

Welwyn Hatfield Highways Liaison Meeting
13 October 2022

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the WELWYN HATFIELD HIGHWAYS LIAISON MEETING
held on Thursday 13 October 2022 at 7.00 pm via Microsoft Teams.

PRESENT:	County Councillors	T. Kingsbury (Chairman), S. Boulton, S. Thusu, P. Zukowskyj
	Borough Councillors	S. Bonfante, J. Boulton, S. Boulton (as above), L. Crofton, A. Hellyer, D. Jones, S. Kasumu, T. Kingsbury (as above), F. Marsh, G. Michaelides, L. Musk, D. Panter, J. Quinton, M. Siewniak, S. Thusu (as above), R. Trigg, P. Zukowskyj (as above)
	Parish & Town Councillors	Hatfield Town Council (H. Goldwater), Hatfield Town Council (N. Hutton), Welwyn Parish Council (B. Morris)
OFFICIALS PRESENT:	County Officers	Strategy and Project Manager (A. Sweeney) Group Manager for Transport Strategy (S. Jackson) Senior Strategy Programme Manager (Anushia Vetti)
	Borough Officers	Assistant Director – Regen & Econ Dev (G Sampson) Parking & Playground Services Manager (E. Robova) Parking Services Team Leader (M. McCann) Senior Democratic Services Officer (C. Francis)

12. INTRODUCTION AND CHAIRMAN ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

13. NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2 MARCH 2022

The notes of the meeting held on 2 March 2022 were confirmed as a correct record.

Officers were asked about the extract below from the minutes and whether the link to the map had been sent. This will be clarified and forwarded as necessary.

Councillors asked how would they know whether a ditch at the side of the field was an ordinary water course? Is there a definitive map of where they were located? Officers agreed to send a link of the map to Councillors.

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14. HUNTERS BRIDGE CYCLEWAY AND TOWN CENTRE PHASE 2 UPDATE

Councillors received a presentation from Andy Sweeney, Strategy and Project Manager at Hertfordshire County Council. The presentation included the following points:

The Public Realm project in Stonehills was completed in 2021, this included revised parking bays, a turning circle, and a pedestrianised area. A vegan market was the first event held there and was very well attended.

There was an update on the Hunters Bridge Cycleway. This is a segregated two-lane cycle way and should be low maintenance. The lane will be taking up previous road space. There will be a new verge near the subway.

WGC phase 2 works will be starting in late Jan / early Feb 2023. Works are expected to complete July/Aug 2023, but this is subject to change. Changes will include pavement level crossings across the carriageway, linking with green spaces, cycle connectivity from Stonehills, through Fretherne Road onto the wider cycle network, and re-paving the link paths across Howardsgate, (replacing damaged slabs and recycling pavers where possible).

Work will be dealt with as quickly as possible but there will be disruption, so communication of this work is key. A core communications group has been set up which includes HCC Comms Officers, Project Sponsor, Design and Build Teams, WHBC Officers, BID Officers, and the Passenger Transport Unit. HCC have visited and listened to businesses and will be writing to them and residents. Media avenues include social media, press releases, Internal HCC, and WHBC intranets, On the Move publications, and WHBC ONE magazine. Ongoing consultation will be important.

Councillors raised the following points:

Concern in raising roadway level to footway level as it does put pedestrians at risk with HGVs that could override the pavement. HCC said the design has been through their safety team. There is no intention to put up rails or big kerbs as this would impact the streetscene.

Concern about proposals for Parkway that take away its Garden City ethos of straight lines, and that the narrowing of the carriageway would make future sporting events difficult. HCC said they have contacted *La Petit Tour* and they don't see an issue with this. HCC said they will make contact again to confirm.

Concerns about the roundabout junction at Broadwater and pedestrian safety. HCC advised of their plans to increase the footway widths, and the narrowing of the carriageway to help pedestrians cross. The cycle ways will continue down to the Peartree roundabouts. There is also a plan for a bus lane over the bridge, and to include a lot more greenery. The designs are still in draft and are subject to change.

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The Ayot Way cycle path can only be accessed from the back of Campus West, Councillors asked if any thoughts had been given to link this path to the cycle ways. HCC said it had been part of the conversation, but due to a limited budget it was important to initially develop a route to create a key link from one side of WGC to the other. If in future, there is any further funding available then this could be tied in.

HCC and WHBC have a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) which considers these wider links. Feedback is currently being reviewed and this will be taken through the democratic process; this is linked to government funding.

Concern was raised about safety of pedestrians crossing the road, and the shared pedestrian and cycle paths. HCC said the converted staggered crossing to a straight crossing will help, along with the narrowed width of the road at the Broadwater end and increased traffic island space. HCC said having enough space for segregated cycle ways is always going to be difficult. The designs are as close to LTN 1 20 compliant as possible.

HCC confirmed that at the Broadwater junction they did a real-life trial over several weeks where signals were turned off and lanes were narrowed. They found that the expected traffic congestion didn't happen. HCC noted there is provision for a bus lane approaching the junction from the town centre.

WHBC officers said they have received positive feedback on the Stonehills project so this is a good example of what can be done.

Concern raised about parking in the town centre. HCC advised that minimal parking spaces will be removed in the centre of town. Hunters Bridge Car Park has ample parking, and it would be preferable for visitors to use the car parks, making air quality better and reducing the cars circulating in the town centre.

15. PROCESS FOR IDENTIFYING AREAS FOR 20MPH LIMITS

Councillors received a presentation from Sue Jackson, Group Manager for Transport Strategy at Hertfordshire County Council. The presentation included the following points:

Speed limits should be appropriate and in keeping with the area. They should also be self-enforcing and should aim to reduce overall speeds and not those at a particular point.

HCC have a Speed Management Strategy which was adopted in November 2020. £7m has been allocated up to 2024/25 to implement 20mph in suitable areas countywide.

The speed limit framework helps to identify streets suitable for the 20mph speed limit. It is recognised that the most benefit is achieved when the

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restrictions are applied over wider areas with an identification of natural boundaries (railways etc.) to form coherent areas.

There are some criteria where additional weighting is added, such as locations of schools.

HCC have identified over 500 potential areas. The first process is to collect relevant speed and volume data. Possible locations then go to engagement, consultation, and Delivery. Where surveyed speeds are over 24mph this would require the design of appropriate speed reduction measures and so would take longer. If surveyed speeds are less than or equal to 24mph then a simpler signing and lining scheme is appropriate with a shorter timescale dictated by the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) process. It was noted that no scheme will go ahead unless there is sufficient local support.

Any questions can be directed to speed.management@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Councillors raised the following points:

There was a fatality on Bocket Road due to speeding and another serious issue happened two weeks ago. Councillors have been advised that HCC wouldn't investigate unless there were 8 or more instances. HCC advised these instances need to go through a police investigation independently, and that the group could consider inviting someone from the safety team to a future meeting.

HCC advised that the planning to implementation phase is approx. a 12–18-month process.

Councillors asked if it would be possible to see a list of areas under consideration or an indication of when these might come forward. HCC said Welwyn Village is one of their top priorities and Welwyn Parish can email the speed management address for more information.

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the Welwyn Hatfield Highways Liaison meeting will take place on the 6 March 2023.

It was agreed to have a further update on wider speed and safety issues at the next meeting.

Councillors were asked to email the Chair if they had any other topics of interest they wanted to discuss at the next meeting.

Meeting ended at 8.26 pm
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