.

10 INTEGRATED WORKS PROGRAMME AND PROGRESS REPORTS

The Panel received a report of the Lead Assistant District Manager which summarised progress on the delivery of the Integrated Works Programme.

It was noted that the contact officers shown at the end of the report needed to be updated with Justin Bloomfield replacing Linda Baker as Parking Services Manager.

ACTION: Lead Assistant District Manager

The District Manager apologised that the list was more comprehensive than it needed to be as it included last year's schemes. The list would be reissued. The casualty reduction schemes were all in the design process and were planned for the 2012/13 financial year.

Integrated Transport Projects- Scheme Update

The Chair drew Members' attention to the example road sign that officers had brought to the meeting.

The Transport and Infrastructure Section Head informed the Panel that the new signs were designed to declutter the signage in the Clarendon Road area. They utilised the space below the sign to give pedestrian information.

A Borough Councillor asked how the time taken to complete journeys on foot was judged as it would vary for different people.

The Vice-Chair responded that it was based on the average person's walking speed which was approximately two to three miles per hour.

RESOLVED –

that the new signage be approved.

Variable Message Signs

The District Manager reported that the Variable Message Signs (VMS) had been quite well used. For example during the recent Police incident in the town centre they were used to notify motorists of road closures.

In response to a question from a Member, the District Manager confirmed that the Automatic Number Plate Recognition cameras would solely be used to measure journey times. If a journey had taken a particularly long time officers could look at CCTV and establish where there was a problem and inform motorists via the VMS system.

Schemes being investigated in 2011/12

The District Manager informed the Panel that the pedestrian crossing at the junction of Langley Road and Stratford Road was not likely to be viable due to a low crossing count and poor intervisibility between motorists and pedestrians.

Regarding the quality of life schemes for 20mph zones West of St Albans Road, in the Alexandra Road area and in Park Avenue, all three schemes were being progressed. The District Manager said that a 20mph zone was feasible in each area but traffic calming measures were also needed.

The Chair noted from his attendance at a recent HCC Highways and Transport Panel that in respect of a trial 20mph Zone in the Cathedral area of St Albans, officers had applied to the Department for Transport under Section 64 and 65 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 for exemption from the requirement to have traffic calming measures in part of some of the roads within the trial area. He queried if this could be used in Watford for the Alexandra Road area.

Post meeting note- the District Manager checked the particular circumstances of the St Albans trial, and the roads for which exemption from traffic calming measures was requested had existing speeds which were lower than 25mph. This was not the case with Alexandra Road, where speeds were higher, and so physical measures other than signs and road markings were still likely to be required.

Update on Watford Junction National Station Improvement Project

The District Manager reported that the works were progressing well. There had been resolution with Watford Borough Council regarding pay and display in Woodford Road and it would now be installed.

Watford Borough Council Highway Works

The Transport and Infrastructure Section Head informed Members that the Cassiobury Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) was to be extended to Parkside Drive (The Gardens to Richmond Drive), Cassiobury Drive (The Gardens to Langley Way); and Richmond Drive. These were the only roads that showed clear support for inclusion in to the zone.

There had only been one objection to the scheme in Nascot to combat non-resident parking in Kildonan Close, Oaklands Court and Kenilworth Court.

The majority of residents in the Langwood Gardens, Pinewood Close and Maple Grove area of Nascot were in favour of the scheme to combat commuter parking.

The County Councillor for Nascot Park expressed his thanks to Brian Scott, Watford Borough Council's Traffic Engineer, for his proactive approach, particularly to consultation.

The Vice-Chair referred to the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) for Beechwood Rise, Bushey Mill Lane (disabled bay), Courtlands Drive (disabled bay), Lavinia Avenue, Longspring and the Tolpits Lane service road. He asked whether comments had been received from Herts Highways and whether this could be expedited as residents were keen for it to be implemented. The Transport and Infrastructure Section Head responded that the TRO would go in the Watford Observer in late July/early August.

A Borough Councillor raised an issue of a van which regularly parked on Beechwood Rise/Longspring. The Vice-Chair suggested that it could be a matter for the Police to pursue if the driver was causing an obstruction.

Intelligent Transport System Strategy

The Chair noted that the system on the UNO bus fleet would be live in March 2012.

The Transport and Infrastructure Section Head agreed to ask operators about the progress of their plans at their next meeting.

11 **OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF HERTS. HIGHWAYS**

The Panel received a report of the District Manager which advised on the performance of Hertfordshire Highways in the Borough of Watford.

RESOLVED –

that the report be noted.

12 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

27 October 2011

Chair
Hertfordshire Highways
Watford Joint Member Panel

The Meeting started at 6.00 pm
and finished at 8.35 pm