

SAFFRON WALDEN LOCAL ROAD SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE held at 7.30 pm on 16 FEBRUARY 2000 at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN

Present:- Councillor W F Bowker - Chairman.
Miss K Barwood - Arkesden
Mr J Double - Ashdon
Mrs M Asinya - Elsenham
Mr A Thomas - Hempstead
Mrs A Smith - Newport
Mr P Lawson - Radwinter
Mr P Hughes - The Sampfords
Acting Inspector S Brewer and Sergeant J Sones - Essex Police Traffic Management Unit.

Officers in attendance:- Mrs C Roberts - Secretary, W J Rose - District
Transportation Manager - Essex County Transportation and Operational Services
Department, A Stewart - Community Development Manager, Uttlesford District Council.

I. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs C A Bayley,
Mr D Boatman, Councillor R C Dean, Doctor P Fentem and Mrs G Ryan.

I. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 1999 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

(i) Minute SWRS26 (i) Cycleways Network

The representative for The Sampfords asked whether it would be possible to provide a cycleway to a specification closer to that of a footpath than that of a motorway. He asked also how the "rate of return" on a cycleway could be established. The District Transportation Manager explained that with the exception of the stretch from the station to the Walden Road, the cost of the proposed cycleway to Audley End was unknown and would vary significantly depending upon the solution chosen to be adopted. Any capital improvement normally had to be supported by a measurable rate of return and the priority in the case of cycleways was in favour of urban routes, where the maximum number of cyclists making short journeys would displace the greatest number of four wheel vehicles, reducing congestion. The cycleway could form part of a bid within the Local Transport Plan. A seminar would take place for consultation on 27 March so that the public and representative groups could put views forward about the right funding priorities as between different projected transport arrangements for the District. Members noted that little could be achieved without buying land and it would be probably also be necessary to take out hedges for a cycleway to Audley End.

(ii) Minute SWRS30 Road Surfaces - Hempstead and Radwinter

The representative for Radwinter referred to two more accidents at Stocking Green and thanked the Police who had, at his request, placed skid signs at the site on the following day. He informed the meeting of areas which had not yet been surfaced and of a 6" drop at the edge of the road surface on a right hand bend. The District Transportation Manager explained that the money available was limited and had to fund the sites regarded as worst - in this case those on the road bends. There would be a further review in April of newly identified sites. Mr Lawson agreed to provide the District Transportation Manager with details of poor surface between Hoys Farm and the next house in the direction of Swards End.

In answer to a question from the representative of Hempstead, the District Transportation Manager informed the meeting that one section of road surface near Hill Farm was in the current programme. One of the accidents, however, had taken place on a road within the Braintree district which had no surfacing problem.

Mr P Hughes drew attention to the correspondence from the Clerk to The Sampfords Parish Council which had been circulated with the Secretary's report and in particular to the suggestion that the road surface referred to was so poor as to preclude prosecution. The District Transportation Manager replied that within the current round of works many problem stretches of surfacing would be dealt with and the representative should raise this matter later if the areas of

concern were not remedied shortly. Mr Hughes added that the Parish Council had been informed there was no funding and that he himself had complained that poor use was made of funding, the cost of consultants and preparation of plans etc absorbing too much money and leaving little for actual works. The District Transportation Manager refuted this suggestion and added that, in pursuance of Best Value, the County Council had used consultants who had been shown to be cheaper. Costs were more easily ascertainable than they had been when costing was done internally. Mr Hughes further suggested that materials were lost. The District Transportation Manager felt that the important factor was the erosion of budgets by central Government and by reduction of the county rate allocation. The surface dressing budget had shrunk by two thirds in recent years. The achievable standard had suffered due to a reduction of the overall budget from £800,000 to £250,000 per annum. In addition, more expensive dressings had become necessary due to climatic change and the build up of binder increasing the cost of providing the required service.

RESOLVED that this matter be reconsidered at the next meeting of the Committee.

I. SECRETARY'S REPORT

(i) Retirement of the Road Safety Officer

The Secretary informed the Committee that Mrs Christine Stearn, the Road Safety Officer, had retired and circulated an appreciation of her work by the Head of Community and Leisure Services.

RESOLVED that a letter of appreciation and good wishes be sent to Mrs Christine Stearn for her retirement.

(ii) Retirement of the District Transportation Manager

The Chairman expressed the appreciation of the Committee for the work undertaken by the District Transportation Officer during the previous 23 years and the courtesy and patience with which he had at all times dealt with questions from the Committee, some of which must have grated. He added that he was sure that all of Uttlesford would share these sentiments and wish him a very happy retirement. Individual representatives of parish councils praised the District Transportation Manager's helpfulness and lucidity.

