

Public highways meeting

Saturday 7 March 2015

Present: Ward Councillors: Les Gilbert, Andrew Kolker
CEC Highways officers Gary Mallin and Rob Welch
Fiona Bruce MP, Sgt Kerrie Snowden, PSCO Jill Cope
Parish Councillors: S Ranger, M Ranger, J Clowes, B Bath, P Cotton,
M Street, R Parry, L Slaughter
Over 100 members of the public.

Apologies: M Mackenzie

LG opened the meeting and ran through the format of the morning. He explained the background of highway issues since the formation of Cheshire East Council in 2009. He reminded the meeting of the consultation and various options available. He reminded the meeting that the village opted to address the pinchpoints on London Road (by the Church) and on Macclesfield Road.

FB spoke about the surgeries she holds in her constituency and of one in HC library early in her tenure when over 50 people attended to lobby for highway improvements in HC. She had ensured the subject has been kept on the agenda with CEC officers and praised the work of CEC and the PC

JC spoke on behalf of the PC as chairman of the committee of the work the PC and volunteers since this issue was raised. The PC is mindful that the re-routing will not solve all the highway problems but that we have to do the best with the road systems we have. He reported that the PC are collecting information with the aid of volunteers which will provide evidence. Further minor works are required to help around the village, e.g. surfacing. He thanked CEC, the police and volunteers for their hard work.

GM spoke as Network Manager for CEC Highways. He reminded the meeting that substantial consultation has brought us to this point and that the community voted for the current scheme which has an 18 month window from installation in August 2014. There are three options available with regard to the scheme: remove, amend or make permanent.

Traffic monitoring was undertaken in March 2014 and again in March 2015. Results are showing no change of material value on Middlewich Road, marginal increase on Station Road, decrease in traffic on Macclesfield Road, increases on Manor Lane and Station Road and a significant increase on Chester Road. Chester Road results may be skewed due to works on Junction 17 of the M6. CEC is of the opinion that the scheme is working but a further review is required once the works on J17 are complete.

CEC will do a second review in a further 6 months, will install advanced notification signs outside the village and have informed the Hauliers Association of the scheme. They are aware of the problems on Station Road and will completed a traffic assessment on Station

Road bridge looking at signage, lining and will ensure they consult the residents, parish and ward councillors at all times.

Development in the village may provide potential funding for further work e.g. roundabout at Saltersford Corner. Changing the priorities at the Chester Road/Middlewich Road junction may help the flow of traffic. CEC will ask that Highways Agency amend their instructions regarding J 18 being the Emergency Diversion Route once J 17 improvements complete. The effect of the Congleton bypass should be taken into account.

Sgt. Snowden spoke of the police point of view and confirmed that now the scheme is legal they are able to run some enforcement days. She also asked for volunteers to come forward to run a community watch scheme.

AK then opened the meeting to residents:

1. Chester Road congestion etc. is a risk to children and senior citizens. In favour of enforcement and further speed restrictions.
2. Chester Road/London Road/Station Road traffic lights are not working. Traffic builds up on Chester Road due to inability to turn right and 2 lorries to pass. GM reported that the signals have been upgraded to intelligent lights which should see an improvement.
3. Is it possible to have a different speed limit for HGVs. KS: no speed limits must apply to all traffic. It could be possible to reduce the speed to 20 mph in some areas.
4. Chester and Middlewich road might be A roads but are used by school children. Not safe.
5. All that has been done is move the pinch points to more residential areas e.g. Station Road. London Road needs reducing to 20 mph.
6. How are speed surveys done? Macclesfield Road still has a problem with speeding HGVs, especially at night. Tankers make a noise going over manhole covers.
7. Macclesfield Road needs enforcement early in the morning. From 4.30 a.m. onwards HGVs speed along the road. A letter needs sending to all the quarry operators.
8. Clean Air act and government literature states that no old people homes or schools should be on a busy road. The re-route scheme takes people along a busier route (Chester Road).
9. Manor Lane/Station Road has a nursery, soft play centre and new development and it is difficult to walk along these roads now as the pavements are not wide enough to cope with buggies.
10. A resident re-submitted a petition from Station Road/new estate residents to CEC. GM reported that they are talking to Network Rail about improvements to the bridge. They will also carry out a pedestrian survey on both Station Road and Manor Lane to identify numbers and whether a pedestrian crossing is possible.

