

HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHWAYS WATFORD JOINT MEMBER PANEL

27 October 2011

Present: County Councillor Giles-Medhurst (Chair)
Borough Councillor Wylie (Vice-Chair)
County Councillors Bell, Brandon, Scudder, and Watkin
Borough Councillors J Brown, Johnson, Khan, Rackett (for minute numbers 13 to 20 and 25) and Sharpe

Also present: Borough Councillors Aron (for minute number 25), I Brown, Burtenshaw, Meerabux, County Councillor D Lloyd (for minute number 25)
Angela Joseph- Petitioner (for minute numbers 13 to 17)

Officers: Mike Jarrett	Area Service Manager for the South West Herts Area office
David Swan	Hertfordshire Highways, District Manager
Andrew Melville	Hertfordshire Highways, Assistant District Manager
Stuart Liddle	Development Control Manager, Hertfordshire Highways
Andy Smith	Watford Borough Council, Transport and Infrastructure Section Head
Yvonne Shaw	Watford Borough Council, Town Centre Programme Manager
Jodie Kloss	Watford Borough Council, Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer

13. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP/APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor Oaten.

There was a change of membership for this meeting: Borough Councillor Khan replaced Borough Councillor Dhindsa.

14. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest.

15. MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 24 March 2011 and 12 July 2011 were submitted for signature.

16. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

17. PETITIONS AND LOCAL ISSUES

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

Petitions Received – St James Road

A petition with 112 signatures had been received from the residents of St James Road asking that the road be made one-way. The Chair, County Councillor Giles-Medhurst, invited the petitioner, Angela Joseph, to speak to the Panel.

Ms Joseph told the Panel that she had lived in the road for 20 years and there were increasing numbers of vehicles going up the road. The petition was signed by residents from 98 houses on the road who asked that the road be made one-way. One end of the road was 'no entry' but cars could go both ways along the road. This resulted in problems and arguments as there was not enough room for two cars to pass when cars were parked on both sides of the road. There had been no accidents but some cars had been damaged trying to pass on the road.

County Councillor Bell thanked the petitioner and said he hoped that officers would be able to help.

Borough Councillor Sharpe said it was important for officers to consider how it could be made to be effective as the risk with one-way streets was that motorists had the confidence to go faster.

The Vice Chair, Borough Councillor Wylie, said that he understood the problems in St James Road as he lived in a similar street. He urged officers to consider the extent of the problem in daytime hours as well as at night when much of the damage occurs. He fully supported the petition.

The Panel agreed to back a study into the problem.

RESOLVED –

To fund a survey of vehicle movements from the Discretionary Budget, so that current levels of usage and direction of traffic flow can be quickly established.

Petition- Courtlands Drive / A41 Hempstead Road junction

The District Manager reported that officers were continuing to investigate the scheme. A modest widening scheme was being considered as it would give more space to the vehicles queuing but the disbenefit was that this could encourage more traffic to the junction. Officers were also investigating changing the settings on the Hempstead Road/ Ridge Lane pedestrian crossing to allow greater gaps in the traffic but this measure was not often used in non town-centre areas.

County Councillor Watkin thanked officers for the perseverance. The original intention was to find a way to allow cars turning right onto the Hempstead Road to do so more safely. He felt that the length of the queue was not an important

issue and asked officers not to spend more time on it and he was prepared to draw it to a close.

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

The District Manager reported that progress on this scheme was shown in Item 9 Appendix C and officers were progressing with outline designs and consultation.

Following a comment from County Councillor Scudder, the Chair asked that the County Councillor and the Borough Councillors for the ward receive copies of the report.

ACTION- District Manager to send the report.

RESOLVED –

that the report be noted.

Objections to Traffic Regulation Orders

The Chair noted that the objection was in relation to the closure of the cycle lane during the specialist markets on The Parade.

In response to a question from Borough Councillor Rackett, the Town Centre Programme Manager responded that it would be difficult to provide an advisory route whilst allowing space for pedestrians and for emergency vehicles. She also added that the markets varied in size and the last one had covered a much smaller area.

The Vice Chair informed the Panel that it would not be possible to have any meaningful statistics on accidents involving cyclists and pedestrians as they rarely resulted in injury and were therefore not recorded.

RESOLVED –

that the objections to the TRO be overruled.

Local issues- Woodmere Avenue width restriction scheme

The Chair noted that this item had been before the Panel on several occasions and it was agreed at the last meeting that no further action be taken.

County Councillor Bell asked if this could be looked at again in light of recent events.

The District Manager reported that the width restriction had been recently checked after a resident informed them that she drove through it regularly and had not had a problem until recently. The inspection showed the width restriction had not moved.

County Councillor Scudder informed the Panel that he thought there was a fundamental problem with the width restriction. There may be a perception problem for drivers.

Borough Councillor Khan recounted his experience of driving through the restriction which he found frightening. It was noted that it was intended to be a speed restriction as well as a width restriction.

