

## NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHWAYS PARTNERSHIP – JOINT MEMBER PANEL

Meeting held at the Council Offices, Gernon Road, Letchworth Garden City  
at 7.30 p.m. on Monday, 30 January 2006

**PRESENT: Representing North Hertfordshire District Council:**

Councillors: A.D. Young (Chairman), P. Clark, J. Cunningham, W. Davidson,  
Joan Kirby, Ian Mantle and R.A.C. Thake.

**In Attendance:** Councillors: John Barry and M. Paterson.  
Chief Engineer and Committee & Member Services Officer.

**PRESENT: Representing Hertfordshire County Council:**

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

**In Attendance:** North Herts District Manager – Hertfordshire Highways.  
North Herts Assistant District Manager – Hertfordshire Highways (Hitchin)  
North Herts Assistant District Manager – Hertfordshire Highways(Letchworth)

*Note: District Councillor R.A.C. Thake arrived at 8.08 p.m.  
County Councillor D. A. Ashley arrived at 7.47 p.m.*

**30. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been received from District Councillors L. McNamara  
and Lorna Kercher and County Councillors N. Brook and K. Emsall.

**31. SUBSTITUTION**

In accordance with the procedures of North Hertfordshire District Council the  
Chairman advised that District Councillor L. McNamara had tendered his apologies  
and that District Councillor J. Cunningham would attend as his substitute.

**32. MINUTES – 17 October 2005**

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2005 be  
approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

**33. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chairman invited District Councillor J. Cunningham to ask two questions  
pertinent to the opening of the Baldock By Pass.

*1. Can you please provide details of the signage arrangements relevant to the  
Baldock By Pass for traffic exiting the by pass and heading towards Hitchin and  
Luton and similarly for traffic heading from Hitchin towards the by pass?*

*2. What arrangements are currently envisaged to monitor traffic flows in the  
Letchworth area following the opening of the by pass?*

The North Herts District Manager provided the following responses:

**1.** The legend on the advance direction sign for drivers approaching the A1(M) at  
Junction 9 will include the following destinations: Left turn – A1(M) London,  
Stevenage, Luton (with aircraft symbol denoting airport). Straight on – Letchworth  
A 505. In response to a supplementary question the North Herts District Manager  
confirmed there would be no change in signage for traffic approaching Hitchin on  
the A505 en route to the Baldock Bypass.

2. A 'before and after' survey report will be published a year after by pass opening. All 'before' data has now been collected (a mixture of automatic and manual counts, turning movements, journey time surveys, accident data). There will also be an assessment carried out three months after by pass opening, with a report produced about a month later. The exact list of data to be collected for this is not finalised yet, but will include a number of automatic and manual counts and a review of accident data.

**34. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

No declarations of interest had been made.

**35. 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) Serpentine Close, Great Ashby: Provision of a new vehicular access to the District Park from Great Ashby Way to replace the existing access point at the end of Serpentine Close.

Mr Mark Barker had given due notice that he wished to address the JMP on behalf of the Great Ashby Community Group about the access to Great Ashby District Park off Serpentine Close. Mr Barker also presented a petition regarding this matter from the local residents of the area. More than 160 individuals had signed the petition calling for consideration to be given to providing access to the district park off Great Ashby Way rather than via Serpentine Close on the grounds of safety. This was most evident where a footpath crosses the entrance to the park and parked cars obscure users of the path from vehicle drivers.

Mr Barker advised the JMP that there were inadequate parking facilities and an inadequate approach to the park that caused problems for the residents. He also stated that there was concern that the access to the park was extremely dangerous as vehicles sped into the park and that without barriers, there was a possibility of serious injury.

- (2) St. Nicholas Primary School, Norton Road, Letchworth Garden City: School crossing patrol and safety issues in Norton Road affected by volume and speed of traffic.

Mrs Proudlove spoke as a substitute for Mr Fitch who had given due notice to speak at the meeting regarding highways issues and traffic management in Norton Road, Letchworth Garden City.

Mrs Proudlove reiterated the following key points that had been made to the Letchworth Committee on 9 November 2006.

