

Sustainable Travel Task and Finish Group
6 OCTOBER 2021

Present: Councillors: Michael Croker, Ruth Fletcher, Tony Hogben,
Gordon Lindsay, Tim Lloyd and Bob Platt

13 **NOTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The notes from the meeting held on 15 September were received by the group.

14 **INTERVIEW WITH OFFICERS FROM WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL**

The Group interviewed the County Highways (Development Management) Team Manager and the Transport Planning Policy Manager from WSCC regarding the relationship between HDC and WSCC Highways and how to better implement Sustainable Travel options in new developments.

WSCC Highways confirmed that the entire NPPF is referenced when writing their planning consultation responses and that appropriate access to any development by all transport modes are considered. WSCC Highways are limited in that they can only secure mitigation for that which the development directly impacts.

WSCC Highways clarified that their consultation responses are advisory, and that Planning Authorities can go against their advice. In general, Highways would advise against such action though, given their wider experience from tracking nationwide planning appeals, which informs their view on what highways impacts would prove decisive.

WSCC Highways would be able to provide earlier engagement with Members, through HDC's Planning Department, in the form of RAG Reports that would allow Members to flag specific highways issues before WSCC Highways provide their consultation response to a particular Planning Application (a system that had already been adopted by Mid-Sussex District Council). WSCC Highways confirmed that they could accommodate specific issues that Members raise in their consultation responses.

In connection with NPPF Para 111, which now refers to 'highways' rather than 'transport' grounds, WSCC officers said that they still include more than just motor traffic on roads when assessing highway impacts of any given development. It remains a key paragraph as far as highways planning is concerned.

WSCC Highways informed Members that including more policies relating to sustainable transport in HDC's Local Plan would help secure more sustainable travel options in planning applications. Ensuring that Local Plan supporting documents, like the Local Infrastructure Delivery Plan, clearly identify

sustainable transport needs, likely costs and delivery mechanisms is essential in a plan-led system.

Adopting the HDC LCWIP as an SPD (Supplementary Planning Document) would grant it greater weight during Planning discussions, but there are resource limitations in many LAs, and, initially with the NPPF, central government did not expect a proliferation of SPDs.

Plans for more Low Traffic Neighbourhoods would best come through LCWIP schemes and be backed by full stakeholder support. Horsham's Local Transport Study might also be a route to identifying where such schemes, and other sustainable transport measure, might improve matters.

WSCC's 2008 Design Guide would be re-written once the anticipated combination of Manual for Streets and Manual for Streets 2 are made, likely in 2023.

It was considered that achieving all the sustainable travel routes in current LCWIPs was unlikely, even in the long term, so prioritisation was important. The balance between conventional and sustainable transport schemes is essentially being driven by central government funding.

The County Highways (Development Management) Team Manager had said that they would raise the Group's concerns regarding the implementation of policies coming from the Governments Gear Change Documents with senior officers at the County Council.

Traffic management schemes for the centre of Horsham would need to come through WSCC's Local Transport Plan and could be raised during the consultation period.

It was noted that potential effects of development on Public Rights of Way, such as footpaths or bridleways, would not be assessed by WSCC Highways, despite their use, and potentially much greater use, as utility transport corridors. In order to make changes to existing Public Rights of Way, WSCC would need to get permissions from the landowners, making them harder to modify.

15 **NEXT STEPS**

Infrastructure Development Plan – Scope to include more sustainable travel options.

Contact Strategic Planning regarding how sustainable travel will be incorporated into HDCs new Local Plan, with particular reference to the Horsham Transport Study.

Investigate MSDC RAG report for consulting WSCC Highways for Planning.

HDCs LCWIP needs further development and HDC need to produce more LCWIPs for areas other than the centre of Horsham.

The meeting closed at 5.56 pm having commenced at 4.00 pm

CHAIRMAN