

Evesham Transport Strategy

Evesham Transport Stakeholder Group

Meeting Notes

Meeting of 6 November 2018

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

Apologies: Councillor Bob Banks, Worcestershire County Council
Nigel Hudson, Worcestershire County Council
Councillor Gerry O'Donnell, Wychavon District Council

Attendees: Councillor Dr Ken Pollock, Worcestershire County Council (**Chair**)
Councillor John Smith, 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
Phil Merrick, Wychavon District Council
Shawn Riley, Wychavon District Council
Brian Chilver, Vale of Evesham Civic Society
Deborah Rolls, VECTA
Clive Bostle, Ramblers
Robin Walker, Cycle Evesham Vale
Colin Tether
Sarah Gilmour, Worcestershire County Council
Gavin Loach, Worcestershire County Council

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 Issues Discussed at Previous Meetings

Issue	Comment
At High Street/ Worcester Road junction: extended double yellow lines further into Worcester Road in order to stop parked cars causing exit blocking.	Done.
Remove "Keep Clear" from the carriageway surface on Davies Road (near to junction with Cheltenham Road) as these are no longer needed now that the ambulance station has moved.	The 'keep clear' is within an area of buff-coloured anti-skid surfacing, which means it can't be 'burnt-off', nor can it be removed by hydro-blasting as this would likely pull up the anti-skid material beneath/beside it. 'Overpainting' it would leave a shadow effect that would, arguably, be as visible as the marking itself and certainly wouldn't be very long lasting. Since the marking is already worn, it will be left as-is. Cont./

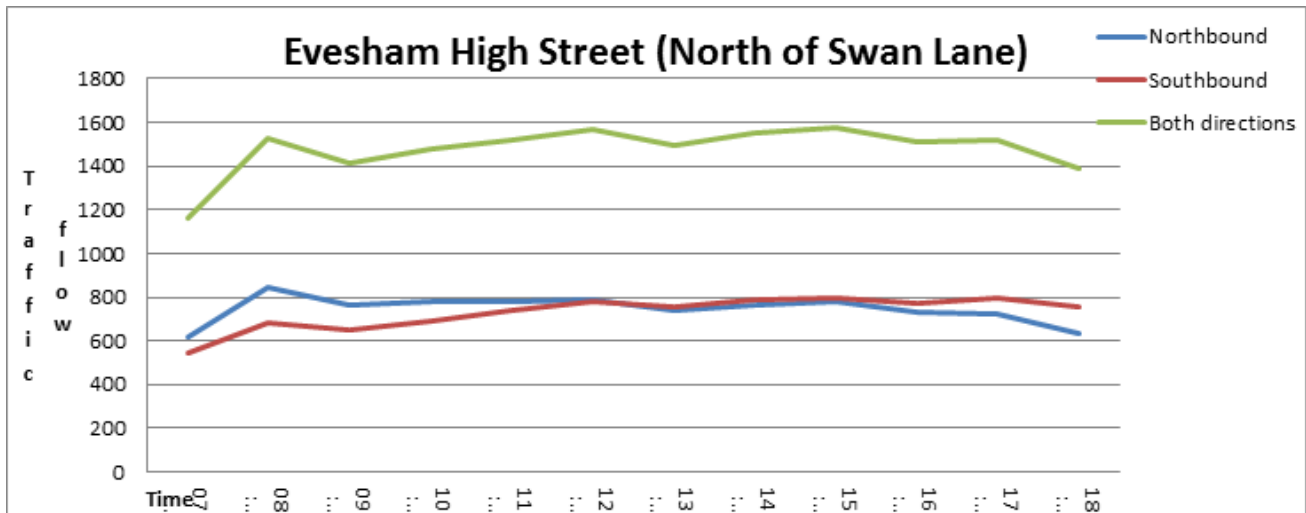
Issue	Comment
Repaint 'arrows' on the carriageway surface at Abbey Road/ Cheltenham Road junction.	This is being looked into.
Pedestrian crossing on High Street (near Lawrance's Bakery); can the timings be amended so that they take a bit longer to revert to the pedestrian phase?	Done; trial underway. The timings have been changed and video cameras have been installed (the cameras will enable the timing-change's effect on the use of the crossing to be monitored, ensuring that safety is properly managed).
Cars parking on the Pershore Road arm of the Abbey Road/ Cheltenham Rd junction are thought to be affecting the efficiency of the left-turn/ right-turn queuing.	Double yellow lines have been repainted. A relatively recent change to how some of the adjacent moorings are being accessed (with cars being left parked on Pershore Road) is being assessed to see whether this is affecting the efficiency of the junction.
Swan Lane/ Avon Street junction. Proposal to make Avon Street one way (away from High Street)	<p>This is being assessed.</p> <p>There are three parts to this assessment: the effect of the change needs to be tested in the traffic model, its feasibility needs to be assessed and a consultation of those that would be affected needs to be undertaken.</p> <p>The aim is to complete the first two parts before undertaking the consultation (a consultation based on an unproven proposal would not be particularly informative), and the aim now is to set a timescale for this.</p>
Paint new box junctions on High Street	Consultation with the police currently underway.