- Norton Road was not just a traffic route in and out of Letchworth Garden City; it was a place where people lived, raised families and often retired;
- Many residents walk along Norton Road to and from St. Nicholas School and there had been several "near misses";
- The noise and pollution disturbed lives;
- The volume and weight of traffic destroyed the road infrastructure;
- Excessive traffic speed intimidated pedestrians, horse riders and cyclists; and
- The speed of traffic provided a constant risk of serious injury.

Mrs Proudlove advised the JMP that there had been two vehicle accidents in Norton Road (since the presentation to the Letchworth Committee on 9 November 2006), one of which had seen a vehicle overturn and burst into flames.

**RESOLVED**

- (1) Serpentine Close, Great Ashby: That the Head of Community Development and Cultural Services at NHDC be requested to undertake the necessary investigations for an alternative entrance to the Great Ashby District Park at the Dixons roundabout off Great Ashby Way as follows:
  - (a) Present a design concept to Hertfordshire Highways for an assessment regarding road safety;
  - (b) Develop a design concept for adequate car parking provision for users of Great Ashby District Park;
  - (c) Subsequently present a detailed report on (a) and (b) above to a future meeting of the Southern Rural Area Committee.
- (2) St. Nicholas Primary School, Norton Road, Letchworth Garden City: School crossing patrol and safety issues in Norton Road affected by volume and speed of traffic: That the North Herts District Manager be requested to emphasise to the Herts Highways Strategy Development Manager the need to ensure that the traffic issues in Norton Road in the vicinity of St. Nicholas School be carefully considered during development of the Letchworth and Baldock Urban Transport Plan.

**36. ITEMS REFERRED FROM NHDC AREA COMMITTEES**

No items had been referred to the Joint Member Panel since its last meeting held on 17 October 2005.

**37. LETCHWORTH AND BALDOCK URBAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

The North Herts District Manager (NHDM) advised the JMP that the process for the development of the Letchworth and Baldock Urban Transportation Plan as a pilot for the advance of other urban and inter – urban transport plans throughout Hertfordshire had taken place since November 2004.

The NHDM described the main core elements in the process: 1. An Officer Steering Group, 2. Data and policy review, 3. The Joint Member Panel (a review of the planned objectives with consideration of local and county issues and agreement of the framework for programme delivery), 4. A wide-ranging stakeholder group (to provide detailed inputs and opinions on the problems and issues faced in the areas under consideration – and would involve town, district and county councillors), 5. Interventions, 6. Sifting of measures (against national and local objectives), 7. A public information programme at locations within the Plan area), 8. The presentation of findings and 9. The Development of the Urban Plan from the review, workshop and public consultation.

The JMP noted that the anticipated completion date for the plan was August 2006, with the first stakeholder meeting by the end of February 2006. The second stakeholder in March 2006, the presentation of feedback to the JMP on 24 April 2006 concluding with the Public Information exercise in May 2006.

**RESOLVED;**

- (1) That the proposed process for the adoption of the Letchworth and Baldock Urban Transportation Plan be agreed;
- (2) That the Herts Highways Strategy Development Manager be requested to include where appropriate the NHDC Area Committee in the consultation and information process;
- (3) That the North Herts District Manager be requested to include where appropriate the Local Strategic Partnership and Community Safety Partnership.

## **REASON FOR DECISION**

To use this Plan as a pilot in improving the process in which transport plans are investigated and undertaken throughout Hertfordshire.

### **38. INTEGRATED WORKS PROGRAMME 2005 - 2006**

The NHDM reminded the JMP that the final version of the IWP for 2005-2006 had been presented at the meeting held on 21 March 2005 (Minute 41 refers), and the JMP noted that unfortunately a number of schemes had been transferred into the IWP for 2006-2007 as presented at Appendix A. The NHDM confirmed that these delayed schemes would have priority funding status in 2006-2007.

The JMP noted the details presented at Appendix B concerning the status of integrated transport projects in North Hertfordshire with details of the projects delivered, or in the process of being delivered as well as the projects cancelled or removed from the programme completely.

