

HIGHWAYS SUB-COMMITTEE held at 7.30 pm COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN on 4 FEBRUARY 1998

Present: Councillor M A Gayler - Chairman.
Councillors F G Bannister, R P Chambers, M L Foley, D W Gregory, J Hurwitz, Mrs Y L Morton, Mrs J M Porter, R C Smith, J A W Whitehead and P A Wilcock.

Also present at the Chairman's invitation: Councillor Mrs J F Cheetham.

Officers in attendance: Mrs M Cox, A Forrow (Uttlesford District Council); Miss A Buckland, J Dixon, D Hurrell, I Hurwood and W J Rose (Essex County Council); Sergeant Gary Heard (Essex Police).

I. MR D HURRELL

The Chairman reported that Mr Derek Hurrell, Area Highways Manager, would shortly be retiring and this was the last meeting that he would be attending. Members thanked Mr Hurrell for his considerable contribution to the work of the Highways Sub-Committee and wished him many happy years of retirement.

The Sub-Committee welcomed Mr Jim Dixon who would be replacing Mr Hurrell and attending the future meetings.

The Chairman also welcomed Sergeant Gary Heard who would be the Police representative on the Sub-Committee.

I. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 1997 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

I. BUSINESS ARISING

(i) Minute HW14 (i) - Speed reduction programme - 30 m.p.h. speed limits

It was confirmed that those sites not yet covered by a speed limit would be brought back to the Sub-Committee at its next meeting, when the locally determined budget programme would be considered.

(ii) Minute HW16 - Locally determined budget programme

Councillor Mrs Porter referred to parking problems in Catons Lane, Saffron Walden and asked about the progress of the review of parking restrictions in Saffron Walden. Mr Rose reported that the County Highways Department was still investigating a number of options and would report back to the Sub-Committee at a later date. In answer to a question from Councillor Foley it was confirmed that Newbiggen Street and Bardfield Road, Thaxted had been included in this year's speed reduction programme. The Dunmow Road measures would be considered for inclusion in next year's budget.

(iii) Minute HW50 - Saffron Walden Town Centre Traffic Management

The Sub-Committee was advised that the report from the Saffron Walden Town Centre Manager on this issue would be considered at the next meeting.

(iv) Minute HW17 - Local Road Safety Advisory Committees

It was reported that Officers were still looking at possible solutions for pedestrian safety on the A120 and would report to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee.

Councillor Smith mentioned that Great Canfield and Takeley Parish Councils would hopefully be meeting with a Senior Minister from the Department of the Environment, Transport & the Regions regarding the problems associated with the A120. He asked that this Council submit a letter to the Minister, supporting the early development of the A120 By-pass.

(v) Minute HW18 Road Safety Measures - Newport Free Grammar School

Councillor Gaylor and Mr Rose had recently met with the Head Teacher of the Newport Grammar School and had advised a possible scheme. This would be considered at the next meeting of the Sub-Committee. Councillor Hurwitz referred to the possible construction of a bridge but was informed that this option was expensive.

(vi) HW19 - Stoney Common, Stansted

A meeting regarding traffic congestion and road safety at Stoney Common, Stansted had been held with Councillor A Dean and residents on 3 February 1998. Highways Officers would investigate the issues raised and report to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee.

I. PEDESTRIAN CROSSING, HIGH STREET, SAFFRON WALDEN

The Sub-Committee was advised that the Uttlesford Area Access Group had received complaints about the pedestrian crossing in the High Street, Saffron Walden. It was not fitted with audible signals, which caused some difficulties for sight impaired people. Also, it was perceived that the time allocated by the "green phase" did not allow sufficient time for people with mobility difficulties to cross the highway. Mr Rose explained that for safety reasons an audible signal could only operate when there was an all "red phase" installed. Officers were concerned that this proposal might result in long delays and queues in the High Street. Also, pedestrians would be required to wait for a longer period before it was safe to cross, and therefore might not wait to use the crossing. However, Members considered that the junction should be made safer for elderly and disabled people and suggested that Officers look at installing an all "red phase" in conjunction with the George Street pedestrian crossing.

