

20 M.P.H. SPEED LIMITS/ZONES IN HITCHIN - INFORMATION NOTE

Members will recall that at the meeting held on 17 July 2012 (Minute 30 refers) there was debate on the need for 20 m.p.h. limits/zones in certain parts of Hitchin including consideration of a town wide speed limit of 20 m.p.h. The Committee requested that the Chairman in his role as a County Councillor should take forward the nominated 20 m.p.h. schemes to the first Highways Liaison Meeting for consideration.

At the meeting of North Hertfordshire Highways Partnership – Joint Member Panel held on 30 July 2012 (Minute 7 reproduced below refers) Councillor D. Segalini raised the issue of 20 m.p.h. speed limits/zones in Hitchin. The Hertfordshire Highways Lead Assistant District Manager advised the JMP of the Hertfordshire policy on the introduction of 20 m.p.h. zones/limits and that legislation was awaited from Government.

In addition to the extract from the JMP Minutes there are two web sites that Members are invited to look at for further information regarding the move to highways liaison meetings and highways locality budgets:

<http://www.hertsdirect.org/your-council/civic-calendar/cabinet/16954176/>

www.hertsdirect.org/highways

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHWAYS PARTNERSHIP – JOINT MEMBER PANEL**Monday, 30 July 2012*****Extract from Minutes*****7. REFERRALS FROM NHDC AREA COMMITTEES**

The Chairman advised the Panel that there had been one referral from the Hitchin Area Committee which met on 31 May 2012.

The Lead Assistant District Manager (LADM) advised the Panel that consideration of a permanent relief road to remove heavy lorries from the residential roads in Hitchin was considered as part of the Hitchin Urban Transport Plan (HUTP). However, due to the uncertainty surrounding longer term development at the time as well as austerity measures the ability to address such long term considerations was uncertain, therefore it was not possible to test the proposals for a relief road. The HUTP currently runs to 2014 after which the above position may be considered.

The LADM advised that there were a lot of unknowns on development in and around the Hitchin Industrial Area and currently there was no funding for this scheme and possession of third party land would be necessary.

The Chairman accepted a request from District Councillor Deborah Segalini to ask the Lead Assistant District Manager about 20 m.p.h. speed limits in Hitchin. Although this was not the actual referral to the JMP but was discussed by the Hitchin Committee at its meeting held on 31 May 2012 the Chairman agreed to this request. The Lead Assistant District Manager advised the Panel that Hertfordshire's policy and procedure for considering requests for 20 mph limits/zones was detailed within its Speed Management Strategy. In turn this document was in line with current guidance and legislation. Essentially there were two ways a 20 mph limit/zone could be implemented. If the 85th percentile were below 20 mph then a limit could be introduced by the use of signs only. The second option, if speeds were above an 85th percentile speed of 25 mph would be to introduce a 'zone' together with associated traffic calming to slow the traffic. A Member advised that Government had recently announced a lessening of regulations pertinent to 20 m.p.h. zones but this information was to be regarded as guidance and no changes had been made as yet to the legislation.

The LADM confirmed that any moves to a 20 m.p.h. speed limit needed further investigation and this could be done through the Highways Locality Budget . Another Member advised the Panel that a local haulage company had been accepted as part of a trial with two large HGVs passing through the Cadwell Lane and Grove Road residential areas which was worrying for residents and pedestrians and that it could be possible through an application to the Traffic Commissioners for a 24/7 working schedule, and consequently night time restriction on goods vehicles was required. The LADM advised that Hertfordshire Highways could only comment on the grounds of whether the infrastructure was designed to cope with the proposals. The NHDC Transport Policy Officer was able to confirm to the Panel that the local haulage company had been selected as part of a national trial.

The Chairman thanked Members and Officers for their comments and that investigations on the viability of a 20 m.p.h. limit in certain residential roads in Hitchin should be considered as a scheme/s within the Highways Locality Budget.