The JMP raised several queries which centered on the request for clarification of more detail against each project e.g. ITP 05056, ITP6007, TTP073, ITP5065, TTP083. Members also requested that more advanced information about the commencement of works was required e.g. Starlings Bridge in Hitchin and the closure of Wymondley Road bridge. A request was also made for the five NHDC Area Committees to receive as much information as possible and in advance as much as possible details of schemes in their respective area.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the content of the current Integrated Works Programme for 2005-2006 be noted;
- (2) That the North Herts District Manager be requested to make the necessary arrangements to ensure that a longer period of advance notice of road works is provided in North Hertfordshire;
- (3) That the North Herts District Manager be requested to provide a written answer to members of the NHDC Hitchin Committee with an update on ITP 05056 – A505 Bedford Road/Paynes Park;
- (4) That the North Herts District Manager be requested to make the necessary arrangements to ensure that the Highways and Transportation Panel at Hertfordshire County Council provide in advance the details of schemes appropriate to each Area Committee.

#### **REASON FOR DECISIONS:**

To ensure that the Joint Member panel are regularly updated on the Integrated Works Programme.

### **39. INTEGRATED WORKS PROGRAMME 2006 – 2007 DRAFT 2**

The NHDM presented the second draft of the IWP for 2006 –2007 and provided details of the comments raised by the five NHDC Area Committees during the December 2005 cycle of meetings and the changes to the first draft of the IWP. The JMP noted that the Draft 2 was still very much in outline and could be subject to substantial changes until endorsement in March 2006 following agreement by Herts County Council on 27 February 2006.

The NHDM confirmed that the JMP would be allocated £80,000 for the Discretionary Schemes Programme to invest in highway asset maintenance or improvement at its discretion and provided further details on the other main themes to be addressed in 2006-2007: Carriageway refurbishment, Footway and cycleway refurbishment, Drainage, Accident reduction, Integrated transport projects, Traffic and environmental issues, Local transport plan and the IWP for 2006-2007.

The JMP were pleased to confirm their support for all the proposals made by the five NHDC Area Committees and expressed a wish that each project would be

considered for inclusion in the IWP 2006-2007. Notwithstanding comments made on the clarity of the presentation of the 2005-2006 IWP the JMP emphasised the need for clarity and more complete descriptions of projects. The NHDM confirmed that this request had been made several times before and unfortunately any changes to the layout and additional information had to be arranged by officers elsewhere in Herts County Council. The NHDM confirmed that comments made by the five NHDC Area Committee concerning the Enhanced Spend on Highway Maintenance had been forwarded to the Strategic Client

The JMP provided the NHDM with additional information on CWY061283 and SAR05061and:

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the contents of the Draft 2 of the Integrated Works Programme for 2006 – 2007 be noted;
- (2) That the results of the feedback process from Draft 1 of the Integrated Works Programme for 2006-2007 be noted;
- (3) That the JMP fully supports all the scheme proposals made by the Area Committees as presented at Appendix C;
- (4) That the Integrated Works Programme for 2006-2007 must be improved with regards to clarity of information and description of schemes;
- (5) That with regard to (4) above the Chairman of the JMP be requested to convene a meeting between himself, the Vice – Chairman of the JMP and the HCC Executive Member for Environment and Transportation in order to present the views and concerns of the JMP.

**REASON FOR DECISION:**

To ensure that the joint Member Panel are involved and contribute to the development of the Integrated Programme of highway works for 2006/2007.

**40. ENFORCEMENT OF SCHOOL KEEP CLEAR MARKINGS**

The North Herts Assistant District Manager – Hitchin (NHADM) reminded the JMP of the background to the School Keep Clear Markings (SKCM) and that it had become a priority to restrict cars parking outside school gates to allow children to be seen more easily when they cross the highway. The NHADM advised the JMP that one Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) could be raised to cover all existing non- enforceable SKCM as the cost of one TRO alone could be in the order of £1400. The JMP noted that although enforcement was currently undertaken by the police the introduction of decriminalised parking enforcement would allow NHDC to include the school locations in the enforcement process following inclusion of the new SKCs within the revised North Herts Consolidated Parking Order.