2 Intelligent Transport Systems and Traffic Signals

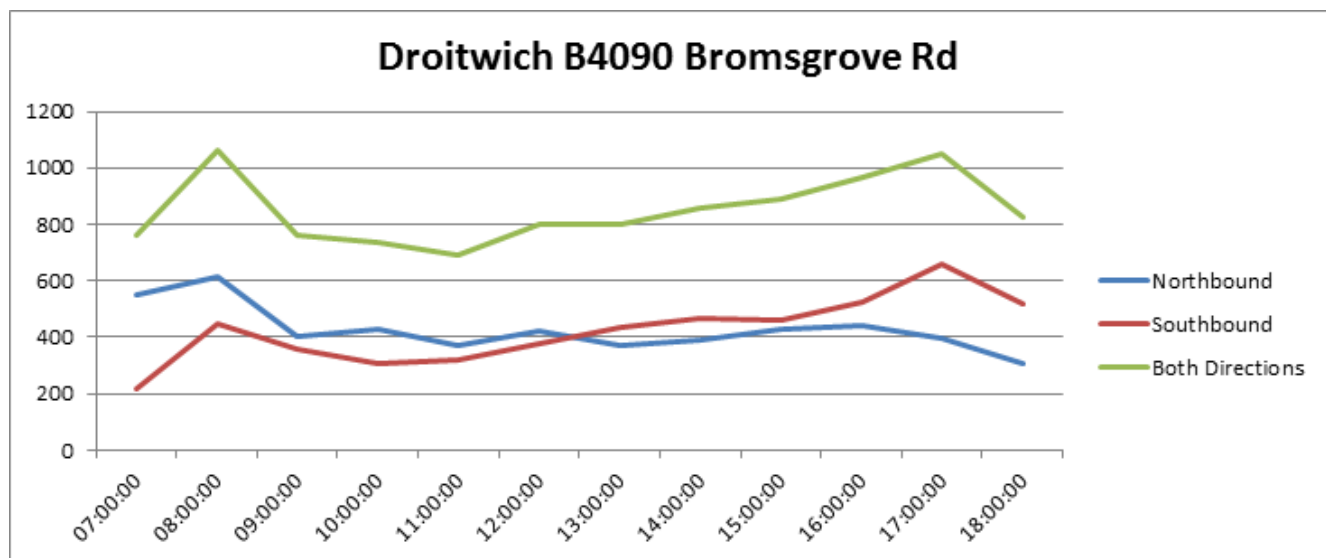
The main part of the meeting was devoted to the combined themes of Intelligent Transport Systems and Traffic Signals, with brief introductions to both topics followed by question and answer sessions (on both topics).

Key messages from the introductions:

- The 'pattern' of traffic volume in the busiest parts of Evesham is quite different from the more normally seen pattern of a peak in the morning followed by a trough, followed by a further peak in the late afternoon (with those peaks corresponding to the times when most journeys to and from work occur): in Evesham, particularly on High Street, there is no discernible trough:



For comparison, an equivalent plot for traffic volume in Droitwich shows the more normally seen peak-trough-peak profile:



- The high volume of traffic throughout the day indicates that Evesham is the destination for a lot of locally-generated trips accessing businesses and services within the town. This suggests a 'healthy' inwards flow for those businesses and services, but of course the downside is the congestion that this brings.
- Since the closure of the Old Brewery Car Park rat run, traffic volume on High Street has risen by 20%.
- Traffic signals on the key High Street/ Vine Street/ Abbey Road/ Cheltenham Road corridor are all relatively modern (with respect to technology), but there will soon be an assessment (known as a 'revalidation') of whether or not the most recent update to MOVA (the Transport Research Laboratory's "Microprocessor Optimised Vehicle Actuation" traffic signal control software) would bring benefits.

