

HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
PANEL

THURSDAY, 17 MAY 2018

PRESENT: Councillors Hari Sharma (Chairman), Eileen Quick (Vice-Chairman), Wisdom Da Costa, Maureen Hunt, Paul Lion, Julian Sharpe and Shamsul Shelim

Also in attendance: Councillor Malcolm Beer, Phillip Bicknell, Jesse Grey, Councillor Derek Wilson and Councillor Edward Wilson

Officers: Wendy Binmore, Darren Gotch, Ben Smith, Tony Carr and Gordon Oliver.

APOLOGIES

None.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Hunt – Declared a personal interest in the Highways and Transport Works Programme item as Cllr Hunt was a Ward Councillor where works were to be carried out.

Cllr Grey – Declared a personal interest in the Petition for Crossing and Safety Measures at Eton End School as he was Ward Councillor.

Cllr Sharma – Declared a personal interest in the presentation from First Group as he was an employee of First Group; however, there was no decision required on the item.

MINUTES

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2018 be approved.

WORK PROGRAMME

The Panel agreed to have the item moved to later in the meeting following the presentation from First Group and the item on the Petition for crossing and safety measures at Eton End School.

Councillor Beer wanted the congestion along Straight Road in Old Windsor to be investigated to find out why it had gotten so heavy. The Head of Highways and Transport confirmed he was happy for that to be added to the work programme.

Members discussed potential items for the Work Programme. The following items were suggested for the Work Programme with reports requested to be brought back to Panel in the future:

Buses: Public engagement (Task & Finish group with bus cos, RBWM & public) to create routes, frequencies and services relevant to residents needs including:

- Service 2 – Dedworth, Windsor, Slough
- Service 10/11 – Slough, Datchet, Sunnymedes, Wraysbury & Heathrow

- Service – 15 Slough and Eton Wick
- Service 702

Street lighting: implementation review; location and coverage of lights to enhance CCTV and improve security of residents

Road maintenance: areas failing or soon expected to fail reasonable standards, needing prioritised attention

Council waste: recycling own waste (e.g. coffee cups); policy for purchasing, to set highest environmental legacy

Councillor Quick requested an item be added to the work programme on introducing a cycling safety campaign.

Members noted the work programme and agreed for the above items to be added for future meetings.

PETITION FOR CROSSING AND SAFETY MEASURES AT ETON END SCHOOL, ETON ROAD, DATCHET

Mrs Gill, the Lead Petitioner addressed the Panel and Members noted the following key points:

- The Lead Petitioner felt compelled to start the petition following the death of a child due to a road traffic accident. The child's father witnessed the accident and the family was changed forever.
- Mrs Gill had submitted a 17 point plan to combat speeding outside Eton End School and her report showed that speed outside the school was an issue.
- The nearby church had allowed parents to park in their car park but, some parents were choosing not to use that initiative and were still parking on the pavements outside the school gates which reduced visibility for both pupils and motorists.
- The pathway between the church and the school was very narrow and cars did not stop to let pedestrians cross. The petition called for a zebra crossing to be installed.
- The school and its parents had campaigned for years for a school crossing patrol officer to be hired as the children deserved safety.
- Drivers ignored the 20mph speed limit signs and a maximum speed of 91.5mph had been recorded outside the school.
- The petition requested a crossing and there was strong demand for it. It was hoped that drivers would see the crossing and use common sense to slow down.
- Additional speed limit signs should be installed.
- Bollards installed to stop drivers parking on the pavements would address the issue of parking outside the school gates but, would not address the issues of speeding.
- Raised speed humps would solve problems of speeding motorists.

The Chairman said he had a meeting with Mrs Gill and the school on 10 May 2018 as he wanted the Lead Petitioner and the school to know the Borough took road safety very seriously. He added it was not possible to have both a zebra crossing and a school crossing patrol officer outside the school as it would be too confusing so, the school and Lead Petitioner needed to choose which they would prefer. Tony Carr, Traffic and Road Safety Manager stated the main issue was when the previous school crossing patrol officer retired. They had been hired by the Borough but paid for by the

school. The best option was to employ a patroller and the Borough would train and provide the equipment. The Borough would also ensure the patroller was covered by insurance. Two patrollers would need to be hired to cover sickness and holidays. The Traffic and Road Safety Manager added zebra crossings had poor safety records outside of school hours. The Department for Transport advised a patrol officer should be in place outside of schools and there were ongoing discussions with the school on that.

