

# Evesham Transport Strategy

---

## Evesham Transport Stakeholder Group

### Meeting Notes

---

#### Meeting of 3 December 2019

Held at the Northwick Hotel, Waterside, Evesham WR11 1BT

---

**Attendees:** Councillor Dr Ken Pollock, Worcestershire County Council (**Chair**)  
Councillor John Smith, Worcestershire County Council  
Councillor Bob Banks, Worcestershire County Council  
Henry Harbord, Worcestershire County Council  
Councillor Bradley Thomas, Wychavon District Council  
Councillor Martin King, Wychavon District Council  
Councillor Mark Goodge, Evesham Town Council  
Councillor Andrew Dyke, Wychavon District Council  
Phil Merrick, Wychavon District Council  
Shawn Riley, Wychavon District Council  
Deborah Rolls, VECTA  
Brian Chilver, Vale of Evesham Civic Society  
Jim Powell, Vale of Evesham Civic Society (guest)  
Clive Bostle, Ramblers

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 Evesham traffic model testing.

- 1.1 Testing of the options that passed WSP's 'feasibility screening' exercise has now finished. Jacobs (the consultancy undertaking the testing) has produced an individual report for each test, together with a summary report.
- 1.2 An overview of the findings of each test was given:

Option 1: close a central road (in the model) to 'benchmark' gridlock. Mill Street chosen because of its location. The model suggests the subsequent rerouting of traffic can be accommodated on four of the town's five main 'corridors' but that a fifth corridor experiences a significant lengthening of journey time.

Option 2: increased capacity at the Abbey Bridge junction. The current traffic signal configuration gives the maximum traffic capacity possible within the constraints of the existing road layout. With some widening of the Pershore Road approach capacity could be lifted. Testing the effect of this uplift on the network shows that some useful improvement stands to be gained, suggesting further development of the proposal is appropriate.

Option 3: convert Avon Street to one-way (heading away from High Street). Testing indicates that removal of the Avon Street stage of the High Street traffic signals (enabled by the one-way) does reduce delays at that junction, but that this improvement attracts more traffic to High Street (to take advantage of that improvement).

Option 4: increased left-turn/ right-turn queue separation on the Worcester Road arm of the Greenhill/ High Street/ Worcester Road junction. Extension of parking restriction on the

railway station side of Worcester Road (to prevent exit blocking) could have freed-up enough space to achieve the objective of this option, rendering the test unnecessary.

Option 5: 'move' the queue at the western end of Port Street back to Port Street/ Elm Road/ Broadway Road junction, to alleviate air quality problems at that western end of Port Street. Revocation of the Air Quality Management Area order removes the initial rationale for the option, and the testing did show that queues at the Port Street/ Elm Road/ Broadway Road junction could grow considerably compared to the current situation. But the testing also suggested that some increase in network-wide average speed could be seen from this proposal in the PM peak. This could be worth further development as part of a wider 'smart' whole-corridor traffic management scheme.

Option 6: a test that combined Options 3 and 4. With the Option 4 test rendered unnecessary, the combined test was also unnecessary.

Option 7: test the combined effect of Options 5 and 11. This combined test was proposed in case the option 5 test showed a detrimental effect on traffic flow on the wider network. Instead, the propagation of queues at the junction at the core of option 5 emerged as the main issue. This rendered the proposed combined test unnecessary (the combined test would have shed no light on the localised queue problem).

Option 8: 5% shift to walking or cycling. Reducing by 5% the car-borne trips that start and finish within the town shows some good improvements in journey times.

Option 9: 10% shift to walking or cycling. Reducing those same car-borne trips by 10% also shows improvements, but, perhaps counterintuitively, at a reduced scale to the improvements achieved under option 8. A 5% conversion of trips might reasonably be seen as a lower-bound expectation of what might be feasible with the implementation of a dedicated programme of infrastructure improvement, whilst a 10% conversion might be the upper-boundary. Both tests support the development of walking and cycling improvements: the reduced improvements derived from the 10% shift suggests that traffic will re-route to take advantage of freed-up road space. In turn this suggests that a programme of 'behaviour change' interventions could help lock in any benefits gained from the infrastructure.