11. FB asked GM - the Congleton link road should help HC traffic but what analysis has been done on the area? What percentage of traffic will be removed from HC when the road is built? GM has asked colleagues for figures for this meeting but not yet available. His understanding is that relief will radiate out in the area. The bypass is due to start in 2016 with an 18 month build.

12. What success will you have in making people use J17 as the recommended emergency route? GM replied that they are confident CEC will have a strong voice.

13. The quality of the road surface on Chester Road is poor especially with the increase in traffic.

14. The new Sainsbury's development will attract even more traffic to the area. Can it be a planning condition to direct traffic to other roads? The planning condition has already been given.

15. Enforcement is needed at night.

16. Station Road bridge should be turned into a cycle route as it can't cope with traffic. Children are being driven to school at the Hermitage due to lack of safe route to school. Build a new road from Marsh Lane to the A50.

17. Instead of banning HGVs on London Road make it one way. It is the roads which are causing the problems not the HGVs as they are quieter than ever, some with less emissions than cars.

18. A London Road resident spoke up for the scheme. Less traffic on London Road might encourage more visitors to the village centre.

19. Has the spending been reduced to J17? Station Road and Chester Road are suffering with increased traffic. Please enforce the speed limit. Sainsbury's have calculated the volume of traffic will be over 2,500 additional vehicles over a 10 hour day.

20. Station Road pedestrian route is bad. Why is there no SID on Station Road? Pedestrian crossing needed especially trying to cross by Bromley Drive.

21. Tailbacks on Chester Road causing drivers to drive on verges, take short cuts along Westway.

22. The junction on Middlewich Road/Chester Road is poor. GM confirmed that CEC is looking at this junction for further work.

23. Air pollution on Station Road is poor and the pavement too narrow. This should have been addressed before the scheme was put in place.

24. Agree with the development but not thought about the impact.

25. Can I have an assurance that the do nothing option was considered? AK assured the resident it was one of the options.

26. I understood this is an experiment? All I here today is that it will be made permanent?

27. Are there restrictions on Middlewich Road as there are wires on the road outside the school? GM suggested this may be monitoring traffic.

28. An HGV driver who lives in the village thinks it is a good idea but that Macclesfield Road doesn't seem to work. Would cameras to enforce be a good idea?

29. There is no enforcement and no police in the village. Members of the public have been noting the name of companies and registration: would the police do anything? KS reported that this is not sufficient. The police have to see the offender and take them to the weighbridge.

30. What democratic process took place on the scheme? Chester Road residents didn't know about it? Both Ward Councillors assured the resident on the consultation.

31. An HGV driver spoke of the amount of training HGV drivers undertake and that they are tested every 12 months in competence. It is the road surface and older wagons which cause the noise. In addition the quality of the motorway surfaces are shocking.

32. Someone volunteered to help with a speed gun in HC. KS asked them to speak to PCSO Jill Cope afterwards.

33. A residents suggested that the survey of pedestrians on Station Road may not be accurate as a lot of people will not use the road as it is too dangerous. As the new development is only 1/3 built please take into account the additional number of people over the next few years.

34. Signage for the scheme is too wordy. It needs a greater use of graphics. GM agrees and will change some of them.

35. Macclesfield Road pavements are not wide enough.

36. Macclesfield Road needs more speed signs. Resident mentioned Twemlow's new signage – FB said this took 2 years to sort out & locals v involved with compiling evidence to show need. Suggested volunteers could do the same in HC. Discussion of formation of traffic volunteers group with KS & PCSO. Community Speed Watch.

AK summed up – meeting had done exactly what required – provided feedback; will be noted analysed and acted on. The scheme has 12 months more to run.

Need for enforcement.

Quality of road surface; remedial work to be done but Station Rd will have to be closed, this will cause problems.

JC spoke about SIDs requesting volunteers to collect & analyse data. Requested assistance for Neighbourhood Plan, traffic is a workgroup topic requested views