

INFRASTRUCTURE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY, 12 MARCH 2020

PRESENT: Councillors Gurpreet Bhangra (Chairman), Mandy Brar, Jon Davey, Phil Haseler (Vice-Chairman) and Gurch Singh

Also in attendance: Cllr Davies and Cllr Tisi.

Officers: Russell O'Keefe, Ben Smith and David Cook.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies received.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

MINUTES

Resolved unanimously: that the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd February 2020 be approved as a true and correct record.

REVIEW OF BOROUGH WIDE JUNCTION

The Panel received a verbal update on their work programme item regarding borough wide junctions.

The Head of Commissioning - Infrastructure, Ben Smith, informed members that the item had been requested to be added to the work programme by a previous Panel Member about how junctions were identified for work.

The Panel were informed that part of the Borough Local Plan (BLP) was the Infrastructure Development Plan. Development within the BLP were modelled to identify and improvement to junctions or if new junctions were required as part of any developments. Following the modelling a bid would be placed to the LEP for funding.

Other junction improvements were undertaken via the Council's Capital Programme from priorities such as safety schemes, traffic management or improving air quality. Identified schemes would then be prioritised.

Cllr Davey asked if the process was re-run when a new housing development came through the system and was informed that it would depend on the size of the development and volume of traffic it was expected to produce. Highways were a consultee on planning applications and would identify any issues and the need for Community Infrastructure Levy or S106.

Cllr Haseler asked if the infrastructure plan was continually updated and if the Shopenhanger roundabouts were being progressed or if they were dormant. The Panel were informed that the plan was continually being updated and the roundabouts were in the list but not yet live.

Cllr Davey questioned why £150,000 was available for schemes and was informed that this was just funding from the Council there were other funding streams available and the amount mention could undertake a number of schemes.

Mrs Shearer addressed the Panel as a member of the new independent cycle forum. She informed the Panel that when the RBWM Cycle Forum was disbanded, as part of the Council's constitutional review, they were told by the former councillors that work would be added to this Panel's work programme. She recommended that the Panel review the Cycling Action Plan at an appropriate moment.

The Panel noted the update.

DEDWORTH ROAD/HATCH LANE ROUNDABOUTS TRIAL

The Chairman informed the Panel that Cllr Tisi had requested the item come to the Panel and that the request had been added to our work programme.

The Head of Commissioning – Infrastructure, informed the Panel that in 2018 Ward Councillors requested proposals seeking to improve road safety and traffic flows and to respond to the issues of traffic entering and exiting the 'Tesco' causing blocking of traffic into the Hatch Lane / Parsonage Lane junction.

Desktop analysis was completed, and a 'live' trial scheme introduced seeking to understand the impact of converting the junction to a roundabout operation. Consultation was undertaken with 60% in support to convert the 'trial' roundabout scheme to a permanent solution which was completed in September 2019.

Cllr Tisi asked whether it was made clear to residents that opting for the roundabout system to be made permanent would involve zebra crossings being fitted, why was a zebra crossing not used in the trial. The Panel were informed that during the trial temporary traffic lights were used for the pedestrian crossing as a temporary zebra crossing would not have met safety standards.

Cllr Tisi asked if it was always the intention to have a zebra crossing and why it was not mentioned in the consultation. Residents assumed that the traffic lights would be maintained. The Panel were informed that it was an open consultation and they did not wish to predetermine the outcome, it was accepted that it should have been made clear that traffic lights would not be retained.

Cllr Davies mentioned that the junction was very busy with local shops, four schools and bus stops all in the area, she was also concerned that there had been no mention of having a zebra crossing. Mobil traffic lights were not mentioned in the technical briefing.

Cllr Tisi asked if the new system had improved the situation with traffic coming out of Tesco's causing congestion. The Panel were informed that feedback suggested that there had been improvement and prior to work being undertaken a road safety audit would have been completed.

Cllr Davies asked who made the decision to go for a trial roundabout rather than the original plan to look at upgrading the existing traffic light system. The Panel were informed that it was the then Lead Member who decided to go ahead with the trial using officer delegated powers, the works done outside Windsor Boys School had been used as a live example.

Cllr Davies also raised concerns about safety in the area as drivers used it as a through area with speeds increasing whilst local drivers, walkers and cyclists safety was being compromised. Different users had different priorities.

Cllr Tisi mentioned that there had been a loss of parking outside the shops and that through traffic did not realise that there was a raised pedestrian crossing.

Susy Shearer mentioned that cyclists were being driven away from junctions due to speeding traffic travelling east to west.

Ben Smith said he would look at the safety audit to see if anything can be done regarding the concerns raised.

Cllr Brar asked why the consultation period had been extended and was informed that it was due to the elections.

The Panel noted the report.

(Cllr Tisi, Cllr Davies and Susy Shearer left the meeting)

ROUGH SLEEPER PATHWAY

The Chairman informed that the report provided an update on the Rough Sleeper Pathway.

The Corporate Director Place informed the Panel that The Royal Borough had previously opted to undertake an evidence based estimate of rough sleepers, however this year to ensure all rough sleepers were captured in the annual figure, it had been decided to undertake an evidence based estimate informed by a spotlight count. The evidence-based estimate ensured the gathering of intelligence from officers and partner organisations, this was then added to the number of rough sleepers found bedded down on a given night.

Whilst the results identified an increase in numbers of 40 rough sleepers recorded 32 of them had been supported into accommodation through the newly implemented rough sleeper pathway. The Rough Sleeper Pathway included a three stage accommodation programme to get users back into long term sustainable accommodation.

Currently there were 17 users in stage one, 12 in stage two and 5 ready for stage three, as of 10 days prior to this meeting.

Cllr Davey mentioned that last year More Than a Shelter ran on only £20,000 with the support of volunteers, they had been promised an additional £20,000 but this had not materialised. He felt more money should go to smaller organisations. The Panel were informed that discussions had been held and were continuing to be held will organisations of all sizes to see if they wished to be part of the integrated approach. More Than a Shelter will be invited to a workshop of providers, a Members workshop was also planned.

Cllr Haseler said it was great that the new approach had helped so many people.

Cllr Singh asked if the strategy was successful and there fewer people homeless would there be a change in focus. The Panel were informed that ever case was different and needed bespoke solutions.

The Panel agreed that a future update on progress should be added to their work programme.

The update was noted.

ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT - DRAFT

The Chairman informed that the Panel are asked to produce an Annual Report that would be considered by Council in June 2020. This is an opportunity for the Panel to say what they felt had gone well and to proposed improvements. We don't just want to list past agenda items so member impute was appreciated. Appendix A had been attached to show analysis of the recent member survey on scrutiny to help in their deliberations. He said he would be circulating an initial draft but Panel Members input would be appreciated.

The Panel noted the item.

WORK PROGRAMME AND ANY PUBLIC TOPICS

The Chairman informed the Panel that this was an opportunity to identify any areas they wish to add to the work programme.

The Chairman also informed that the task & finish group had held their first two meetings and the final meeting would be scheduled for early April 2020 to review the draft updated Homeliness Strategy prior to it going to Cabinet for approval. Prior to this meeting if members wish to visit any examples of good practice of other local authorities to ask Tracey Hendren.

Cllr Haseler mentioned that it was important that the Panel added items for a purpose and not just for information.

Cllr Davey asked for the A308 report to be considered at the appropriate time.

The Panel noted the work programme.

The meeting, which began at 6.30 pm, finished at 7.55 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....