Evesham Transport Stakeholder Group Meeting Notes

Meeting of 11 June 2018

Held at the Evesham Hotel, Coopers Lane, Evesham, WR11 1DA

Apologies: Councillor Anthony Hopkins

Attendees: Councillor Dr Ken Pollock, Worcestershire County Council **(Chair)**
Councillor John Smith, Worcestershire County Council Councillor Bob Banks, Worcestershire County Council Nigel Hudson, Worcestershire County Council
Henry Harbord, Worcestershire County Council Councillor Bradley Thomas, Wychavon District Council Councillor Frances Smith, Wychavon District Council Councillor Martin King, Wychavon District Council Councillor Mark Goodge, Evesham Town Council Councillor Jo Sandalls, Wychavon District Council Councillor Robert Raphael, Wychavon District Council Councillor Gerry O'Donnell, Wychavon District Council Phil Merrick, Wychavon District Council
Shawn Riley, Wychavon District Council Gerry Davies, VECTA
Brian Chilver, Vale of Evesham Civic Society Deborah Rolls, VECTA
Clive Bostle, Ramblers
Robin Walker, Cycle Evesham Vale

Please note: many of the Councillors attending the meeting represent constituencies at more than one tier of Local Government; for simplicity, only one tier is set-out here.

1. Introductions

1.1 Attendees were asked to introduce themselves, and to raise the interests and concerns of the organisations they represent. Principal points raised were:

There is a perception that nothing is being done and that suggestions (from members of the public) for making improvements to the traffic problems are ignored by Worcestershire County Council. There is a perception of 'aloofness' from Worcestershire County Council.

There is a fear that businesses are leaving the town centre, with delays and journey-time unreliability for customers and businesses both cited as being contributory. It was suggested that detrimental effects on tourism also need to be considered.

A view was expressed that the development of the Waitrose Supermarket has exacerbated matters by closing an alternative route to High Street. This was balanced

by the view that this alternative was seen by many as a 'rat-run', with the blight that is associated with such a term.

The traffic survey results should be published.

There was a suggestion that Worcestershire County Council "hasn't been forgiven" for the delays to the Abbey Bridge project.

A concern was raised over the perceived danger of traversing the junction of Abbey Road/ Waterside/ Cheltenham Road/ Pershore Road.

A pedestrian crossing on High Street has been requested but hasn't been progressed.

A view was shared that there doesn't seem to be a rhythm to the congestion.

There was a suggestion that roadworks are undertaken without enough advanced warning.

There was a suggestion that the Town Council's "Evesham Town Plan" (which has recommendations on transport) should be considered.

A concern was raised over the town's new housing, with the view that this is adding to frustration.

It was suggested that, rather than seeking to road-build our way out of the problem, we should be encouraging people to change their transport habits, with walking, cycling and public transport the means to achieve this, and that such measures should form part of the short term package being worked on.

There was a view that bus services could be improved: particularly for routes from the surrounding area and with regard to operating times (with the suggestion being that services start too late/ finish too early). It was further suggested that bus-service subsidies should be considered and that Worcestershire County Council should seek to 'co-operate' with the operators, as provided for in the Bus Services Act 2017.

There is a perception of a 'lack of joined-up thinking' between the Councils.

It was suggested that Evesham's difficulties are 'not the worst' and that a town without traffic is a town that is dying (economically speaking).

It was pointed-out that work has been underway on the Strategy, and on developing a proposed network for walking and cycling.

Concern was raised over the effect that 'gaps' in traffic can have on network efficiency and over the effect of pedestrian facilities on the same.

A desire to see the roads 'made safe', so as to encourage more active travel, was expressed.

It was suggested that the Evesham Walking and Cycling map should be updated.

The chevron parking on High Street was criticised, with the suggestion being that it ought to face the other way.

Concern was raised over timescales.

It was suggested that a particular focus should be to reduce the number of short trips undertaken in private motor cars.

1.2 Post Meeting actions arising from/ responses to comments made in section 1.1:

Proposals for traffic and pedestrian signal upgrades will be shared with the Group.

Concerns over communication are understood and are being acted upon; the Stakeholder Group is the first component of a communication plan for the Evesham Town Transport Strategy.

Worcestershire County Council is not aware of any significant changes to the Evesham Walking and Cycling map being needed at this time, and, with a new network for such in development, it would be premature to update the map now. Any errors or omissions in the current map should be shared with Worcestershire County Council in the meantime, for inclusion in any future redrafting.

The results from the traffic survey will be published on the Worcestershire County Council web site.

Worcestershire County Council understands the interest in precise timescales being given. The best possible information will be given on this matter.

Clarification will be sought on High Street's chevron parking.

2.1 The Evesham Town Transport Strategy

2.1 An introduction was given to the objectives of the Strategy, the work that has been done so far and what will happen next (all as set-out in the "Evesham Town Transport Strategy; An Introduction" document, circulated ahead of the meeting).

3. Terms of Reference for the Group

3.1 The Terms of Reference were agreed. It was suggested that Councillor Bob Banks would be the Worcestershire County Council elected-member representative on the Group, and the Wychavon District Council and Evesham Town Council members present were asked to propose who from amongst them would represent those two bodies.

3.2 One of the main objectives for the Stakeholder Group is for the members to share the business of the Group within their own organisations and, wherever possible, more widely too. To aid this it was agreed that Group meeting notes should be appended with a summary of the principal points to share.

4. Date of next meeting

Set for 18:00 on Tuesday 17 July. Venue to be confirmed.

5. Any other business

No other business was raised and the meeting closed at 19:38.

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6. Key messages for sharing

6.1 Members of the Group are asked to share what it is discussed at the Group with their own organisations and, where possible, more widely too. Key messages from the 11 June meeting are:

Worcestershire County Council and Wychavon District Council are working in partnership to develop and deliver the Evesham Town Transport Strategy.

Evesham's issues with poor access and congestion cannot be remedied by a simple, single solution. A measured, incremental package of schemes that considers all modes of transport is needed.

The Strategy seeks to assess what schemes there might be that can be delivered in the shorter term, it seeks to develop medium term schemes, and all the while, to build the business case for longer term schemes.

A computer-based traffic model of Evesham's road network has been 'constructed', founded on the results from the town-wide traffic surveys to ensure that it properly reflects how Evesham's roads function.

Worcestershire CC has before it a large number of proposals for improving transport in Evesham: some from Worcestershire's Local Transport Plan fourth edition and many kindly shared by residents of Evesham. An independent assessment of which of these proposals could work on Evesham's roads is nearing completion. As soon as this assessment has been completed, Worcestershire CC will report the findings (via the WCC web site) and the results will determine which proposals then go on to be tested in the traffic model.

The assessment of the proposals and the model-testing that will follow will determine what package of measures could be delivered in the short term.

Work continues on developing proposals for an improved network for walking and cycling in the town and Worcestershire CC is working in partnership with Highways England to develop a bid for funding for improvements to the A46 junctions in the vicinity of Evesham.

The results from the traffic surveys will be published on Worcestershire CC's web site.

Concerns over communication are understood and are being acted upon; the Stakeholder Group is the first component of a communication plan for the Evesham Town Transport Strategy.