

HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHWAYS WATFORD JOINT MEMBER PANEL

20 JANUARY 2011

Present: Borough Councillor Sharpe (Chair) (for minute numbers HH35-10/11 to HH44-10/11)
County Councillor Giles-Medhurst (Vice-Chair) (Chair for minute numbers HH32-10/11 to HH34-10/11)
County Councillors Bell (for minute number HH32-10/11 to HH40-10/11), Brandon, Oaten, D Scudder and Watkin
Borough Councillors Khan (for minute numbers HH35-10/11 to HH44-10/11), Qureshi, Rackett, and Wylie (for minute numbers HH40-10/11 to HH44-10/11)

Officers:	David Swan	Hertfordshire Highways, District Manager
	Andrew Melville	Hertfordshire Highways, Assistant District Manager
	Chris Gladwin	Hertfordshire Highways, Technical Manager
	Christian Hoskins	Hertfordshire County Council, Passenger Transport Unit Team Leader
	Andy Gipson	Hertfordshire County Council, Passenger Transport Unit Consultant
	Jane Custance	Watford Borough Council, Head of Planning
	Brian Scott	Watford Borough Council, Traffic Engineer
	Rosy Wassell	Watford Borough Council, Democratic Services Officer

HH32-10/11 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Borough Councillor Johnson. Apologies had also been received from Borough Councillors Sharpe and Wylie for anticipated late arrival.

HH33-10/11 **DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

There were no disclosures of interests.

HH34-10/11 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd November 2010 were submitted and signed.

HH35-10/11 **MATTERS ARISING**

HH22-10/11:

A Member noted that the Winter Maintenance Plan had not provided sufficient information on the maps.

The District Manager said that Members had been sent e-mails before Christmas advising that the web-link showed all roads to be treated and also the location of the salt bins. He added that it had been agreed that an extra 15 bins would be provided. Some residents, however, had objected to the bins being placed outside their property and the Highways Authority was currently liaising with residents to determine different positions.

The Member then reported that there was currently no salt in the bins and that no salting routes had been covered prior to Christmas.

The District Manager advised that the salt could be funded from the Locality Budget.

HH36-
10/11

PETITIONS AND LOCAL ISSUES

Petition – Courtlands Drive/A411 Hempstead Road junction

The District Manager advised that a video survey, funded by Members and costing £1,100, would be undertaken. This would be funded by the Discretionary Fund and could start in March 2011.

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

The District Manager advised that there had been no injury accidents at this location. He added that a toucan crossing was already in place but this would only be convenient for people in the southern half of Boundary Way whilst those accessing from the northern half of the road would have an extra distance to cover to reach the toucan crossing and so the petitioned proposal would be of benefit to some but not all of Boundary Way. A site inspection had been made and whilst there appeared to be enough space to install a crossing it would impact upon current on-street parking and existing bus stop facilities.

In reply to a Member, the District Manager said that it was unlikely that there would be enough children to justify a school crossing patrol and that a zebra or 'puffin' crossing would be a better option.

The County Councillor for the Stanborough/Woodside division informed the meeting that a patrol would not be reinstated and recommended that a survey be commissioned to determine whether a pedestrian crossing would be justified. If it could be justified, then it was recommended that a feasibility study be carried out. The District Manager advised that the feasibility study would cost between £2,000 and £3,000 and that different types of crossings could be considered. He suggested that Section 106 (s106) monies from a local school development be used.

RESOLVED –

1. that the cost of a video survey at Courtlands Drive/ Hempstead Road be funded through the Discretionary Fund and carried out in March 2011.
2. that a pedestrian survey and feasibility study be undertaken at Horseshoe Lane funded from the Discretionary budget for 2010 / 2011.

HH37-
10/11

BRIEFING NOTE FROM NETWORK MANAGER

Lower High Street Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (TRO)

This TRO had been discussed at the previous meeting. Submissions had been made objecting that there would be an increase in traffic through the Watford Fields residential area. The study, however, had shown that this had not been the case. The District Manager drew the meeting's attention to the appendices to the report which gave a breakdown in traffic flow in both directions. The survey had indicated that traffic flow had neither increased nor decreased in significant measure. The benefits to the new system meant that the left turn from the Lower High Street improved access to the A4008.

