

HIGHWAYS PANEL held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.00 pm on 29 NOVEMBER 2012

Present: Councillor A Walters – Chairman.
Councillor J Salmon (Uttlesford District Council).

Councillors R Chambers and S Barker (Essex County Council).

Councillors M Sullivan and A Townsend (UALC).

Officers in attendance: R Dobson (Democratic Services Officer), J Pine (Planning Policy/DM Liaison Officer), Andrew Taylor (Assistant Director Planning and Building Control), R Long (Highways Liaison Officer - ECC) and David Sprunt (Principal Transportation Co-ordinator – ECC).

HP27

WELCOME AND PUBLIC SPEAKING

The Chairman welcomed all present and invited those who had given notice of their wish to speak to address the meeting.

Councillor Couchman of Clavering Parish Council asked for an update regarding a speed reduction scheme and a parking restriction scheme to be introduced in Clavering. He said a speed reduction scheme in Wicken Bonhunt had recently been completed and he wished to know why such a scheme in Clavering was taking longer. He described problems with congestion and access due to inconsiderate parking associated with the primary school drop-off and collection times.

Councillor Walters said although these matters fell outside the remit of the Panel, he had asked Rissa Long to supply information in answer to Councillor Couchman's questions.

Rissa Long said the speed reduction scheme was currently being progressed with the Highways operations team. An installation date in mid-January had been provisionally set. The reason for the delay to the implementation of the schemes in Clavering was that objections to the proposals had been received, necessitating investigations before work could be carried out.

Regarding the parking scheme, an extension of the footway on Stortford Road was also planned, so the yellow lines would be put in once these works were finished. An estimated date for the works to be carried out was March 2013, but Highways would inform Clavering Parish Council once the date was confirmed.

Councillor Barker said a meeting of the North Essex Parking Partnership, of which she was Chairman, was to take place on 13 December at which members of the public could attend, or that she would raise comments if these were emailed to her.

HP28 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Channer and Walsh.

Councillors Barker and Chambers declared their non-pecuniary interest in matters relating to Essex County Council, Essex Fire Authority and Uttlesford District Council as both were members of these bodies.

HP29 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2012 were received, and subject to a correction of the next meeting date to show 29 November 2012, were approved as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman.

HP30 **BUSINESS ARISING**

(i) Minute HP19 – Highway Schemes

Councillor Barker referred to a discrepancy between County areas regarding the availability of seasonal closure of public rights of way in order to address repair works to such paths. She had noted this reason could be used to close public rights of way in Clavering, but had understood that this solution was not an option in her division, The Rodings area. The Chairman agreed that the issue of winter closures for public rights of way could be included on the next agenda.

(ii) Minute HP19 – Highway Schemes

Councillor Salmon reported a problem with repair of potholes at Wetherfield in Stansted Mountfitchet, where the road had been left with bumps. Councillor Salmon was advised that matters relating to potholes were not within the remit of the Panel and the Essex County Council Member for Stansted, Councillor Gooding, could be approached regarding this issue.

HP31 **UPDATE ON APPROVED SCHEMES**

The Panel considered a report presented by Rissa Long setting out schemes approved. She said the Newport scheme was the only one where the date of commencement was now confirmed, as the other dates were estimates. She drew attention to a correction to the cost of the scheme in Cambridge Road, Ugley, which was in fact £10,000 for the sign itself, £12,000 if the sub plates were to be included as well. The scheme in Walden Road, Littlebury was previously agreed at £12,000 but the estimated cost was £20,000 and therefore she asked that the Panel agree the further £8,000.

Members agreed to increase to £20,000 the funding for the scheme at Walden Road, Littlebury.

Regarding the co-ordination of works with those to be carried out by utilities companies, Rissa Long said works would be done as closely as possible after the installation of schemes. She said the parish councils concerned with each scheme would be kept informed of co-ordination arrangements. She concluded by stating that the sum of £445,000 of the total of £472,000 had now been committed.

HP32

POTENTIAL SCHEME LIST

Members considered a list of potential schemes. The Chairman cautioned that it was not possible to carry out all suggested schemes this year.

Members considered bus shelter schemes at two sites in Leaden Roding and one in Saffron Walden; mobile VAS signs; and the purchase of two winter maintenance tools which was a request referred by Councillor Barker from Uttlesford's Head of Street Services.

AGREED to allocate funds totalling £13,900 for

- 1 the wooden bus shelter scheme costing £7,500 at the bus stop outside the Village Hall on Stortford Road in Leaden Roding;
- 2 two winter maintenance snow clearing tools (£3,200 each).

HP33

NEW SCHEMES AND PLANNING FOR NEXT YEAR

The Panel was informed that a list of new schemes was not yet available from Highways but that it was likely there would be some safety schemes coming forward.

The Chairman said it was important to seek parish councils' requests for schemes. He would report to Council at the meeting on 11 December on funding already allocated and would make it known that anticipated funds of £480,000 would be available to the Highways Panel for allocation next year.

Rissa Long gave a presentation regarding the Hempstead footpath works. She said the engineering team needed to complete its investigations before costings could be provided; that the key work involved the transfer of part of the land of three gardens to form a section of the proposed footpath, and that the parish council was involved in discussions. Although the three landowners had agreed in principle, an extremely expensive estimate had been provided by Highway's legal advisers for the land transfer. The Chairman said he had asked for the quotation to be checked.

Councillor McCarthy, Chairman of Hempstead Parish Council, said the Parish Council had offered £4,000 towards the project.

The Chairman suggested this contribution could be used to meet costs of fencing and hedging.

Rissa Long said investigations were being carried out into another high-value scheme, for installation of a mini roundabout in Hatfield Heath next year.

