

HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHWAYS WATFORD JOINT MEMBER PANEL

19 January 2012

Present: County Councillor Giles-Medhurst (Chair)
Borough Councillor Wylie (Vice-Chair)
County Councillors Bell, Brandon, Oaten, Scudder, and Watkin
Borough Councillors J Brown, Dhindsa, Johnson, Rackett and
Sharpe (for minute numbers 30-36)

Also present: Borough Councillor I Brown

Officers:	David Swan	Hertfordshire Highways, District Manager
	Andrew Melville	Hertfordshire Highways, Assistant District Manager
	Stuart Liddle	Hertfordshire Highways, Development Control Manager
	Nick Gough	Hertfordshire County Council, Area Highway Development Control Manager
	Andy Smith	Watford Borough Council, Transport and Infrastructure Section Head
	Sandra Hancock	Watford Borough Council, Committee and Scrutiny Officer

26. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP/APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

27. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest.

28. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 October 2011 were submitted and signed.

29. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

30. PETITIONS, TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDERS AND LOCAL ISSUES

The Panel received a report of the District Manager setting out the current status of petitions, information on any objections to Traffic Regulation Orders and other local issues.

Petition – First Avenue and Fourth Avenue

The Chair, County Councillor Giles-Medhurst, invited Borough Councillor J Brown to present a petition she had received from local residents.

Borough Councillor Brown explained that the petition related to First Avenue and Fourth Avenue. Fourth Avenue was scheduled to be resurfaced in 2013/14 even though there were no potholes. First Avenue had more reported potholes but was not due to be resurfaced until 2017. The 21 signatories asked that the programme was altered and that First Avenue was resurfaced at the earlier date and Fourth Avenue later.

County Councillor Oaten advised that she supported the petition. First Avenue was a main thoroughfare compared to the other road, as it was a direct to a school.

Borough Councillor Johnson said that he agreed with the petition but the residents in Fourth Avenue should be consulted about the alteration to the programme.

Borough Councillor Brown replied that she had spoken to residents in Fourth Avenue and they were in agreement with the change. They acknowledged the state of the road in First Avenue.

The Chair asked that the Joint Member Panel noted the petition and that it was forwarded to the relevant officer who managed the Integrated Works Programme.

RESOLVED –

that the petition be noted and forwarded to officers for action.

Petitions Received – St James Road

County Councillor Bell thanked officers for the update regarding the petition for the introduction of a one-way route in St James Road.

The District Manager advised that officers were waiting for the results of the survey, which would be provided to the County Councillor. A report would be presented to the next Joint Member Panel for further discussion and consideration of any proposals.

Borough Councillor Dhindsa stated that he had witnessed arguments between drivers when they had met in the road and were unable to pass each other.

RESOLVED –

that the position of the St James Road petition be noted.

Objections to Traffic Regulation Orders

The Joint Member Panel was informed that at the previous meeting Members had agreed to support officers' recommendation to overrule the two objections to the Traffic Regulation Order for the prohibition of driving and cycling in The Parade when 'specialist' markets were held in that area. The Traffic Regulation Order had been completed and was ready for sealing. Members would be informed when it came into effect.

RESOLVED –

that the update be noted.

Local issues- Woodmere Avenue width restriction scheme

The Joint Member Panel noted that there had been fewer complaints about the Woodmere Avenue width restriction.

Borough Councillor Rackett asked whether the residents in Woodmere Avenue were happy with the situation.

County Councillor Oaten advised that she had not received any comments from residents for some time.

The Chair suggested that the situation should be monitored. He had discussed the issue with officers and it had been suggested that lines on the road could be introduced to enable vehicles to correctly line up with the restriction.

County Councillor Scudder said that he understood that the majority of accidents involved drivers coming from the A41 and approaching the restriction too fast and out of alignment. He considered the road markings to be a good option.

RESOLVED –

that the Woodmere Avenue restriction continue to be monitored and consideration be given to the introduction of road markings.

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

The District Manager reported that Thames Water prioritised areas where people were affected by flooding in their living accommodation. He said that it was important that residents contacted Thames Water if they experienced any flooding in their living accommodation. Thames Water was happy to advise residents on measures they could undertake to protect their property.

County Councillor Oaten commented that it was important that the Borough Council's Environmental officers needed to be involved in discussions.

RESOLVED –

that the report be noted.

31.