RESOLVED that Officers investigate introducing an all "red phase" and an audible pedestrian crossing at the High Street and George Street traffic lights.

I. CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT AND THE REGIONS

Following the last meeting of the Sub-Committee, representations had been made to the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions and replies had now been received.

(i) Variable mandatory speed limits near schools

Councillor Smith had suggested a lower, 20 m.p.h. speed limit which would come into operation outside schools, when the flashing lights were operating. The Department had stated that the variable mandatory speed limits had been tried outside schools but these had had little effect on vehicle speeds and there were no plans to approve any further schemes. The letter also stated that the signs could be confusing for motorists and would create enforcement problems for the police. Councillor Smith could not agree with the sentiments in the letter. He considered that the scheme would be cheap and effective. He suggested that the Council write again to the DETR in stronger terms pressing for a change in the law to allow the adoption of variable signs.

Councillor Foley considered that the Council's priority should be to have a 20 m.p.h. speed limit outside all schools in the district. The County Highways Officers explained that County policy provided for consideration of all schools being included within a 20 mph zone (except on 'A' class roads) although the timetable for implementation would depend on the funds available. All Members of the Sub-Committee agreed that a 20 m.p.h. speed limit should be a high priority and asked that the broad costs of introducing this proposal be investigated for the next meeting.

RESOLVED that

- 1 The Council make representations to the DETR for a change in the law to permit the introduction of variable speed limits outside schools.
- 2 Officers investigate the likely cost of introducing 20 m.p.h. speed limits outside all schools in the district.

The Sub-Committee was advised of the progress in the formulation of the Uttlesford Cycle Network Plan. The comments of the Great Dunmow Town Council and Saffron Walden Town Council to the proposals had been received and would now be incorporated into the plan.

The Sub-Committee was then updated on the National Cycle Network in Essex. A number of organisations and Town and Parish Councils had been consulted and a favourable response had, in most cases been received. It was therefore proposed that the Network for Essex be adopted as a working blueprint for the county.

With regard to the Saffron Walden to Audley End cycle route, a detailed design of the initial stage of this route had been completed by W S Atkins Consultants Limited. The estimated cost of the proposal was £75,000, but funding had not yet been secured.

Some Members were disappointed at the Town Councils' responses, particularly their reluctance to approve dual use paths.

RESOLVED that a revised Cycle Network Plan be produced taking account of comments received by Great Dunmow and Saffron Walden Town Councils.

I. **COMMON MEAD BRIDGE MANUDEN**

Members recalled that at its last meeting, the Sub-Committee had deferred a decision on proceeding with a Traffic Regulation Order confirming and making permanent the present 3 ton weight restriction on River Stort Bridge, Common Mead, Manuden. Due to the high level of subsidy necessary to maintain the school bus contract and public service buses on the lengthy diversion that would result from the closure of the bridge, it had been proposed to undertake an option study on alternative strategies. It was now proposed to proceed with the strengthening of the bridge in accordance with the recommendations of the study. Savings in the bridge maintenance budget had been identified and work on the bridge had now commenced.

I. **VILLAGE SPEED LIMITS - AFTER SPEED STUDY**

The Sub-Committee was advised of the results of the speed survey undertaken approximately 6 months after implementation of the Uttlesford village speed limits scheme. With the exception of one site, a reduction in the 85 percentile speed of between 1 and 11 m.p.h. had been achieved. Generally the percentage reduction in speed had been small ranging from 2 - 13 percent. It would be necessary to continue monitoring speeds at the sites for longer term effects before determining the additional measures that might be needed to make the speed limit self-enforcing. A further study would be commissioned for early in the 1998/99 financial year.

Members were encouraged by the results of the survey. A number of Members still considered that periodic speed checks by the police were essential for reducing drivers' speed. Sergeant Heard stated that the police had to target their resources to areas where there was a clear speeding problem. However most sites would be visited at some time, on an ad-hoc basis.