Option 10: updated traffic signal control equipment at Cheltenham Road/ Davies Road junction. Updated control equipment can increase traffic flow capacity: testing the effect of this on the wider network shows benefits.

Post meeting note; work to update the control equipment at this junction is now complete.

Option 11: updated traffic signal equipment at Port Street/ Waterside/ Bridge Street junction. As with the previous option, this test shows that the increased traffic flow capacity at this junction attributable to updated control equipment brings improvements to the wider network. To meet the requirements of legislation, pedestrian crossing facilities would need to be incorporated into any enhancement of the junction. Whilst this could temper the traffic-capacity increase that the upgrade could realise, any such tempering would be offset by the role the facility would play in the implementation of the active travel measures mooted in DS8 and DS9.

### 1.3 Issues raised:

Jacobs' summary report of the model testing and WCC's summary report will both be shared with the Stakeholder Group, ahead of publishing on the WCC Evesham transport web page. Jacobs' individual test reports will be shared with members of the group who indicate that they would like to receive them.

Comment: can the right turn into the Lidl car park (from Port Street) be stopped?

Response: this would not improve traffic flow since those heading east on Port Street wishing to access Lidl would be required to 'U-turn' at the nearby roundabout, adding extra unnecessary vehicle movements to that junction. This proposal was ruled-out at the pre-feasibility 'screening' stage.

Comment: it was suggested that increased car parking at Lidl is proposed and the impact of such an increase on traffic was questioned.

Post meeting response: WCC is not aware of any such proposal to expand the provision of parking at this site.

Comment: it was suggested that traffic moved smoothly when traffic signals were out of action; could a 20mph limit, combined a signal switch-off be the answer?

Response: traffic can often respond 'positively' to a temporary failure of traffic signals, but the response to a permanent removal of signals can be quite different.

Post meeting response: removal of traffic signals can risk 'main roads' dominating all other traffic movements (for Evesham this could give too much of an advantage to 'strategic' traffic over 'local' traffic) and it can make walking and cycling more challenging, risking decreased uptake of those modes of transport and an increase in motorised transport. A town-wide 20 mph limit and a town centre 20 mph limit have both been proposed for Evesham. WSP assessed both in the Pre-Feasibility Option Testing exercise, finding that a town-wide limit would likely be unworkable, and that a town centre limit might be workable, but that a detailed analysis of collision data (beyond WSP's remit) would be required to establish the need for such a limit. The Department for Transport's 'Setting Local Speed Limit' (July 2012) guidance states that '...alternative measures should always be considered before proceeding with a new speed limit'. Accordingly, such alternative measures are being assessed first.

Comment: WCC does not object to more houses, meaning there is more traffic in the town.

Response: it is widely held that there is a national shortage of housing. Objecting to new housing purely on the grounds of traffic impact can be difficult, particularly given the risk that if a refused application is successful at Appeal the proposed development could then go ahead with no mitigation for traffic impact (not to mention the costs for the authorities of such an appeal). A balanced approach is taken with a notable example being that the largest recent development in the town will fund the construction of a walking and cycling bridge over the River Avon.

Comment: why not bring in Uber style buses?

Response: the viability of such a service would be for the commercial sector to determine. Worcestershire's Community Transport Consortium, known as Community Travel Worcestershire and supported by WCC, runs community transport services in the county. WCC continues to liaise with Evesham Volunteer Centre on local community transport provision.

Post meeting response: WCC's recently published 'Passenger Transport Strategy' (2019-2030) includes an objective to consider other services that can complement the network (the 'Alternative Service Provision' objective).

Comment: has a western bypass for the town, linking from the football club around either to the B4084 or the A44 been considered?