BRIEFING NOTES FROM NETWORK MANAGER

Proposed National Grid Gas (NGG) Works in Watford – 2012/13

The Joint Member Panel was informed that there would be a presentation on 6 February when NGG would present the outline programme and traffic management proposals for the schemes.

RESOLVED –

that the report be noted.

Use of Watford's Bus Lanes by Hackney Carriages

The Chair advised that many of the Transport Panel Members had not been aware that taxis were unable to use bus lanes. He suggested that option 5.1 ii should be the preferred choice but sought Members' views.

Borough Councillor J Brown thanked the Chair for ensuring this was reported to the Joint Member Panel. She had been trying for two years for people to consider this matter. Hackney carriages needed to be able to use bus lanes, particularly in Station Road.

County Councillor Brandon said that his concern with taxis using the bus lane in Station Road was the amount of space between the traffic lights. Generally there was the maximum space for two buses. He asked whether an increase in the space could be considered.

Borough Councillor Dhindsa agreed with Borough Councillor Brown's comments. He advised that drivers had approached him asking why they were unable to use bus lanes. This might encourage people to use taxis more. He welcomed the proposal to change the access arrangements at the Lower High Street. Hackney carriages near the Harlequin would be able to access it from the Lower High Street.

County Councillor Bell commented that when this suggestion had been raised on a previous occasion, a senior officer had advised that there were major legal problems. He was pleased that it appeared the situation had changed.

The Vice-Chair, Borough Councillor Wylie, stated that he had raised this matter when he had been Portfolio Holder responsible for Transport. The Passenger Transport Unit had refused the request and that the preference was for people to use buses. Taxis were a good alternative form of transport. He hoped that the proposal was agreed by the County's Panel.

Borough Councillor Dhindsa asked how the bus lanes would be monitored, as not all taxis were black and white. He asked whether permission would be given to allow private hire vehicles to use the bus lanes; they carried out the same role as hackney carriages.

The Chair replied that the report clearly specified that this would apply to hackney carriages.

The District Manager added that it was important to take one step at a time. The request had been for hackney carriages to be able to use bus lanes.

The Chair agreed that this was the approach that should be taken. He said that having heard the discussion it appeared that all Members were in favour of the second option. Both he and County Councillor Bell were members of the Transport Panel and they would ensure that the Joint Member Panel's opinion would be heard. He acknowledged the Member's comments about enforcement.

The Vice-Chair advised that enforcement was generally carried out by the use of cameras. It was important to arrange for hackney carriages to use the bus lanes and if that were a success it could be extended to private hire vehicles.

Borough Councillor Dhindsa commented that if it was necessary to change the signs at a later date it would cost more.

The Chair explained that the survey had been based on hackney carriages. If the scheme was extended to private hire vehicles at this stage it would delay the process.

RESOLVED –

that the Panel prefers to allow taxis (hackney carriages) to use some or all bus lanes and 'bus only' junctions in Watford.

32. **SECTION 106 CONTRIBUTIONS**

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

The Chair referred to paragraph 2.3 of the officer's report. He said that it appeared that the £250,000 released from the Croxley Rail Link funding had been fully allocated to schemes.

The Area Highway Development Control Manager informed the Panel that Appendix A explained the approved requests to use S106 monies in 2011/12.

The Area Highway Development Control Manager reminded the Panel that the Croxley Rail Link had received government funding approval in December. It was now necessary to ensure there was available funding for the required value for the scheme and that it was set aside. It was possible that other development sites may come forward nearer the scheme in the future. This could release some of the funding currently reserved for it which would make it available for other local schemes.

The Area Highway Development Control Manager reminded the Panel that £250,000 had been released from the ring-fenced funding in July 2011 and it was available for local schemes. At the last officer meeting, officers had identified schemes which had support from the Panel and were deliverable in

the required timescale. The proposals were set out in Appendix B to the report. This appendix also included details of new S106 obligations which had been ring-fenced for the Croxley Rail Link.

The Area Highway Development Control Manager added that Appendix C set out the current S106 contributions and the possible schemes that might be supported. The final part of the report set out the contributions which had been received from developers since the last meeting.

The Chair noted that the funding from two large developments in Leggatts and Nascot had been allocated to the Croxley Rail Link. In his opinion this did not provide for any funding to mitigate traffic issues in the local area arising from those developments. It appeared that there had been no consultation with Members to discuss where the £250,000 released funding should be allocated. He referred to the proposal to use £68,000 for Clarendon Road pedestrian improvements in 2013/14. Previously this was due to be paid for from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) budget.