RESOLVED –

that remaining objections be overruled and the experimental Traffic Regulation Order become permanent.

HH38-
10/11

SECTION 106 CONTRIBUTIONS

The District Manager advised on items in Appendix A:

Alban Wood Junior School, Newhouse Crescent:

Should a scheme to provide a pedestrian crossing on Horseshoe Lane be justified by the pedestrian count being funded by Discretionary Budget, preparation of this scheme could be funded from this s106 source.

I Bruce Grove:

Speed data on traffic in Judge Street was being collected and if speed management criteria were met, a 20 m.p.h. zone/limit could be part funded by this s106 source and others.

27 Essex Road:

The introduction of 20 m.p.h. zones in Alexandra Road and Park Avenue were currently 'on hold'.

A41 Vehicle Activated sign scheme:

S106 contributions from Meriden Primary School or the Leggatts Campus in Leggatts Way could be used to fund this scheme.

Pedestrian crossings:

Crossings had been requested at Langley Road near the junction with Stratford Road and Courtlands Drive near the junction with The Ridgeway. These sites had been surveyed and results were awaited. The Langley Road crossing could be funded from the West Herts Campus development.

Pedestrian Accidents in Watford:

It was noted that there had been a considerable number of pedestrian accidents in Watford; a study could be conducted to establish causes and be partly funded by s106 contributions from several sites listed in Appendix A.

In reply to a question from a Member, the Head of Planning advised that the Cassiobury Controlled Parking Zone had been funded from the diminishing parking reserves. Investigation of potential parking controls in the Oxhey area would be a good use of Section 106 (s106) funds. The Parking Reserve could not be relied on to fund all new parking related schemes in 2011/2012.

In reply to a further question she said that the aim of the parking controls was to control parking rather than to accrue extra revenue. She said that the Council had agreed that charges for parking permits would not be increased.

The District Manager said that as many CS99s as possible would be submitted for local schemes. He advised that strategic schemes such as the Croxley Rail Link would have priority for s106 funding unless such schemes could not be initiated by the pre-determined spend date whereupon the funds would be released for local schemes.

The Member reminded the meeting that s106 monies could not be used for revenue support.

The Member then noted the £321,403.00 received through the West Herts College Cassio Campus scheme and suggested that this funding contributed towards increasing the number of buses and to increase bus usage.

RESOLVED –

that the report be noted.

HH39-
10/11

JMP DISCRETIONARY BUDGET AND LOCAL WORKS PROGRAMME

The Assistant District Manger and District Manager advised on items in Appendix A.

Woodmere Avenue:

This scheme would start at the end of February 2011.

Additional Tree Planting:

Works had been completed.

Deep Cleansing Programme:

Works had been completed.

20 m.p.h. zones:

Work on the Elfrida Road and Ring Road zones was scheduled to start in March 2011 on condition that existing objections had been dealt with. S106 funding would be sought to progress the schemes for Park Avenue and Alexandra Road.

Buckingham Road - street scene improvements:

Work had been completed using the current year's Discretionary Budget. The tree would be removed.

Town Centre - street scene improvements:

Works had been completed.

Leggatts Rise off North Western Avenue - new carriageway:

This scheme had been deferred until next financial year.

Dell Road and Elm Road – one ways:

A feasibility study would be conducted and a public consultation would then be initiated.

Francis Road and Percy Road – one ways:

This scheme had been passed to the works team for implementation in the last quarter of the current financial year. Street signs would be altered in the near future and work would start in March 2011.

Cecil Street/Judge Street area – 20 m.p.h.:

A Feasibility study and speed checks would need to be undertaken before the scheme could be implemented. The results would be assessed and results presented to the Panel at a future meeting.

Fairview Drive – point of no entry:

The design details had been finalised and the works would be undertaken during the second quarter of 2011; construction would take place between April and June 2011.