Councillor Mrs Cheetham drew the Sub-Committee's attention to the road from Bambers Green to the Airport which was becoming a "rat run" especially in the early morning. She asked whether it would be possible to implement a speed limit through Bambers Green. Mr Rose replied that Bambers Green was generally open and undeveloped and therefore did not meet the criteria for a speed limit. If the character of the road was not perceived as being urban, drivers would be unlikely to slow down and engineering measures would be required. Mrs Cheetham was disappointed at this reply but asked, as an alternative, whether thought could be given to introducing a no right hand turn at Crumps Corner between 7.30 and 9.00 am. Highways Officers agreed to look at this matter further.

I. **RADWINTER SPEED REDUCTION**

The Sub-Committee was advised of the current situation with regard to the effectiveness of the speed reduction measures which had been introduced on the B1053 in Radwinter in conjunction with the 30 m.p.h. speed limit signed following improvements to street lighting by Radwinter Parish Council. Mr Rose explained the background to the speed reduction measures in the village. The after study of vehicle speed had showed that within the village the 85 percentile speed had decreased from 42 m.p.h. to 33 m.p.h. However at the Plough Hill end of the village, the 85

percentile speed had not decreased. The Highways Department, in conjunction with the Parish Council, was investigating alternative measures to make the speed limit on Plough Hill self-enforcing.

Mr Hardisty, Chairman of Radwinter Parish Council addressed the meeting on this matter. He stated that the Parish Council had recently surveyed all residents of the village on various options for the speed limit at Plough Hill. The most popular option had been to alter the gateways at the start of the speed limit, by blocking off completely one half of the carriageways at each entry to the village.

RESOLVED that an item for a review of options be included in the report to the next meeting of the Highways Sub-Committee when the programme for the 1998/99 locally determined budget would be considered, paying particular attention to the option favoured by the majority of the residents of Radwinter.

I. **REVISED SPEED REDUCTION POLICY**

The Sub-Committee was advised of the revised policy document approved by the County Highways and Transportation Committee on Thursday 23 October 1997.

I. **TRAFFIC SIGNING POLICY**

The Sub-Committee was given details of a new traffic signing policy which had been approved by the County Highways and Transportation Committee on Thursday 23 October 1997. Councillor Foley drew attention to road signs which had recently been erected in Thaxted, which were very large and out of keeping with the village. He hoped that in future thought could be given to appropriate signs for areas of historical interest. Councillor Chambers endorsed these comments.

I. **LOCAL ROAD SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEES**

The Sub-Committee received the minutes of the Local Road Safety Advisory Committees held in Dunmow on 1 December and Saffron Walden on 10 December 1997.

(i) **Minute DRS23 - Divisional Engineer's Report**

In answer to a question from Councillor Foley it was confirmed that a footway between Thaxted and Stanbrook would be included on the list of projects at the next meeting of the Sub-Committee when the locally determined budget would be considered.

(ii) **Minute SWRS24 (iii) - Junction Rose & Crown Walk with B1052 Common Hill, Saffron Walden**

It was confirmed that the problem with this junction was being discussed with the private landlord.

(iii) **Minute SWRS25 (v) Speed reduction measures - Rickling Green**

It was confirmed that the Order had been published and it was hoped that the speed limit measures would be implemented before the end of this financial year.

(iv) **Minute SWRS26 (ii) - Accident 2000 Remedial Measures - Elsenham**

Councillor Hurwitz raised a number of points regarding the pedestrian crossing and the double roundabout at Elsenham. County Officers agreed to investigate these points.

I. **LOCALLY DETERMINED BUDGET**

The Chairman agreed to the consideration of this item on the grounds of urgency.

The Chairman reminded Members that at the next meeting of the Sub-Committee the locally determined budget would be considered. The County Council was experiencing severe financial pressures and large scale cuts were being suggested. He urged the four County Councillors representing this district to lobby the County Council and resist a cut in this District's budget.

The meeting ended at 9.50pm.

\D012