The following questions and suggestions were raised in the meeting:

Question/ suggestion	Comment
The vehicle table on Vine Street is poorly understood and acts as a de facto set of traffic signals	Advice from Worcestershire County Council's traffic management team will be sought.
Can U-turns (on High Street) be prevented?	Enforcement and the physical means to prohibit U-turns are both problematic. The suggestion was that the bulk of such manoeuvres were undertaken by taxi drivers. Councillors and Officers from Wychavon District Council will look into what can be done through the taxi licencing process.
Evesham is indeed busy (as evidenced by the traffic volumes), but walking and cycling are better for businesses.	Noted: the Evesham Transport Strategy seeks to strike a balance across all modes of transport in the same way that it seeks to deliver measures across the full range of timescales.
In addition to the difficulties that can arise from cars accessing the echelon parking, cars accessing the parking spaces in the Co-op/ Post Office stretch of High Street, and in the vicinity of the Catholic School are also thought to create difficulties.	Noted: this will be considered in the review of parking.
Are traffic flows in school term-time and school holidays known?	This will be looked into. (Post meeting note: it is worth mentioning that many working parents take leave during school holidays, so the reduction in traffic volume during school holidays isn't simply the absence of parents driving their children to school.)
The effect of buses taking school children to Prince Henry's High School on the surrounding roads was raised.	It is understood that the buses must take the children into the school (rather than deliver them nearby) as the safety and wellbeing of the children is the school's responsibility from the moment they get onto the buses.
What is known from the traffic surveys about the proportion and type of short trips? And did they record vehicle occupancy rates?	The results of the traffic surveys are on the Evesham Transport Strategy web page (http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/evesham), and a precis will be provided at the next meeting.
Can advanced stop lines (for cyclists) be added to more junctions?	These are put in place where feasible. Cont.

Question/ suggestion	Comment
It was suggested that the pedestrian phase at Abbey Road/ Cheltenham Road signals does not 'self-cancel'.	This will be checked.
Improvement of the functioning of the Greenhill/ High Street junction was called for, including the introduction of pedestrian facilities on all arms of the junction (currently provided only on the Greenhill arm).	<p>This will be assessed. The biggest problem at this junction for road traffic is exit blocking on High Street (i.e. stationary traffic on High Street blocking traffic heading towards the town centre). But if the mooted changes at Avon Street/ Swan Lane junction prove to be possible, some improvement might be seen at the Greenhill junction.</p> <p>There has been a call for a pedestrian crossing in the northern stretch of High Street. It would not appear that such a crossing would be feasible currently, but the proposed parking review might suggest a rationalisation of the provision of on-street parking, which in-turn might free-up the space needed for a crossing. It must be borne in mind that capacity for any improvement at this junction is highly constrained.</p>
Can box junctions have enforcement cameras?	Advice from Worcestershire County Council's traffic management team will be sought.
A press release should be produced in order to publicise the Evesham Transport Strategy.	Agreed.
The type, location and any timing restrictions of car parking is a very hot topic for the town. There was some discussion on whether parking on High Street should be restricted to one hour or two hours; it is understood that the bulk of the restrictions along this corridor are set at one hour, as called for by the business owners.	Noted. The aim now is to set a timescale for the proposed parking review.

3 Any Other Business

The matter of a planning application for a new lorry-park facility was raised, but as this was a brand new application, it has yet to be assessed.

It was suggested that traffic signals could be introduced to the High Street/ Albert Road junction in the event that the proposed change to Avon Street proved to be viable: the suggestion was that these lights would assist those that currently access High Street via Avon Street. This will be borne in mind, but it is unlikely to be viable or desirable: new signals here would likely cancel-out any gains won from changing Avon Street, not least because the proximity of Leicester Grove means that any signals at this location would likely need as many stages as the signals at Swan Lane/ High Street/ Avon Street currently have.

It was proposed that 'smarter choice' type programmes should form a part of the Evesham Transport Strategy.

The question of 'disincentivising' single-occupancy car trips was raised. 'Incentivising' car sharing is better aligned with smarter choice programmes.

A request was made for a future Group meeting to focus on what a 5% shift to walking and cycling might look like/ where else has this been achieved (and how).

The Chancellor's recent Budget announced a new "Future High Street" fund; Councillor Thomas said that Wychavon District Council will look to submit a bid based on Evesham.

Councillor Thomas also set-out that, through the update of the South Worcestershire Development Plan, he will be working with Wychavon District Council Officers on strengthening the focus on the good design of the layout and infrastructure of new developments.

A strong case was made for the Strategy to include consideration of bus services; those without access to a car and those in the rural communities around Evesham all rely on public transport. It was pointed out that the Strategy must not be limited only to cars, walking and cycling and mention was made of some larger employers providing bus services for their employees.

The meeting closed at 19:30.

4 Date of next meeting

To be confirmed.

4 Key messages for sharing

4.1 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 had 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 into which of these proposals could work on Evesham's roads has been done. This assessment will be shared on Worcestershire CC's web site, and the results determine which proposals now go on to be tested in the traffic model.

The model-testing will determine what package of measures will then be put forward for funding, with the aim of delivery in the short term.

Work continues on the development of a proposed 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 have been 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 Transport Strategy.