North Western Avenue – VA (Vehicle Activated) signs:

A s106 application had been made for this project; this had been accepted although it could be necessary to use £15,000 from the Discretionary Fund to complete the work. One Member noted that the VA signs on the Bedmond road were particularly effective. He urged officers to look at these signs and to give thought to whether similar ones could be installed on North Western Avenue. Other Members agreed that these signs were an improvement on the ones currently in use.

Old North Western Avenue:

Members commented that there had been numerous accidents here and suggested that 'tubes' should be placed in the centre of the long straight part of the road. The Panel agreed that this would be a wise solution and agreed to fund the £400 survey from the Discretionary Budget.

Coates Way Opposite Coates Dell JMI School:

Works had been completed.

Coningesby Drive/Langley Way to Fullarians Rugby Club:

Works had been completed.

Greenbank Road – various sites:

Works had been completed.

Scheme numbers 3, 4 and 5 from the 2009/2010 Discretionary Table:

These schemes had over-run into the current year.

Petition – Courtlands Drive traffic counts:

A video survey would be started in March 2011.

Petition – Horseshoe Lane pedestrian crossing:

This request had been agreed.

The Vice Chair proposed that work should be initiated to prevent regular flooding at the Orphanage Road railway bridge. The County Councillor for Meriden/Tudor division seconded this proposal. In reply to a question from a Member, officers considered that this could be funded out of the £2,000 under-spend from schemes which would fall into the next financial year.

Members AGREED that this work should be added to the programme.

The Panel then considered Appendix B in the report.

The District Manager noted that works costs so far totalled £70,000.00.

Deep Cleansing programme:

A Member asked why some roads in Watford Fields had not been cleaned; those residents whose roads had not been cleaned had expressed their displeasure.

Waterfields Recreational Ground:

One Member noted the illuminaires at the Recreational Ground. He considered that illuminaires could also be installed between the Tesco supermarket and the Town Centre as lighting here was currently very dim.

The Panel considered the Super Cat 2 Work Programme for 2010/ 2011 as detailed in Appendix C.

The Assistant District Manager noted that works in Stratford Road, Whippendell Road, Church Road and Franklin Road had been actioned. In reply to a comment from a Member he advised that the railings at Chalk Hill would not need to be replaced. The support wall to the carriageway would need reinforcing with steel and concrete. He added that all schemes detailed in Appendix C would need Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) for road closures whilst work was carried out.

RESOLVED –

1. that Members agree to the Discretionary programme of works for 2010/2011.
2. that Members agree to the Discretionary programme of works for 2011/2012.
3. that Members agree to the Super CAT2 programme for works for 2010/2011.

INTEGRATED WORKS PROGRAMME AND PROGRESS REPORTS

The District Manager advised on items within the Integrated Works Programme and Progress Reports:

Woodmere Avenue:

Width restriction improvements would be completed by the end of January 2011.

Waterfields Way, Dalton Way, Lower High Street:

Major resurfacing would be carried out at night on various dates. This would be completed by March 2011.

Leavesden Road:

The road would be closed during week 24th January for major surface patching.

Whippendell Road/Queens Avenue:

The District Manager confirmed that s106 funding was available.

St Albans Road Nr Bushey Mill Lane:

The County Member for this division asked that the traffic lights at Longspring be included in this scheme.

Sydney Road:

The District Manager confirmed that works had been delayed but that the scheme was almost completed with only the snagging to be finished.

Watford Town Hall Cycle Route:

The cycle route had been completed.

Clarendon Road Pedestrian Improvements:

Recommendations for this area included the removal of street clutter, clearer give way markings and reduced waiting times for pedestrians at crossings.

Update on National Station Improvement Project:

The Passenger Transport Unit (PTU) Consultant (AG) reported that design work had started and 20 new signs were proposed for the short-stay car park in Woodford Road. He advised that most signs would be added to the existing furniture to avoid additional clutter. He added that consultations would be held with the area Highways office with regard to on-street parking in Woodford Road.

