

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHWAYS PARTNERSHIP – JOINT MEMBER PANEL

Meeting held at the Council Offices, Gernon Road, Letchworth Garden City
on Monday, 17 October 2005

MINUTES

PRESENT: Representing North Hertfordshire District Council:

Councillors: P. Clark, Joan Kirby, Ian Mantle, L. McNamara and R.A.C. Thake.

In Attendance: Councillors: I. Knighton and M. Paterson.

Chief Engineer and Senior Committee & Member Services Officer.

PRESENT: Representing Hertfordshire County Council:

County Councillors: D. Drake (Vice-Chairman in the Chair), Dr N.E. Agar, D.A. Ashley, D. Billing, N. Brook, K. Emsall, A.F. Hunter and M.R.M. Muir.

In Attendance: North Herts District Manager – Hertfordshire Highways.

19. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from District Councillors: W. Davidson, Lorna Kercher and A.D. Young (Chairman).

20. MINUTES – 27 June 2005

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2005 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman, subject to one of the headings listing those present being amended from “Hertfordshire District Council” to “Hertfordshire County Council”.

In respect of Minute 11 – Vehicle Activated Signs in Wymondley Road, Hitchin – the North Herts District Manager confirmed that the Panel’s request for a permanent speed activated sign in this location would be considered by the County Council’s Development Control Committee on 8 November 2005. He undertook to report the outcome to the Panel’s next meeting in January 2006.

21. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman invited District Councillor L. McNamara to raise two items of business in addition to that set out in the agenda.

(a) Howard Drive, Letchworth Garden City – Footway damage

Councillor L. McNamara stated that he had received a number of complaints from residents regarding the poor condition of the footway in the proximity of 127-131 Howard Drive, Letchworth Garden City. The roots of three trees had caused significant damage to the footway. The trees had been removed, but replacement trees would be planted. A number of photographs showing the damage were circulated.

The North Herts District Manager confirmed that the cost of the repairs to the footway and kerbing was estimated at £12,000. If the Panel decided to proceed with this scheme, the cost could be met from the Panel’s discretionary budget. The Chief Engineer, North Herts District Council, advised that sufficient funds were available in the District Council budget to finance the cost of the replacement trees, together with replacement railings and new benches.

The Panel agreed to defer a decision upon this matter until it considered its discretionary budget later in the meeting (see minute 27 below).

(b) Willian Vehicle Activated Speed Signs

Councillor L. McNamara commented that, as part of a Section 106 Agreement attached to a grant of planning permission for an extension to the Fox Public House in Willian, the District Council's Letchworth Committee had required the applicant to contribute £4,000 towards the cost of a second Vehicle Activated Speed Sign in the village. This contribution was to take account of the extra traffic generated by the development.

Councillor McNamara stated that it appeared that the use of the financial contribution of £4,000 was time limited, and as the second sign had yet to be installed the applicant had asked for a return of the money. NHDC officers would need to investigate whether or not there was such a time limit.

The Panel expressed its support for the second sign and asked for the matter to be referred to the County Council's Development Control Committee for approval, this being subject to the contribution not being time expired, and the matter being re-considered at the next meeting of the JMP, with the benefit of the information from officers as described above.

RESOLVED: That, provided the £4,000 contribution is able to be used and appropriate top-up funding can be identified, the County Council's Development Control Committee be requested to approve the installation of a second Vehicle Activated Speed Sign in Willian, and that this matter be re-considered at the next meeting of the JMP in the light of further information.

22. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interest had been made.

23. RECEIPT OF PETITIONS SINCE THE LAST MEETING OF THE JOINT MEMBER PANEL

The North Herts District Manager gave an update on the following petitions:

- (1) Old Knebworth Lane – the North Herts District Manager was still awaiting from District Councillor F.R.B. Wordsworth the name of a lead petitioner. He would write again to Councillor Wordsworth.
- (2) Serpentine Close, Great Ashby: use of footway/cycleway by mopeds – this petition would be referred to the District Council's Southern Rural Committee, for referral back to a future meeting of the JMP.
- (3) St. Nicholas Primary School, Norton Road, Letchworth Garden City: School crossing patrol – this petition would be referred to the District Council's Letchworth Committee, for referral back to a future meeting of the JMP. Officers were asked to ensure that, in receiving this petition, the Letchworth Committee is updated on the progress in respect of an earlier petition relating to this site.

24. ITEMS REFERRED FROM NHDC AREA COMMITTEES

No items had been referred to the Panel since its last meeting held on 27 June 2005.

25. NHDC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHWAYS

The Chief Engineer, North Herts District Council, presented a report on the review of Hertfordshire Highways undertaken by the District Council's Scrutiny Committee during the latter part of 2004 and early part of 2005. The matter was subsequently considered by the District Council's Cabinet, where it was resolved that the scrutiny report and recommendations be referred to the JMP for comment.

The Executive Summary of the scrutiny report was attached as Appendix A to the report. The full report was attached as Appendix B.

