

Welwyn Hatfield Highways Liaison Meeting
12 March 2020

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the WELWYN HATFIELD HIGHWAYS LIAISON MEETING held on Thursday 12 March 2020 at 7.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, The Campus, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 6AE.

PRESENT:	County Councillors	S.Boulton, L.Chesterman, B.Gibson, S.Gordon and N.Quinton, P.Zukowskyj.
	Borough Councillors	S.Boulton (as above) A.Chesterman, L.Chesterman (as above), A.Dennis, S.Elam, B.Fitzsimon, G.Hayes, T.Kingsbury, S.Markiewicz, F.Marsh, L.Musk, J.Quinton, P.Zukowskyj (as above).
OFFICIALS PRESENT:	County Officers	Group Manager, Strategy (S.Jackson) Strategy and Programme Manager (A.Vettivelu) Highway Locality Manager, Mid Herts (P. Gellard) Assistant Highway Manager (D.Pearman) Lead Assistant Highway Manager (Z.Iqbal)
	Borough Officers	Head of Environment (D.Reyner) Parking and Cemetery Services Manager (V.Hatfield) Governance Services Officer (H.Johnson)

7. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

In the absence of the Chairman, County Councillor R. Smith, County Councillor S.Boulton was appointed Chairman for the meeting.

8. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from:

County Councillors S.Gordon and R.Smith (Chairman).

Borough Councillors D.Bell, M.Cowan, J.Cragg, T.Jackson-Mynott, H.Quenet, K.Thorpe, F.Thomson and R.Trigg.

Parish Councillor A.Gribble.

9. NOTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The notes of the meeting held on 15 October 2019 were confirmed as a correct record.

10. VERGE PROTECTION

The Assistant Highway Manager set out a review on the current status of verge maintenance and protection measures across the borough for Members to consider.

Members noted the causes of verge damage and the variety of solutions which included the following:

- Bollards
- Tree planting
- Verge protection orders (VPOs)
- Grasscrete
- Boards for contractors
- High curb stones
- Double yellow lines
- Prosecution

A discussion followed and the following points were raised:

- Hatfield and Handside area in Welwyn Garden City had the highest number of VPOs.
- The Peartree area in Welwyn Garden City and Salisbury village in Hatfield were due to have a number of VPOS this year.
- One and half double curb stones were expensive and were not always suitable as the verge needed to be built up and it could still be mounted at starting points.
- Increased liaison with housing developers could ensure that there was sufficient car parking spaces.
- Grasscrete would be best on the corners of narrow roads and had been successful in Bishops Rise in Hatfield, along with double yellow lines. Otherwise it was often hard for the grass to take hold and it required depth to install with the potential need to divert utilities.
- Council contractors were instructed to use boards, however potentially more could be done to instruct householders to request boards for their contractors.
- Many contractors did not apply for a licence when undertaking works, such as extensions, due to the time it took. However it would also be unworkable to create a planning condition as the works would then need to be monitored by Officers.
- Hardstanding bays were a realistic option on narrow roads.
- The sending out of verge protection cards to residents around QEII Hospital was successful but was undermined by subsequent reporting in the local news that verge maintenance was low priority for the County Council.

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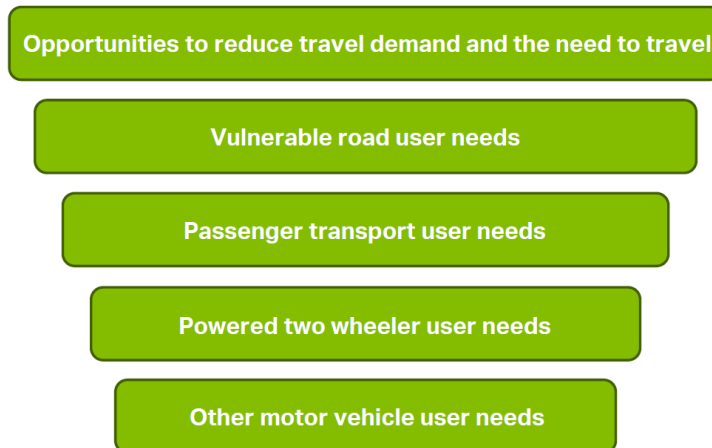
- Members were of the view that verge protection ought to be a higher priority for the County Council as it was a visual amenity with value. Currently, damaged verges that posed a hazard (with deep ruts) would be a higher priority, but otherwise any fault reporting via the website often led to cases being closed with no action required.
- Some Members felt that the non-replacement approach concerning bollards undermined the whole scheme instead of safeguarding it. However County Officers confirmed that they still had to prioritize faults in accordance with health and safety requirements and with limited resources.

County Officers said that verge protection would continue to pose challenges and that there were a variety of solutions suitable in a variety of different circumstances. There was no one size fits all approach and a county/district wide verge protection regime was unlikely due to the high cost. Verges remained the responsibility of Hertfordshire County Council and WHBC continue to review VPOs within areas included on the Parking Services work programme.

11. GROWTH AND TRANSPORT PLAN UPDATE

The Group Manager, Strategy (Hertfordshire County Council) presented an update on the status of the current Growth and Transport Plan (GTP) affecting the borough.

- The GTP was a spatial transport plan developed in partnership with key stakeholders, including District/Borough councils, Local Enterprise Partnership, Network Rail and Highways England.
- It was the supporting document to the County's Local Transport Plan and was a way of translating the vision, policies, objectives and goals to a growth focused area. It would also be aligned with the District and Borough Local Plans in terms of recognising local development and quality of life priorities.
- The A1 (M) GTPs set out plans for improving transport in the towns along one of the major north-south routes in the county, with proposals to reduce congestion and provide real alternatives to travelling by car.
- LTP4 Hierarchy was key transport policy and would guide the GTP:



- The GTP covered a wider area, including Pottersbar and St Albans, recognising the connections between towns.
- The GTP was out to consultation which would be completed in the summer and would be adopted in the autumn.

The South Central Herts GTP was a package of proposals to support planned growth and address current issues. It included sixteen different packages relating to the borough. It took into account measures identified in other transport strategies and interventions had been developed in line with LTP4 hierarchy.

Members queried whether there was any further detail available than that provided in the intervention papers. County Officers confirmed that were looking for feedback and support for the concept during the consultation prior to developing the schemes into more detail. In addition the Local Plan discussions were still ongoing which could impact on potential plans. .

A Member raised an issue with the package relating to improved links between Pottersbar Railway Station and Hatfield Railway Station. There seemed to be no intention to continue the scheme to the west and link to the Royal Veterinary College. Officers confirmed that this could be flagged up during the consultation.

Many Members felt that the GTP and investment in cycle ways and pedestrianisation was worthy in principle, however the current public transport network was not a viable alternative for most residents. Many residents were not only reliant on the use of the car, but also did not have shops, schools or work within suitable walking or cycling distance. It was felt that the Health and Education services at County would both need to be consulted to ensure that public transport ran in accordance with hospital visiting times or after school clubs for example. Members also raised concerns about public safety on pedestrian routes between Welwyn and Hatfield and that many pathways were not wheelchair accessible.

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Officers confirmed that there many any other policies and schemes were being developed that linked to the LTP4 Policy including the launch of an enhanced bus network partnership.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting of the Welwyn Hatfield Highways Liaison Meeting would be held on Wednesday 7 October 2020.

Meeting ended at 9.16pm
HJ