(iii) Dates of Further Meetings

RESOLVED that the next two meetings of the Committee be held on Wednesday, 21 June and Wednesday, 20 September 2000, subject to the dates of the Highways Sub-Committee falling as expected.

(iv) New Representative

Members were informed that Mr Martin Start would be attending the Committee as the new representative for Little Chesterford.

I. ROAD SAFETY OFFICER'S REPORT

The Community Development Manager presented the Road Safety Officer's Report.

I. POLICE REPORT

Acting Inspector S Brewer reported that since the last meeting there had been only one fatality in the District. It had occurred on the M11 at Junction 8. Total casualties for the year to date were up by 1.8% on the previous year. An anti drink/driving campaign had involved a number of breath tests in December. Goods vehicle offences had been targeted in January and rear seat belts, drink/driving and speed were the targets for February.

In answer to a question from Mr P Hughes, Acting Inspector Brewer explained that whilst the great proportion of fatalities occurred on 60 mph roads they generally did not involve breach of the speed limit but were the product of inappropriate speed for the conditions. He confirmed that for a short period the county-wide concentration of police resources was reduced by the policing requirements of the Stansted Korean Airlines crash. Acting Inspector Brewer drew to Members' attention the frequency of front seat passengers being killed by unrestrained rear seat passengers and explained, in answer to a question, that some locations were not suitable for police speed cameras. He added

that the fatal collision at Sampford had not been due solely to the need for road surfacing. The road had been contaminated with oil and/or diesel on the night in question.

I. REPLACEMENT DISTRICT TRANSPORT MANAGER

The District Transport Manager explained that his successor had been unable to attend but sent apologies and would be at the next meeting in June. Mr Paul Hardy had already worked for a number of years in the Essex County Council Transportation and Operational Services Department.

(i) Accident Remedial Programme

The District Transportation Manager reported that one new site had been identified at Birchanger on the B1383 Forest Hall Road near the M11 Stansted Airport junction No 8. There had been twelve personal injury accidents on the northbound exit from the junction, nine from traffic waiting to turn into Forest Hall Road and one from traffic turning out. A skid resistant surface and signs were proposed to be introduced before the junction 8 improvement and bridge strengthening programme.

I. TRAFFIC PROBLEMS AT ELSENHAM

The representative of Elsenham informed the meeting that the land there between the church and the bridge was owned by the Mordant family and leased to Mr R Smith.

The District Transportation Manager explained that compulsory purchase had now been suggested. The next stage was a meeting of the Highways Committee of the County Council on 22 March followed by a meeting of the next Local Transport Committee at which support for the proposal would be sought before the land acquisition procedure was embarked upon. The representative of Elsenham undertook to supply the name and address of the landowner.

I. WEIGHT RESTRICTED BRIDGES

In answer to questions from Members, the District Transportation Officer explained that the limited funding available for weight restricted bridges was directed as a first priority to those carrying heavy traffic loads and therefore there was very little provision at all for small local bridges. It was hoped that some funds would be set aside specifically for local bridges. An increasingly difficult situation was being presented to the Fire Service among others by the proliferation of weight restrictions.

In answer to a question from Miss Barwood, he suggested that where buses could not cross weight restricted bridges a minibus might be permissible. He added, in answer to the representative from Elsenham, that records had been made of even extremely old bridges so that their theoretical carrying capacity was now assessable.

I. HYPOTHECATION

In answer to a question from the representative for Radwinter, Sergeant Sones explained that the Traffic Management Unit at Braintree had been chosen for the trial in hypothecation. Funds would be returned to the Courts, the Police and others involved in the enforcement process and the money would be specified to be spent on further enforcement within the providing area.

In answer to a question from a representative of Hempstead, Sergeant Sones explained that there were specific criteria for the provision of mobile or fixed speed cameras and that to date these had usually required a speed related injury accident site. The District Transportation Manager added that speed cameras were to be installed in Uttlesford. Areas would be signed and hopefully would involve the ringing of Saffron Walden and covering of the Leaden Roding to Dunmow B184. A number of sites would be covered on a half day a week continual rotation basis. Funding had been provided for police monitoring. Sergeant Sones emphasised that the signs warning of speed cameras were no bluff. The sign meant that either a fixed or a mobile camera would be present.

The meeting ended at 8.35 pm.