The Chief Engineer drew Members' attention to the scrutiny recommendations relating to the JMP (Chapter 8), which were set out in the report, together with details of the progress which had been made on each of these recommendations.

The following comments were made by Members:-

- Recommendation 6: Attendance of NHDC Members at JMP meetings for relevant ward issues – such attendance should be encouraged through the Area Committees.
- Recommendation 7: Promotion of JMP activities – this should include awareness raising amongst Town and Parish Councils.
- Area Committees should be encouraged to use finances from their discretionary budgets in order to joint fund further highway schemes.

RESOLVED: That the comments of the Joint Member Panel on the NHDC Scrutiny Committee report on the review of Hertfordshire Highways, as now detailed, be taken on board in the implementation of the recommendations arising out of the review.

REASON FOR DECISION

To enable the Joint Member Panel's views on the scrutiny of Hertfordshire Highways to be recorded.

26. HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL – REVIEW OF HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE STRATEGY

The North Herts District Manager presented a report on the current review of the Highway Maintenance Strategy. He commented that County Council Members had indicated that they wished for an improvement in the condition of the highways across the county, and that the report set out what could be achieved in an enhanced spend scenario and how it could be delivered. The Draft Enhanced Maintenance Potential Programme List for North Hertfordshire was attached as Appendix A to the report.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the report be noted;
- (2) That the County Council's proposal for an enhanced spend on highways across the county be supported;
- (3) That the programme list attached at Appendix A be refined and re-categorised in order to reflect the precise location of each potential scheme;
- (4) That each District Council Area Committee be consulted as soon as possible on the part of the programme list relating to their respective areas only, on the basis that the list is a draft document which would be subject to budget approval by the County Council in February 2006.

REASON FOR DECISION

To ensure that the views of the JMP are taken into account in the progression of any enhanced maintenance spend on highways agreed by the County Council.

27. JOINT MEMBER PANEL DISCRETIONARY BUDGET

The North Herts District Manager presented a report updating the JMP on projects agreed for funding as part of its 2005/06 discretionary budget, and to initiate discussion on themes for 2006/07 and beyond. The current themes for 2005/06 were detailed in the report.

The Panel debated the 2005/06 approved schemes for Vehicle Activated Signs rota and Letchworth signing, and possible themes for 2006/07. Members were supportive of the scheme for footway repairs to Howard Drive, Letchworth Garden

City, as outlined earlier in the meeting (see minute 21(a) above).

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the update on 2005/06 schemes be noted;
- (2) That the North Herts District Manager write to Letchworth Town Council with an update on the scheme relating to Letchworth signing;
- (3) That the North Herts District Manager submit a report to the next meeting of the JMP regarding the feasibility of phasing out over the next 5 years the rota system for Vehicle Activated Speed Signs;
- (4) That the scheme for repairs to the footway and kerbing adjacent to 127-131 Howard Drive, Letchworth Garden City, be approved, with the provision of a grant of up to £11,000 from the Discretionary Budget and £1,000 from Highways General Maintenance Budgets, together with a further £8,000 from NHDC Street Furniture and Trees Budgets in order to complete the works;
- (5) That the themes for 2005/06 be continued in 2006/07, but that the theme relating to "new street lighting likely to make a contribution to community safety" be expanded to cover generally "schemes likely to make a contribution to community safety".

REASON FOR DECISION

- (1) To maintain the flow of information to Members regarding the schemes.
- (2) To progress schemes and other measures in accordance with the agreed themes for the discretionary budget of the Panel.

28. INTEGRATED WORKS PROGRAMME 2006/2007 AND FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2007/2011

The North Herts District Manager presented a report which detailed the proposed Integrated Works Programme 2006/07 and Forward Work Programme 2007/2011. The Work Programmes were attached as Appendix A to the report. The Panel was invited to comment on the Work Programmes.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Integrated Works Programme 2006/07 and Forward Works Programme 2007/2011 Lists attached at Appendix A be refined and re-categorised in order to reflect the precise location of each potential scheme;
- (2) That each District Council Area Committee be consulted as soon as possible on the part of the Programme Lists relating to their respective areas only, and that their suggestions be reported to the County Council;
- (3) That the outcome of the County Council's deliberations on the Integrated Works Programme 2006/07 and Forward Works Programme 2007/2011 be reported to the Area Committees in Spring 2006.

REASON FOR DECISION

To ensure the Panel and District Council Area Committees have an opportunity to comment on the Work Programmes.

29. QUARTERLY REPORT ON OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The North Herts District Manager presented a report providing details of the performance of Hertfordshire Highways for the period March – August 2005, including data for North Hertfordshire and countywide.

The North Herts District Manager commented that the Performance Indicator relating to the speed of Hertfordshire Highways comments on planning applications should improve following the recent establishment of a dedicated Team to carry out this function based at County Hall, Hertford.

RESOLVED: That the data supplied by the North Herts District Manager be noted, and an update report be submitted to each future meeting.

REASON FOR DECISION

To ensure that Members continue to be informed of performance on key service areas.

The meeting closed at 9.20 p.m.

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Chairman