The Vice Chair said that in a low car it was easy to panic and become misaligned. The number of accidents was decreasing but was still too many. He deferred to County Councillor Oaten, who represented the division, who had reported that the residents' associations were happy with the scheme. In his opinion, if the emergency services complain about the number of calls they were taking, then the width restriction would need to be urgently reviewed.

Borough Councillor Sharpe drew a comparison with a width restriction in Oxhey. It was quite controversial when it was put in and there were still issues but there had not been the same media attention. He suggested that complaints and the views of the local residents' association continue to be monitored.

Borough Councillor J Brown said that although the restriction may be technically perfect, the reality was that cars continue to become stuck. She added that it was a strength to change one's mind and not a weakness.

The Chair said the width restriction could be monitored throughout the winter. The suggestion to remove two of the six posts would make it less safe as it would not be possible to see the kerb. CCTV was prohibitively expensive and residents would not be in favour of removing it completely.

RESOLVED –

that the number of complaints continues to be monitored and reviewed at the next meeting.

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

The Chair referred Members to Appendix D to the report which summarised the meeting that had taken place

RESOLVED –

that the report be noted.

18. 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 District Manager reported that feasibility studies for two discretionary schemes, Old North Western Avenue and Courtlands Drive, had been carried out and had been accepted.

The Chair drew Members' attention to paragraph 3.3 which explained that £250,000 would be made available for projects other than the Croxley Rail Link. Regarding the allocation of these monies, the Chair had been in contact with the Area Highway Development Control Manager and the S106 agreements had to be followed carefully. This meant that schemes in Nascot or Leggatts could use the money from the Leggatts Campus development but not schemes in other parts of the Borough.

The Chair commented that the North Western Avenue scheme should have been allocated against the money from Leggatts Campus.

The District Manager explained that Members could submit bids at any time although there was a cycle of meetings at which they would be considered. The next Officer Group would be in January 2012.

Regarding the work on North Western Avenue, the Chair said that he would not want this scheme to delay the implementation of the safety measures that were planned. The rest of North Western Avenue could be completed at a later date and the interim work outlined in the Discretionary Programme should take place in the meantime.

The Chair added that he wanted it to be formally renamed 'Old North Western Avenue' and the Assistant District Manager responded that this was a matter for the Borough Council.

RESOLVED –

that the interim scheme on North Western Avenue be pursued as a priority so as not to delay the safety measures that were planned.

19. 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 7- Dell Road and Elm Road

The District Manager reported that consultation was currently with County Councillor Brandon who represented the division. He was going to redo the consultation using schemes suggested by officers.

ACTION- The District Manager to send the Borough Councillors for Leggatts a copy of the report.

Scheme 9- North Western Avenue

The Chair reported that the speed surveys had come back and the criteria were met so the S106 bid could go in.

County Councillor Scudder said that he was of the opinion that standard Vehicle Activated (VA) signs would be fine. There was no need for more expensive versions to be used.

Scheme 13- Sheepcot Lane

The Chair noted that there an amount of £3,000 in abortive costs as this scheme had been abandoned after materials had been purchased. The Chair asked whether the materials could be purchased by Three Rivers Council who had a programme of grasscrete parking bays.

The District Manager informed the Panel that the other depots in the County had been asked whether they could make use of the grasscrete but none could. The Assistant District Manager reminded Members that if they could find a use for the materials, labour costs would still need to be covered.

ACTION - Members for Leggatts to speak to the District Manager and Assistant District Manager about possible uses for the materials.

ACTION - The Transport & Infrastructure Section Head to discuss with TRDC about purchasing the materials.

Scheme 15- Greenbank Road

The District Manager reported that as the Discretionary budget was currently overcommitted by £5,000, and that one way of bringing it into line was to limit spending on this scheme to £5,000 this financial year. He had been working with County Councillor Watkin to progress this scheme. Subject to the safety audit, the scheme could move on to the consultation stage. It was intended that yellow lines and 'Keep Clear' markings be introduced to alleviate the parking problems.

Informal and TRO consultation could also proceed on the Francis and Percy Road 20mph scheme, as the before and after study had showed that speeds were low enough. By combining consultations, this would bring about savings which would allow the discretionary budget to come in within budget and the Greenbank Road scheme to proceed.

The Transport and Infrastructure Section Head informed the Panel that this work could be combined with other work in Nascot which would free up approximately £3,000.

The Chair noted that extra available budget would help to fund the study on St James Road. He suggested that the TRO for Greenbank Road could be combined with others that were forthcoming.

RESOLVED –

that the report and Panel's comments be noted.

List of streets for Deep Cleansing

The report set out the suggested the streets for Deep Cleansing.

RESOLVED –

that the report be noted.

SuperCAT2 Works

The Chair reported that these schemes had been completed this quarter.

RESOLVED –

that the report be noted.

Jet Patching in Watford

Borough Councillor Khan asked about Oakdene Road where the jet patching had not been successful. The Chair informed the Panel that he had discussed this and several other roads with officers and that roads where jet patching had been unsuccessful were due to be micro-asphalted this year.