The NHADM confirmed that each school in the North Herts area had been visited and examined for: engineering pressures, a current SKC, an enforceable SKC by signage, was there a School Travel Plan? Existence of a school crossing patrol. Upon consideration of this information, scores were given to each element and ranked as high, medium or low as requested by the Transport Panel. The JMP noted the ranking and scores as presented at Paragraph 3.3 and noted the priority for schools listed at Appendix A and that of the 76 schools in North Herts 47 had an SKC. The ranking process had given 7 schools with high, 38 at medium and 31 low priority.

The JMP were unanimous in their support for one embracing TRO for all SKC sites but stressed the need for regular enforcement. It was also agreed that at the appropriate time and in advance of a single TRO a publicity campaign should take place throughout North Herts.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the assessment methodology as detailed at Paragraphs 3.2 and 3.3 for the mandatory 'School Keep Clear' schemes be agreed;
- (2) That the proposal for consultation with each school before implementation to ensure that each scheme was appropriate to the school and the needs of local residents be agreed;
- (3) That a three year rolling programme of implementation of 'School Keep Clear' schemes with priority schools in Year 1 and then medium and low priority schemes in Years 2 and 3 respectively as per the sites listed in Appendix B – Advisory Only be agreed;
- (4) That the proposal to review the assessment of the 'Schools Keep Clear' programme on an annual basis;
- (5) That the Chief Engineer at NHDC be requested to ensure that all of the Traffic Regulation Orders made at each site to enforce the SKP be reviewed 'en bloc' on an annual basis.

**REASON FOR DECISION:**

To allow the JMP participate in the way forward for the 'School Keep Clear' programme.

**41. REVISED POLICY FOR THE USE OF VEHICLE ACTIVATED SIGNS**

The North Herts Assistant District Manager – Letchworth (NHADM) provided an update on the revised policy for the use of Vehicle Activated (VA) signs in Hertfordshire. He confirmed that one of the major objectives was to prevent a proliferation of VA signs, which could lead, to a reduction in effectiveness and thus to unsustainable revenue and maintenance costs.

The JMP noted the changes to the current policy as presented at Paragraph 3.3 and in particular sections 3, 4, 5 and 6 and the North Herts District Manager advised that the installation of VA signs must follow the policy (Appendix A) set by the Transportation Panel. The JMP requested that consideration could be given on a case by case basis for the installation of a vehicle activated sign where all criteria were not met and that careful consideration must be given to funding of signs in that the JMP discretionary budget should not be the only source of finance.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the Hertfordshire County Council revised policy for the use of Vehicle Activated Signs be agreed;
- (2) That the provision of Vehicle Activated Signs should wherever possible meet the set criteria and be funded from local sources e.g. Ward budgets;
- (3) That all applicants for a Vehicle Activated Sign be advised of sections 3, 4, 5 and 6 in the revised policy.

**REASON FOR DECISION:**

To ensure that the JMP are regularly updated on amendments to the Hertfordshire County Council Speed Management Strategy.

**42. VEHICLE ACTIVATED SIGNS IN THE NORTH HERTS AREA**

The NHADM – Letchworth provided an update on the current status of vehicle activated signs where 12 columns had been installed in North Herts and two 'mobile' VA speed signs were rotated through the 12 sites. Six of these sites had been made permanent leaving six sites for the mobile rota and the current arrangement was to move each VA monthly.

Considerable discussion ensued about the provision of VA signs where the criteria were not met and in particular the proposal for a VA sign in Wymondley Road, Hitchin and a VA sign in Willian Village, Letchworth. The JMP also discussed at length the funding channels for these two signs. With regard to Wymondley Road this would be funded by Hitchin Highbury Ward and the JMP discretionary grant, and the Willian sign would be funded from the Letchworth Area Committee, monies from a Section 106 agreement and from the JMP discretionary budget.

The JMP agreed to make the two rotation VA signs permanent and purchase four new signs for permanent installation and that discussions should continue with Parish Councils and the five NHDC Area Committees about new sites but bearing in mind the comments raised under the previous item where there could not be a proliferation of VA signs as the effectiveness could well be reduced over time.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the current situation regarding 'mobile' and permanent vehicle activated signs in North Hertfordshire be noted;
- (2) That the proposal to phase out the rota system for mobile vehicle activated signs in North Hertfordshire be noted;
- (3) That the two vehicle activated signs currently allocated to the rotation procedure be assigned to two locations on a permanent basis.
- (4) That four new vehicle-activated signs be purchased and assigned to four locations on a permanent basis.
- (5) That the funding of maintenance costs for each future vehicle activated sign will be made as a 'top slice' payment from the annual JMP Discretionary Budget;
- (6) That the North Hertfordshire District Manager be requested to make the necessary arrangements for the installation of a new vehicle activated sign in Wymondley Road, Hitchin as soon as possible.