The Area Highway Development Control Manager replied that it would be necessary to speak to the relevant officer regarding that particular scheme. LSTF was still at bid stage and was therefore not guaranteed.

The Chair said that the Area Highway Development Control Manager was responsible for the S106 budget. The Clarendon Road scheme did not need to use the S106 funds. This allocation should have been kept aside for schemes in Leggatts and Nascot.

The Chair added that the £250,000 would not have been available as it had been set aside for the Croxley Rail Link. Two of the schemes had been suggested by the Joint Member Panel; however, the first four schemes were new.

County Councillor Brandon said that he could suggest two alternatives in Leggatts Ward. He noted the £62,000 set aside for Old North Western Avenue and asked whether any designs were available. He had made suggestions and did not know the outcome.

The Chair replied that he understood this would cover the cost of new kerbing being installed on one corner. Further bids would be submitted.

Borough Councillor Sharpe stated that he was not entirely clear on the significance of Appendix B. He questioned whether this was a list of schemes officers had put forward for discussion by the Panel. He suggested that the Chair and Vice-Chair should consider the Panel's comments and then prioritise the order. The Panel had fought to get S106 funding for new local schemes. If a scheme were already funded from another source then it was not appropriate that it should be funded from the S106 budget. This would make the money available for local schemes.

County Councillor Watkin said that he was pleased to see that the crossing on Courtlands Drive had been included in the list. He asked whether the primary school expansion schemes would generate additional S106 funds.

The Area Highway Development Control Manager responded that those proposals did not generate additional S106 funds.

County Councillor Bell commented that Members had pushed for the £250,000 to ensure that areas away from the Croxley Rail Link were adequately funded.

Borough Councillor Johnson said that he had understood that it had been agreed that £111,000 from the Leggatts Campus development would fund the expansion of Old North Western Avenue. At previous meeting Members had specified schemes they would like supported and he understood that these had been agreed.

The Area Highway Development Control Manager informed the Panel that officers made the funding selection decision based on County Council and government criteria; taking into account strategic schemes, ensuring they matched the terms of each legal agreement and complied with legislation. He added that schemes close to North Western Avenue would be strong contenders for accessing the available funds.

County Councillor Brandon said that he was concerned that under the County Council procedure no schemes in Leggatts or Nascot would be eligible until local schemes could be considered for funding, as they were not usually strategic schemes.

The Chair asked whether the £101,000 from the S106 for Leggatts Campus had been taken into account in Appendix C. This showed that £226,832.10 was available for new schemes.

The Area Highway Development Control Manager advised that he was unsure but believed that the £101,000 was included in the available budget figure.

The Chair commented that this implied that there were no further funds available from the Leggatts Campus amount. The Panel had asked officers to process the Old North Western Avenue scheme.

The Area Highway Development Control Manager replied that he would take Members' comments and discuss them at the officer meeting and further suggestions would be made.

County Councillor Brandon asked that the situation was clarified as soon as possible.

County Councillor Scudder said that the improvements to the safety at the Dome roundabout affected three county divisions. The proposals should be brought forward.

The District Manager replied that this had been discussed at the officers' annual selection meeting. There were protocols which stated when funding could be made available in the capital programme. He had spoken to the relevant officer and it was hoped that the brief would be started before the end of the current financial year, if it was possible to identify funding for next financial year.

The Chair commented that schemes had specified their use for works at the Dome roundabout. He did not understand why the investigative work could not commence.

The Area Highway Development Control Manager replied that it would be necessary to discuss this with the relevant officer.

The Vice-Chair, Borough Councillor Wylie, stated that officers' responses were unsatisfactory. Officers did not appear to be clear whether the proposals in paragraph 3.1 of the report were included in the figures referred to in Appendix C. There was little Member involvement and therefore no democratic accountability. At Watford Borough Council if officers wanted to alter the capital programme a report was presented to Cabinet in the same financial year seeking the amendment. With regard to the current S106 report, he said that Members appeared to be the last ones to know what was happening. He added that the public expected Councillors to be in control. Compensation was sought for developments in areas to ameliorate the impact of the developments. It appeared that the procedure followed by the officers did not have any democratic accountability and it was not possible to intervene during the year. He stated that Councillors should make the final decision where money was spent.