The PTU Consultant informed the meeting that consultations had been held on the subject with the major stakeholders affected including Watford Borough Council, Watford Hackney Carriage Association, Disabled Groups in Watford, Arriva, Transport for London, Passenger Focus and London Travelwatch. He confirmed that the taxi rank on Clarendon Road would remain in its current location.

The PTU Consultant updated the meeting on consultation and information matters and advised that:

- Passenger Focus and London Travelwatch considered that the scheme would benefit passengers using Watford Junction.
- A further consultation would be held with disabled users on 28 January 2011.
- Real time information signs in the short stay car park would give information on train arrivals and departures; discussions with London Midland regarding this scheme were in progress.
- The current lay-out of the bus station was poor and did not comply with current disability standards and made the accommodation of 70 buses per hour difficult. A new layout which would improve safety, comply with the Disability Discrimination Act, provide a step free route to / from the station and include real time information screens at all bus stops had been accepted in principle by Arriva. The layout would be subject to review once it had been implemented.
- The improved environment would provide better footways.
- The lighting would be improved.
- Public information and visual displays would be provided at the station and be sent to all major stakeholders during February.
- The taxi rank in Clarendon Road which acts as a feeder rank for the station would remain in its current location.

The PTU Consultant advised that the planning application for the short stay car park would be processed after the lease arrangements had been completed. He confirmed that the internal layout would need approval by Network Rail and that more time was needed to action this. He added that station changes must comply with the Railways Act and advised that London Midland anticipated that they would be on site by November 2011 and that the works would be completed by February 2012.

The Panel then discussed the project.

One Member questioned the layout for the pavement at the lay-by saying that it was unwise to site the pavement on the left; he added that accidents were probable.

The PTU Consultant responded that the width of the footpaths would be retained.

The PTU Consultant advised that London Midland intended to increase enforcement measures in relation to car park management utilising extra resources. This should address Members' concerns about use of the bus station for drop off and collection of passengers. Provision for disabled passengers had been made in the short stay car park. There would be a system so that taxis in the feeder rank in Clarendon Road would know when a space in the Station rank came available so they could move across. The Station taxi rank would be enforced by London Midland contractors. He explained that U-turns would not be allowed and that vehicles would consequently be forced to go into the long term car park to turn around.

A Member expressed the view that the buses which parked in Woodford Road caused considerable problems for other road users.

The PTU Consultant stated that it would not be possible to move all buses out of Woodford Road. He added, however, that once the major scheme for the redevelopment of the Station went ahead the area of the bus station could be extended into the currently proposed short stay car park so that eventually all buses would be able to use the bus station. Although he appreciated Members' concerns about the relocation of the existing taxi rank, the current forecourt arrangement resulted in problems for pedestrian arriving at and leaving the station and he stated that it was imperative that this situation be improved.

In reply to a Member's suggestion that a Pay and Display machine be installed, the PTU Consultant advised that London Midland had indicated that this proposal could be linked with the short stay car park. He suggested that the charge be in line with the charge in Watford for on-street parking.

Members noted the following points:

- There was no provision for passengers to be either dropped off or collected in front of the station. Members were concerned that this would lead to chaos in the rush hour.
- Most passengers accessed Watford Junction from the St Albans Road side of the station. Currently many passengers were dropped off at the pedestrian crossing or at the public house; this inevitably led to problems.
- The location of the short stay car park had been poorly thought out and would have a negative impact for traffic.
- The short stay car park would not work as well as designers intended because car drivers would continue to stop where they could to let their passengers out
- It would be better to use the short stay car park area for bus 'layover'.
- The layout would be compromised because the space was inadequate.
- It would be better to retain the existing layout but to modernise the bus stops.
- The existing barrier should be replaced as, currently, cyclists could not lock their bicycles to it.

The PTU Consultant advised that Watford Junction was in Category 2 with regard to terrorist activity. Consequently bollards would be a better option than guard rails. One Member considered that installing bollards would encourage dropping off passengers between them and would constitute a major safety issue.