**REASON FOR DECISION:**

To allow the JMP participate in the assignment of Vehicle Activated Signs to sites in North Hertfordshire.

**43. THE JOINT MEMBER PANEL DISCRETIONARY FUNDED PROJECTS**

The North Herts District Manager (NHDM) provided an update on the projects completed, underway or yet to start for the 2005/2006 programme as listed at Paragraph 5.2. The NHDM advised the JMP of two schemes for consideration for 2006/2007 i.e. Enhancement of Letchworth Town Centre and additional street lighting at Bury Plantation footpath, Royston. With regard to the works programmed for Eastcheap and Leys Avenue in Letchworth the NHDM proposed and it was agreed that this work should not start until the recent plans proposed by the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation for the town centre were formalised.

The NHDM advised the JMP that the 2006/2007 discretionary budget would remain at £80,000 and further to the discussions raised at Minute 42 above the JMP agreed that the 2006/2007 discretionary budget should include the arrangements for the VA signs at Wymondley Road and Willian village and four new VA signs.

The JMP continued to discuss possible projects for the year 2006/2007 which would relate to the following themes: Enhancement of Town centres, environment and the link between pedestrians and motor traffic; Road safety measures, especially when the accident criteria applicable to Safety Schemes is not met; Street Lighting; The speed of traffic and road calming measures. It was also agreed by the JMP that during the next cycle of NHDC Area Committee meetings that suggestions be sought for projects that would fit into these themes.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the update on current schemes for 2005/2006 as presented at Paragraph 5.2 be noted;
- (2) That the following schemes be approved for implementation in the year 2006/2007:
  - (a) Four No. Vehicle activated signs = £9000;
  - (b) Letchworth Garden Street Signing review = £10,000 (subject to matched funding from NHDC and Letchworth Garden city Heritage Foundation);
  - (c) Contribution to one No. Vehicle Activated Sign located in Wymondley Road, Hitchin = £4000;
  - (d) Contribution to one No. Vehicle Activated Sign located in Willian Road, Letchworth Garden City = £1000;
  - (e) Bury Plantation Footpath, Royston, additional street lighting = £4000;
  - (f) The enhanced maintenance of Letchworth Garden City = £17,000;
- (3) That the following themes be put forward for consideration from which further schemes could be identified: Enhancement of Town centres, environment and the link between pedestrians and motor traffic; Road safety measures, especially when the accident criteria applicable to Safety Schemes is not met; Street Lighting; The speed of traffic and road calming measures
- (4) That the five NHDC Area committees be requested to consider at the next cycle of meetings the themes indicated at (3) above and recommend schemes with funding contributions equivalent to 50 per cent of the estimated schemes works cost for consideration by the JMP at its meeting to be held on 24 April 2006.

**REASON FOR DECISION:**

To ensure that the JMP are updated regularly on scheme progress and allocate funding from the 2006/2007 Discretionary Budget for agreed themes.

**44. QUARTERLEY REPORT ON OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

The North Herts District Manager provided a comprehensive update on the operational performance indicators and the JMP noted the data provided at Appendices A and B relating to the Works Team performance for the inclusive six months period March to August 2005, where Appendix A covered data for North Herts District Council and Appendix B covered all of Hertfordshire. The NHDM gave specific reference to potholes, pavements, street lighting faults and pedestrian crossings with facilities for people with disabilities. The JMP complimented all concerned in the Works Team for the excellent attainment of the Performance Targets.

**RESOLVED:** That the data supplied on the Operational Performance Indicators for the period June to November 2005 be noted.

**REASON FOR DECISION:**

To ensure that the JMP are regularly updated on the performance on key service activities.

The meeting closed at 10.00 p.m.

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Chairman