Borough Councillor J Brown said that the S106 funds agreed for the Meriden Nursery School application and the Sun Chemicals site should not be used in another part of the town, but used in the immediate area to the application sites. She asked that Cow Lane was included in the review of the Dome roundabout. The Sun Chemicals application was a huge development site.

The Area Highway Development Control Manager advised that the District Manager would note the Councillor's wishes regarding Cow Lane.

The Chair said that officers had heard Members' comments and how they were unhappy. He commented that the report was difficult to follow. The report needed to be divided into the six county divisions. It was not clear whether the funding for the Croxley Rail Link had been set aside. With regard to Appendix B, he said that the first four schemes did not need the allocated amounts until it was known if the funding was available.

The Chair stated that there were traffic issues as a result of the Cow Lane development. County Councillor Oaten had discussed the matter with the Portfolio Holder. The funding was available for the required works and residents expected to see action. He added that Councillors were the people who received the complaints from residents.

The Chair suggested that the Joint Member Panel should not agree the proposals in Appendix B and that further clarification was sought.

Borough Councillor Sharpe added that there was a lack of Members' control. If the Joint Member Panel ceased to exist this type of scrutiny would no longer be able to take place. The two annual briefings would not be sufficient. It was

important that Members were able to have this type of debate. He was concerned about the future and Members' ability to influence officers.

County Councillor Scudder commented that he agreed with the Chair's suggestion about Appendix B. Members should be able to put forward their own suggestions.

The Chair agreed that only the two schemes put forward by the District Manager should proceed, as these were the only two Level 3 local schemes requested by members. He asked officers to take on board Members' comments about the Dome roundabout and Old North Western Avenue.

County Councillor Watkin said that he was concerned about what would happen next and the apparent loss of democracy.

The Chair replied that there would be a loss of overview of the whole borough. The current report related to the whole of the borough whereas in the future he would only see the information relating to Central / Oxhey division.

The Chair added that where S106 funding had been acquired for specific areas that work should be carried out.

RESOLVED –

1. that the Joint Member Panel's comments be noted.
2. that only the following schemes be funded with planning obligations previously ring-fenced for use on the Croxley Rail Link –
 - Old North Western Avenue in 2012/13 (£62,000)
 - Courtlands Drive pedestrian crossing in 2013/14 (£23,000)

33. **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

The Lead Assistant District Manager reported that it had not been possible to carry out a deep clean in Cardiff Road. Officers had tried to carry out the works on two occasions but lorries constantly used the road. He updated Members on the schemes which still needed completion.

RESOLVED –

that the report be noted.

SuperCAT2 Works

The Lead Assistant District Manager reported that the majority of the schemes had been completed. Following a question from the Chair he advised that the works to resurface the roads would be carried out in March as officers were waiting for improved weather.

RESOLVED –

that the report be noted.

Highways Locality Budget Phase 1 Schemes 2012/13

The Lead Assistant District Manager reported that officers had received some costings and had spoken to the individual County Councillors.

Highway Locality Budget 2012/13 – Cross Watford Issues

The Lead Assistant District Manager informed the Joint Member Panel that he would arrange meetings with each of the County Councillors to create a batch of lining work in their areas.

The Chair explained that this only related to non-statutory road markings as statutory markings would continue to be refreshed by the County Council. He asked that Members were provided with the definitions for statutory and non-statutory road markings.

With regard to Probationers, the Lead Assistant District Manager advised that they were used to carry out certain work. The Borough Council match-funded the amount provided by the County Council. It was recommended that each County Councillor should set aside £1,666 for this work. The work undertaken included painting subways and cutting hedges and growth at the base of trees. If Members agreed to the amount it would be transferred to the Borough Council who held the budget.

County Councillor Scudder said that it was important that the work was spread evenly across the area. He felt that this scheme was good value for money.

RESOLVED –

1. that officers' request for batch lining be noted.
2. that £1,666 be set aside from each County Councillors' Highways Locality Budget for funding the works carried out by Probationers.

34. **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 and other programmed works on the highways network in Watford.

Active Works List

County Councillor Brandon asked why it was proposed that there would be a lane closure at the junction of St Albans Road and Bushey Mill Lane for four or five days.

The District Manager replied that in many cases the closure would not be required for the full period.

The Lead Assistant District Manager added that if the contractor did not meet their deadline they would be fined for going beyond the end date.

The Vice-Chair suggested that the lane closure might be due to the need to divert pedestrians on to the road. It would be necessary to look at the plans for the scheme.