HIGHWAY RANGERS AND CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

Rissa Long gave a report on the Highways Rangers and Revenue monies. She said the allocation to Uttlesford for 2012/13 had been intended for operation of the Highways Rangers service. This service was being provided by the district council at a cost of £65,000. The balance of the money could be used elsewhere in the district. The uses to which this money could be put were signage works, speed surveys and other minor highway works. The report set out suggested works for the Panel to consider allocation of funds.

David Sprunt gave a presentation on the Wendens Road cycle scheme options. He said this road was currently used as the primary route between Saffron Walden and Audley End Station. Essex County Council were undertaking an informal consultation with all key stakeholders and had put forward four options, the most expensive two of which involved major infrastructure works and were in reality not deliverable in the current economic climate. A third option was to make the road one-way with a cycle way taking up part of one side, separated from traffic by a kerb. The fourth option involved a traffic restriction order and road closure.

David Sprunt said much further work was required but ECC considered the third option to be a deliverable scheme. He gave details of estimated costs, assessed at £150,000. It was necessary to reconcile local concerns against the benefits of the scheme, and next steps involved assessing the consultation outcome and carrying out design surveys at a cost of approximately £11,000. More detailed costs estimates needed to be prepared and funding options investigated. Some funding could come from section 106 monies, some from the national cycling campaign group Sustrans, and perhaps some from the Highways Panel's revenue pot for the Highways Rangers. The design team were available to consider the scheme at the end of January.

The Chairman said no allocation of money to design work was possible until there was a clearer idea of costing. It was necessary that the project had the approval of consultees. Funding from Sustrans had been available but a Catch 22 situation had meant no application could be made without an approved scheme. It was imperative to move quickly because the next opportunity for funding could again be missed, and he therefore proposed using some of the Highways Rangers revenue money.

Rissa Long said £55,000 was in the Highways Rangers revenue pot.

Councillor Barker said this scheme had been sought for a long time, and that if money was available from the Highways Rangers budget and from Sustrans this was good. However if the scheme were to go ahead she felt there could be possible section 106 money. If that were the case it would be unwise for the Highways Panel to use its revenue money for this scheme as a priority. In agreeing to fund the survey from Highways Ranger money, she trusted that this would not lead to a conclusion that funding overall for the project should come from the Highways Panel.

The Chairman said this was not the intention, and if the revenue money from the Highways Rangers budget were not used up, it would be lost.

AGREED that a sum of up to £21,000 could be allocated when the scheme had been approved by ECC to be used for design costs, in order not to miss funding opportunities.

The Chairman said the Highways Rangers scheme had been a fantastic success.

Rissa Long said if any parishes felt they were waiting too long for responses to any requests for schemes that they should contact her direct.

She said there was £34,000 available under the Uttlesford Highways Rangers scheme. It was necessary for each item to be specifically agreed by the Highways Panel, as required by the ECC Cabinet Member. The report before the Panel suggested allocation of funds for speed surveys and ad hoc signage. Members noted surveys cost £200 each. Councillor Barker suggested including in this schedule installation of signs required at Great Canfield and Bacon End.

AGREED to allocate £2,000 for the speed surveys and ad hoc signage as follows:

SITE	REASON
Berden – Pelham Road	Assessment to establish if this site meets the criteria for a VAS sign
Cambridge Road, Quendon	Assessment to establish if this site meets the criteria for a VAS sign
Patmore End, Ugley	The Parish Council are concerned about the speed of traffic using Patmore End. This road is derestricted so a survey will identify if it meets the criteria for a reduction.
Great Easton	Assessment to establish if this site meets the criteria for a VAS sign
Total = £1,000	

Adhoc signage and minor works

SITE	PROBLEM	MEASURE AND COST	
Wicken Road, Newport	Traffic including HGV's regularly turn into a small cul-de-sac off Wicken Road not realising that this is not a through route	1 x no through road sign	£150
Chelmsford Road,	The existing VAS sign is not in the optimum position	Relocate the post and sign	£250

Barnston	to slow traffic down		
Barnston Road, High Easter	Consistent problem of deer running on to the road endangering traffic	2 x deer warning signs	£200
Patmore End, Ugley	There is no footway in Patmore End so pedestrians have to walk blindly in the road	2 x 'walker in the road' sign	£100
			£700

Councillor Barker reported satisfaction with the work of the Highways Rangers in clearing a footpath on a school route between Margaret Roding and Leaden Roding.

The Chairman said the parish councils would be contacted by email regarding requests for Highways Ranger services next year.

Rissa Long said it had been the intention of ECC that the Highways Rangers be outsourced this year, if doing so would be more cost effective than Uttlesford running the service. However, she felt the Highways Rangers service should remain with Uttlesford.

David Sprunt said that if the Highways Rangers service spend exceeded £75,000 this would have been the trigger for transferring running of the service to ECC, but that this was not the case.

HP35

CAPITAL MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME

The Panel considered a schedule setting out completed works. Councillor Barker said work on surfacing at Dunmow Road had been very good. She asked the Assistant Director - Planning and Building Control, Andrew Taylor, about whether the surfacing at this site would need to be dug up again for installation of utilities.

Andrew Taylor said the authority for such works lay with ECC not Uttlesford District Council but that the planning application which had been granted did include laying pipes for drainage.

HP36

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Councillor Sullivan reported difficulties with scheduling of shared VAS signs for which a new arrangement would need to be proposed.

David Sprunt said £13,000 remained in the budget for the Highway Rangers which if not allocated now would be lost.

The Chairman said further schemes would be considered at the next meeting.

The meeting ended at 7.50pm.

