

HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
PANEL

TUESDAY, 28 JUNE 2016

PRESENT: Councillors Jesse Grey (Vice-Chairman), Hari Sharma (Chairman), Malcolm Beer, Marius Gilmore and Maureen Hunt

Officers: Wendy Binmore, Simon Fletcher, Craig Miller and Ben Smith

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Paul Lion and Nicola Pryer.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Hunt – Declared a personal interest in the Part II item that related to Highways Services – Rights of Way as she is the Chairman of the Public Rights of Way Panel. Cllr Hunt attended Panel with an open mind.

MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Part I minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 20 March 2016 be approved.

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Councillor Sharma be appointed Chairman and Councillor Grey be appointed Vice-chairman for the ensuing municipal year.

WRAYSBURY BRIDGE - NEW FOOTWAY (PETITION)

Mr Henry Perez addressed the Panel regarding the Wraysbury Bridge new footway and the Panel noted the following main key points:

- Mr Perez was passionate about safety at Wraysbury Railway Station.
- In December 2014, Mr Perez and Mr Cribbin set up a facebook group called Wraysbury Speed Watch.
- The main concern of people was the safety at Wraysbury Railway Bridge.
- The bridge had been unsafe for some 20 years.
- The population and passengers at the station had increased over the years which caused more safety concerns.
- Mr Perez organised a meeting with Southwest Trains, Network Rail and the council where he chaired four meetings.
- Southwest Trains had spend a lot of money on improvements that they were responsible for.
- In 2015, Mr Perez ran a petition and it was signed by 2,800 people.
- In February 2016, the Highways, Transport and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel recommended spending on safety improvements for the bridge and on 23 February 2016, Cabinet approved the recommendations.
- The new footway had been costed but was not £50k over the expected budget.
- A contractor had been chosen and the footway would be finished by November 2016.

- Mr Perez requested the Panel put a strong recommendation to Cabinet for the new footway to go ahead.

The Vice-Chairman stated he was fearful the cost was unrealistic. Cllr Hunt also raised some concerns over the escalating costs and highlighted that the risk management had highlighted some unknowns. Ben Smith, Head of Highways & Transport stated that during the outline design stage, assumptions were made and the unknowns were things they did not know before; but now, they had all be costed which made the costs increase. The price had been fixed with the contractor which meant the contractor carried the risk. He added he would try and reduce the costs where he could. The Chairman stated he wanted to ensure that residents knew Members took safety very seriously and that he had supported the scheme from the beginning.

The Head of Highways & Transport confirmed that the scheme design altered the access and service road to the station which would prevent any safety issues with the access to the station. Mr Perez stated that the Borough proposed estimated costs but, if the footway was not provided now, the price would go up and that is why the residents requested the footway to be installed during the 2016/17 budget.

Councillor Beer stated residents were saying the steps to the station were not user friendly for the old or disabled but that there were no proposals in the report to do anything about them. Also, the fence adjacent to the drop at the side of the road was not fit for purpose. He added that the Panel were all very supportive of the footway as it was absolutely essential. The Head of Highways & Transport stated he was unable to provide specific answers on the scope of the scheme but he would get the engineers to respond with the exact details of the proposal.

The Head of Highways & Transport confirmed the price was a realistic fixed price and that the risks were carried by the contractor. His team had tested the market and the costs were enough to deliver the scheme; he was comfortable and confident with the fixed price. Cllr Gilmore stated he was supportive of the fixed price as it would be unfortunate to have to go back and request more money. The Head of Highways & Transport had worked well to get the contractor to carry the risks.

Mr Perez stated that Southwest Trains were responsible for the bushes at the site but he was not sure who was responsible for the fence. The Head of Highways & Transport confirmed the Borough would not design or implement a scheme that was not safe , If Network Rail was responsible for the fence, the Borough and the contractor would work with them to get the fence repaired.

- ❖ Ben Smith, Head of Highways & Transport to circulate full details of footway proposal to all Panel Members.

Resolved Unanimously That: The Panel fully endorsed the recommendations to Cabinet:

That Cabinet:

- 1. Approves the scheme set out in Appendix A to install a new footway over the bridge at Wraysbury Station be approved for implementation;**
- 2. Approves an increase to the capital programme (2016/17) to £135,000 to deliver this project.**

HIGHWAYS CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2016/17

Ben Smith, Head of Highways & Transport stated the Highways Capital Programme 2016/17 was on its way to Cabinet to agree detailed schemes within the programme. He added he had written to all Ward Councillors requesting comments and he had received four responses. Cllr Walters requested to know the new footway at Wraysbury Train Station had not been included and Cllr Rankin requested a 20mph speed limit in Windsor the other responses were

regarding a scheme to reduce speeds in Frances Road, Windsor, cats eyes on Maidenhead Road and Brook Lane Verges which were all accommodated within the capital programme.