The Chair asked officers to confirm which part of North Western Avenue was due to be resurfaced. Where long roads were referred to it was not clear which sections were affected.

The Lead Assistant District Manager responded that this scheme referred to the section of road adjacent to the printers. The plan would be to do the anti-skid surface at the same time.

Following County Councillor Bell's question about the casualty reduction proposals for Wiggshall Road, the Chair said that he understood the work to have been completed. He asked officers to inform him and County Councillor Bell of the works referred to by this scheme.

Following a further question from County Councillor Bell, the District Manager explained that the Whippendell Road and Hagden Lane signal refurbishment scheme would be carried out in the current year, but he could not give a precise date.

Integrated Transport Schemes

The District Manager advised that he would check whether all the Automatic Number Plate Recognition cameras were operational.

County Councillor Brandon referred to the proposed 20 mph scheme for roads west of St Albans Road, including Victoria Road, Regent Street, Cecil Street and Judge Street.

The District Manager replied that these schemes had been brought forward as part of the locality budget. The locality budget would be used to fund the feasibility works and surveys. Once this work had been carried out a decision would be made on how to progress them further.

County Councillor Brandon commented that he had understood the schemes to have been funded. Officers had suggested the inclusion of roads west of Leavesden Road.

County Councillor Bell stated that he supported the 20 mph scheme for Park Avenue.

Borough Councillor Dhindsa added that the scheme had been discussed at a local residents' association meeting. Currently this was the only street not in the local 20 mph zone. At this point Borough Councillor Dhindsa stated that he should probably have declared an interest as he was a resident of Park Avenue. He asked whether residents would be consulted about the proposal.

The District Manager replied that a full consultation would be carried out. The Traffic Regulation Order needed to be completed.

County Councillor Watkin commented that part of the Park Avenue scheme was within his division and would appreciate it if officers consulted him as well as County Councillor Bell.

Update on Watford Junction – National Station Improvement Project (NSIP)

The District Manager reported that the main work would be carried out between April and October 2012. Officers would have a clearer idea by the end of February.

County Councillor Scudder said that he was unclear about the drop off facility. This should be available to all users.

The District Manager explained that they were generally used by season ticket holders.

Borough Councillor Rackett was concerned about the pedestrian access to Penn Road. He said that the report did not refer to a pedestrian access. If pedestrians were able to gain access to this route they would use it. Previous discussions had referred to the access being the other side of Homebase. It would be necessary to add a pavement to this access.

The Vice-Chair commented that he could understand the time slippage, as there had been a number of design changes. Legal procedures could take a long time. He was pleased to see the access from Penn Road and pedestrian measures needed to be considered.

Watford Borough Council Highways Works

The Transport and Infrastructure Section Head reported that further funding had been received for additional new style street signs, which would be extended to Queens Road Broadway. He advised that a parking consultation had been carried out in Oxhey. The Considerate Parking Scheme would be a pilot in the ward and could be introduced in other areas.

The Transport and Infrastructure Section Head informed the Joint Member Panel that new parking controls would be introduced in the Town Hall visitors' car park, commencing on 13 February. The parking rates would be the same as in the Town Hall and Avenue car parks. A 30 minutes free period had been

introduced. The flat rate of £1.50 would commence from 5.00 p.m. rather than 6.00 p.m. as at present.

The Vice-Chair noted that Lavinia Avenue had been called 'Lavinia Close'. He asked that this was corrected on future information. He thanked officers for the new parking scheme in Lavinia Avenue. He hoped that the severe problems experienced would be ameliorated.

Following a question from the Chair about the timing of the Shaftesbury Road proposals, the Transport and Infrastructure Section Head replied that there were a number of schemes in Central Ward and they had been put in order of priority. This particular scheme should be delivered by June or July. The refurbishment works would continue. He added that Traffic Regulation Orders could take up to eight months to complete.

The Chair stated that lines for the disabled bays located in Goodwood Parade were missing. He asked about enforcement action in the area.

The Transport and Infrastructure Section Head replied that he would ensure the lines were painted. He would refer the area for more enforcement action.

RESOLVED –

that the reports be noted.

35. **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.

The Vice-Chair noted that there had been a significant increase in footway trip repairs in comparison to previous months. In addition there had been a significant reduction in the number of street light repairs.

RESOLVED –

that the report be noted.

36. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

22 March 2012

Chair
Hertfordshire Highways Watford
Joint Member Panel

The meeting started at 6.00 p.m.
and ended at 8.00 p.m.