The Chair advised that the scheme was not acceptable in its present form; unless the issues raised were addressed it would be better not to go ahead.

The PTU Team Leader said that were this project to be reconsidered, it was possible that the funding would be forfeited. He advised that the scheme needed to go ahead as planned or not proceed at all.

The Chair stated that this option appeared to be the 'least worst' although Members had identified possible changes.

The PTU Consultant assured the meeting that London Midland wished to improve the station and surrounding area. He advised that long term plans included the expansion of the bus station into the short stay car park which would resolve many of the issues. He explained that there was currently no 'drop off' place at all whereas the new design would include four spaces for disabled users. He added that the opportunity existed to meet with London Midland for further discussion.

One Member expressed the view that the Panel should not accept a compromise scheme but that London Midland should reconsider the plans as a whole.

The Chair summed up the discussion by stating that Members felt that they were unable to endorse the scheme in its current state. He advised that the Panel's views needed to be communicated to London Midland and that a meeting would be welcomed. The Chair said that this was the unanimous view of the Panel.

The PTU Team Leader thanked the Members. He said that the views expressed by the Panel had been valuable and that further assessments would need to be made before making a final judgement on how to proceed.

Watford Borough Council Highway Works

Parking: The Traffic Engineer advised that adjustments would be made to the Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) in Central ward: extra parking bays would be installed.

There would be a follow-up survey on the CPZ in Cassiobury soon.

It was noted that the Cassiobury CPZ had had a 'knock on' effect on parking problems in the neighbouring Nascot ward. Consultations had been on-going in Nascot ward to determine what residents wanted with regard to parking. The results of the survey would inform the process in developing proposals for new parking controls in the Nascot area.

The Parade Events Market space: There would be the opportunity to hold a variety of events markets at the section of the Parade from Clarendon Road to the Gade access road. A Traffic Regulation Order would need to be actioned before the events markets could go ahead.

Oxhey Park pedestrian and cycle bridge: The bridge was open and useable. Favourable feedback had been received from users. The siting of the bridge would require the permanent diversion of a length of footpath on the eastern bank of the river. Reports would be available at the following Panel meeting.

Hertfordshire Intelligent Transport System (ITS) Strategy

It was noted that a number of ITS systems were used. The District Manager advised that the systems would be a considerable benefit to the town and was a priority action.

The meeting considered the 'Quick Wins' as identified in the report.

The Technical Manager advised that a survey conducted the previous week had obtained data which would be used to identify improvements for traffic flow in Watford.

A Member suggested that cameras could be installed in order to monitor traffic movement and congestion.

The Technical Manager informed the meeting that the Microprocessor Optimum Vehicle Activation (MOVA) would maximise capacity; this device, which used inductive loops in the road, could measure gaps between vehicles and promote 10% to 20% extra movement of traffic.

RESOLVED –

that a meeting be arranged with London Midland for consultation on the Station Improvement Scheme.

HH41-10/11 **TRO OBJECTION – 20 MPH LIMIT NORTH OF LAMMAS ROAD**

The Chair advised that he had previously been briefed by the District Manager on this issue, that the Panel was familiar with the grounds of objection and that as no ward councillor was present who might specifically wish to speak on the matter, the decision to overrule the remaining objection could be taken.

RESOLVED –

that the Panel overrules the remaining objection.

HH42-10/11 **UPDATE ON LOCALISM**

The District Manager advised that this item was for information only.

A Member advised that it was important for residents that the committees worked cohesively to achieve the best for the community. He considered that the JMP worked very well.

Another Member advised that minuted forums were required in order to give witness to discussions which had taken place.

The Chair agreed that a Borough-wide framework was needed.

RESOLVED –

that the report be noted.

HH43-10/11 **OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHWAYS**

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

RESOLVED –

that the report be noted.

HH44-
10/11

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 24 March 2011

The meeting started at 6.00 p.m.
and ended at 8.35 p.m.

Chair
Hertfordshire Highways Watford
Joint Member Panel