Response: it has been considered. Assessing what can be done to improve the A46 must be the local priority for improved 'strategic links'. A 'bypass extension' to the west of Evesham would undermine the business case for improving the A46.

Post meeting response: WCC's 'Evesham Transport Model Pre-Feasibility Option Testing' summary report, available on the [Evesham Transport webpage](#), covers this issue.

Comment: what about passenger transport strategy? One of the stops in the town centre has no timetable.

Response: the strategy has recently been published and is available on [WCC's webpage](#).

Post meeting response: the problem of the missing timetable arises because of the broken timetable case. WCC has reminded Evesham Town Council (the owners of the case) that repair work is needed, and that the temporary 'fix' (a timetable simply attached to the case) has gone missing.

## **2 Avon Street trial**

- 2.1 Work is underway for a physical trial of the Avon Street option (making Avon Street one-way, away from High Street, to speed-up the cycle-time of the adjacent traffic signals) to start early in 2020. A number of issues need to be resolved before the trial can be deemed viable: ensuring that the cost is proportionate is the key.
- 2.2 Whilst the option testing exercise described earlier did not show a network-wide improvement in traffic flows in the 'future year' that such testing must work on, how the reduced junction delay improves matters locally with existing traffic levels is worth assessing.
- 2.3 If the trial is deemed viable, public engagement will play a crucial role in its success, and stakeholder group support will be invaluable with that.

## **3 Evesham Parking Strategy**

- 3.1 The commission for this work is currently out to tender. The preferred tenderer should be known mid-January 2020, with the contract in place before the end of that month.
- 3.2 As with the Avon Street trial, public engagement will play a crucial role in the parking strategy's success, and stakeholder group support will be invaluable with that.

Comment: will the changes to the parking that might come about through the redevelopment of the Riverside Shopping Centre and the possible change of ownership of the High Street Co-operative shop be considered?

Response: both will be considered.

## 4 Walking and Cycling

- 4.1 Work is underway to design a network of improvements for walking and cycling across Evesham, and this will see the publication of a 'Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan' (LCWIP) for Evesham.
- 4.2 A significant amount of funding is being assembled for the implementation of the first elements of this network, with the largest share so far coming from developer contributions.  
Comment: a developer has sought to delay the final agreement of a contribution, whilst the agent representing a number of landowners has been rather slow in helping matters move forward.  
Response: steps are being taken to manage both of these issues.
- 4.3 Meeting to be arranged with Robin Walker to look at the drafting of the network.

## 5 Pinch Point funding

- 5.1 Work is underway to develop a bid for this recently announced Department for Transport funding.
- 5.2 The bid is likely to feature four main elements:
- Walking and cycling infrastructure; this would add to what can be delivered with the funding that is already in place.
  - Public realm improvement (Port Street); this work will significantly underscore the commitment to delivering improvements for pedestrians.
  - Improvement of a junction on the A46; the trunk road is inextricably linked to the traffic problems of the town and a 'full' bid must show a commitment to improving the existing set-up.
  - Implementation of a 'smart monitoring' network; to help ensure that buses can keep to timetable, but with wider network benefits.
- 5.3 Smart monitoring captures real time, anonymous data on how roads are being used. This facilitates 'whole corridor' management of traffic flows (which is not possible with single-point traffic signal control). The queue that a late-running bus is caught in can be given enhanced priority through a series of junctions, to the clear benefit of the users of that bus service, but to the wider network too.
- 5.4 By capturing all transport movements (and this includes people walking and cycling) smart monitoring can also help show how interventions have performed and it can help build the case for further investment.

Comment: improved walking and cycling infrastructure is supported but crossing the A46 is particularly difficult for cyclists and pedestrians.

Response: improved crossing facilities are being looked at away from the junctions.

## 6 Publicity

- 6.1 The Evesham Transport Strategy web page will be updated and press releases will be issued to coincide with the development or delivery of the issues covered. Stakeholder

group support in press and by personal contact plays a vital role in the wider dissemination of the work that is being done.

**7 Date of next meeting**

To be confirmed.