County Councillor Watkin asked why the work in The Spinney had not yet taken place. The District Manager apologised and said it was not clear whether the works team had visited the road. They had now finished working in South West Herts but would return after the winter.

The Chair explained that when some roads were inaccessible for the jet-patcher the team tried to return at another time but if there were cars parked on both sides of the road it would need to be done at the same time as a deep cleanse.

RESOLVED –

that the Panel's comments be noted.

20. INTEGRATED WORKS PROGRAMME AND FORWARD WORKS PROGRAMME

The Panel received a report of the Forward Works Programme Manager advising Members on Draft 2 of the Integrated Works Programme for 2012/13 and the Forward Work Programme 2012/2013 to 2016/2017.

The District Manager informed the Panel that they could now access the information online. He explained that 58 carriageway bids had been added for Watford but that no footway bids had been accepted. An administrative error meant that the bids had not been submitted in the latest format but an evaluation by the District Manager showed that only one of the footways, Garston Lane, would have ranked high enough to be considered. He explained that under the new system officers graded the condition of the footway (deteriorating, poor or very poor) and this score was then multiplied by its location score.

Borough Councillor Sharpe commented that the residents of Garston Lane should not be penalised for the error and there should be the flexibility to consider it.

The District Manager informed Members that there were still many opportunities to bid for footways and how the footways continued to deteriorate would be a factor for consideration. The round of bidding would go into the Forward Works Programme for 2016/17.

Borough Councillor Khan commented that there needed to be a more quantitative method to grade the condition of footways. The method was too subjective and open to the state of footways being exaggerated to increase the rankings.

The Assistant District Manager informed the Panel that the footways that have been repaired have generally been on roads with shops or schools and were major pedestrian routes with high footfall.

The Vice Chair noted the poor condition of many footways in Meriden where there was a large proportion of older residents.

The District Manager responded that roads with a high proportion of vulnerable road users received a higher ranking.

Borough Councillor Meerabux praised the fast response he had had when he had reported a safety issue with a footway.

County Councillor Brandon felt that the system was disadvantageous to areas like Watford which had a high footfall.

The District Manager said that roads often became a higher priority as their condition resulted in the most insurance claims. He added that if Members had any queries, they would need to contact him by 17 November 2011.

RESOLVED –

that the report be noted.

21. 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.

The Vice Chair noted the recent problems with the works on Rickmansworth Road on the morning when there had been problems with the sewer. He commented that there were not enough staff available to direct vehicles. An early warning system was needed.

Integrated Transport Projects- Scheme Update

The Chair referred to the update in Appendix D about the improvements at Watford Junction Station. The works were due to start in January 2012.

County Councillor Scudder said that it was vital that a drop-off facility be available; without this there would be problems on Station Road.

Borough Councillor J Brown noted that there were difficulties in leaving the station with traffic queuing on Station Road. This became particularly expensive for passengers in taxis. She asked why taxis were not permitted to use the bus lane.

The District Manager responded that once the Intelligent Transport System was in place it will be possible to monitor traffic flow. A modelling exercise needed to be carried out as the risk would be that taxis would have priority over buses.

The Vice Chair added that he had asked about this in the past and heard that it was Hertfordshire County Council policy to only allow buses in bus lanes. Bus companies objected to other road users being permitted to use the bus lanes. He asked that the Borough Council be given an official response to this question.

The Chair suggested that it could be requested as an item on the Highways and Transport agenda.

ACTION- The District Manager to write to HCC for a statement of policy on this issue and circulate to Members.

The Transport and Infrastructure Section Head drew the Panel's attention to Appendix E to the report. He reported that four waiting bays were planned for Queen's Road. The time limit on the parking bays would be 20 minutes.

With regard to the TRO for Lavinia Avenue, the Transport and Infrastructure Section Head reported that there were still objectors and an ambulance had recently been stuck there.

The Chair reported a lack of lighting on the footpath diversion near the Watford Springs site as the lighting columns had been removed.

ACTION- The Transport and Infrastructure Section Head to investigate this.

Borough Councillor Burtenshaw referred to the work at Woodside Leisure Centre. He was very pleased with what had been achieved but questioned why it had taken so long.

The Chair added that the warning signs about parking restrictions were not illuminated but motorists could still receive a ticket at night.

RESOLVED –

.that the report be noted.

22. LOCAL SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT FUND

The Chair noted that the Department for Transport had awarded £1.99 million to Hertfordshire County Council.

Members asked that they be sent more detailed information about how the funds were to be spent.

ACTION- The District Manager to send Members this information.

23. OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF HERTFORDSHIRE 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.

24. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

19 January 2012

25. HIGHWAYS LOCALITY BUDGET

The Area Service Manager for South West Herts Area office of Hertfordshire Highways made a presentation to the Panel. Members asked questions and made comments on the presentation, the notes of this item are available in Appendix A to these minutes.

Chair
Hertfordshire Highways Watford
Joint Member Panel

The meeting started at 6.00 p.m.
and ended at 9.30 p.m.

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