Councillor Beer congratulated the Head of Highways & Transport and his team for the detailed listings within the report. Cllr Hunt requested to know how many insurance claims had been made in the last 12 months with regards to the state of the roads. The Head of Highways & Transport confirmed that the number of claims had been very low. Cllr Beer stated most insurance claims might be from cyclists and that Old Windsor had submitted an outline Neighbourhood Plan.

Resolved Unanimously That: the Panel fully endorsed the recommendations to Cabinet:

That Cabinet:

- 1. Delegate authority to the Director of Operations & Customer Services to implement the programme of work set out in Appendix A;**
- 2. Delegate authority to the Director of Operations & Customer Services in consultation with the Lead Member for Highways & Transport to agree amendments to the approved schemes within approved budgets, and implement reserve or substitute schemes should this become necessary;**
- 3. Authorise a waiver to Contract Rules to permit the use of existing contractors to progress these works until a replacement highways contract is awarded;**
- 4. Approve the indicative programmes for 2016/17 and 2018/19 as set out in Appendix B.**

HOLYPORT COLLEGE - SAFE ROUTE TO SCHOOL (PETITION)

The Panel was addressed by James Blunden, a student from Holyport College. The main points included:

- James was a 14 year old student at Holyport College.
- In 2016 he had addressed the Council on the dangers of walking to school
- Despite improvements, the route was still not fit for purpose
- He thanked the Council for progressing action
- He was aware that it was not just a footpath that was required, but also street lighting and safe crossings
- He appreciated the new route would cause disruption while it was being implemented
- Safety of students was paramount and students wanted to get to school safely.

Ben Smith, Head of Highways & Transport stated the route was subject to a significant petition. The Council was very supportive to help improve the walking route to Holyport College. The Council had looked at different origins and routes to school. There were issues with land and who owned it, street lighting, there were drainage issues and ditches as well as concerns from residents regarding the possible urbanisation of the area.

The Head of Highways & Transport stated the recommendations were for Cabinet to approve construction of a footway along Ascot Road from the school so that students did not have to cross the road and for Cabinet to approve a budget of £140,000. He added that this would make it safer and better than the current situation.

The Head of Highways & Transport confirmed he had received feedback from one of the Ward Councillors who was concerned about a possible urbanising effect. The Council had fitted what it could with the constraints. He had tried to address concerns and the footpath would have a rural surface such as gravel type and not concrete or tarmac.

The Head of Highways & Transport stated that points A – E on the map within the report set out which routes were looked at. The recommendation is not to do all of them but to implement the route with the most value and use. The Vice-Chairman stated it was something that must be encouraged. Due to the rural location of the College, it was a great initiative and

would encourage more people to walk and cycle and it will promote health benefits. The Council was duty bound to provide a safe access to school and he fully endorsed the recommendations.

The Head of Highways & Transport stated he was unable to confirm how many students currently walked to Holyport College. One of the mums set up the petition as there were at least 40 children within the vicinity that could use the footpath. Cllr Hunt stated she was keen to see the number of children walking increase as the Council was looking to spend £140,000 on a safe walking route.

The Chairman stated it was the first time he had seen a school contributing to a scheme like this. The school were contributing £83,000 so the Borough only needed to spend £57,000 and it was worth spending that to ensure the safety of the children. Cllr Beer stated he had a concern over the funding because the planning permission for the school included that the school provide transport for its students because the Maidenhead Development Control Panel raised concerns over access. The School had £12m of public money to make it work so they should have done what it took to make it work in the first place. If Cabinet approves the scheme, it will set a precedent to other free schools and academies. The Chairman stated he felt it was money well spent and there was a petition with over 1,000 signatures. The Head of Highways & Transport stated it was a highways issue and a contribution was provided by the school. Holyport College was happy to vary the conditions of their permission so they could make the contribution rather than waiting for traffic volumes to be reached before implementing congestion reduction measures. The School were happy to have their planning conditions amended so they could contribute to the funding of the footpath. It was a Council decision to make and the S106 money was for junction improvements but could be diverted to this scheme instead. Cllr Beer stated he did not feel it was wise to mess with the original planning permission conditions. The Vice-Chairman stated the Panel could make a recommendation to Cabinet that any contribution from the school should not be from their S106 money but should be new funding.

Resolved Unanimously that: The Panel fully endorsed the recommendations to Cabinet:

That Cabinet:

- 1. The new footway link along Ascot Road (between Holyport Green and Holyport College) forms the basis of consultation on the recommended scheme detail with residents, Members, Bray Parish Council and Holyport College;**
- 2. Subject to the outcome of the consultation, the new footway link be delivered at the earliest opportunity;**
- 3. The approved capital programme 2016/17 be increased by £140,000 to deliver this project (Note: a contribution secured from Holyport College of £83,000 is available to part fund the scheme), but the money to implement the scheme should be new money and not come from the S106 money that was meant for something else.**

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

The meeting, which began at 6.00 pm, finished at 9.00 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....