Councillor Quick stated she was a teacher for 40 years so she was experienced with having children arrive and leave school. She felt it did not matter where the children came from or what type of school they attended, they were all children and needed to be kept safe. Having a patrol officer was far more effective than painting stripes on a road. Drivers sometimes ignored zebra crossings so the Panel should encourage the school to work with the Borough to employ a patrol officer.

The Chairman stated he received a report from Mrs Gill and most of the suggestions within the report had already been implemented such as the bollards being installed on the pavement outside the school gates. Overgrown bushes were to be trimmed to increase the width of the footpath and the timing of the 20mph flashing light zones were to be looked at to try and increase the length of time they flashed for. He added the 20mph limit sign was very close to the school and needed to be bigger and he had spoken to the head teacher about employing a patrol officer as the budget for hiring a patroller used to come from the school budget but, the Council could provide equipment and training.

Councillor Grey stated as Ward Councillor, he cared about what happened to the children at the school. He knew the area well as he attended church nearby. He would like to see more done and accepted a crossing or zebra crossing were not recommended but, he wished to suggest implementing a raised table painted in a different colour outside the school. The speeding hazards were coming from the direction of the Thames Valley Athletics Club (TVAC) so the 30mph speed limit should be extended to nearer the TVAC so that vehicles had to slow down for longer before reaching the 20mph zones. Councillor Grey recommended that the Panel considered to do more with the speed limits and additional enhancements such as the suggested raised table in a different colour which would add more confidence to the school.

Susy Shearer, a Borough resident, agreed and supported Councillor Grey's comments. She stated she had been a member of the Cycle Forum since 1999 and her children had attended Eton End School and cycled to and from school. She had also raised issues around this for years. Susy Shearer said moving the 20mph so it was more visible would be helpful and moving the 30mph speed limit sign to nearer the TVAC would reduce problems outside the school.

Councillor Sharpe stated the safety of children was very important. He queried what the school had done to increase the safety of its children and asked if there was an alternative exit that could be used that was safer for the children during peak times. The head teacher of the Eton End School stated she had met with Mrs Gill to discuss her report. She had taught at the school for 15 years and in 2000 there had been another petition to the Borough stating the same facts as the current petition. The school had paid for a crossing patrol but, she retired so, she entered into discussions to find a replacement. The school had received some voluntary help with crossing patrols but, it was only temporary. The head teacher stated she had entered into communications with the Council and asked for a lady to patrol but, she was told the

school would have to employ someone and had received an email stating the Council would not insure a patrol officer. The school was unable to use current members of staff as that took them away from their other responsibilities, the police also told the head teacher that staff were not insured to be out on the road. She added the caretaker had tried to intervene with bad drivers but had been met with abuse. The head teacher said traffic had increased and the school had been told by officers the Borough could provide training and equipment but, not insurance. The school was seeking to move forward and were being very supportive and had done everything it could.

Ben Smith, Head of Highways and Transport responded that safety measures were being implemented and more could be done. Employing a school patrol officer was the right way forward and conversations had moved on to how that could be done. He was happy to work with the school to employ and train a patrol officer; the Borough was doing all that it could to address all of the issues.

James Clark, a local parent, stated he was very impressed with the work done recently outside the schools within the Borough and he was very impressed with the raised table crossing outside a school in Sunningdale. The proposal that Councillor Grey put forward was the sort of scenario that would work and would go a long way to help. He was not sure a patrol officer was the solution due to the abuse they received. Mr Clark thanked Mrs Gill and the head teacher of Eton End School for their work and also thanked Councillor Grey for the suggestion of the raised table outside the school.

Councillor Bicknell stated he had listened intently to the discussion. He used to be the Lead Member for Children's Services and there were many schools in the Borough and they all suffered with the same issues of safety. He had a daughter of seven years of age that went to school in Windsor and her school placed A-frames outside the school so that it encouraged parents to park away from the school and walk the rest of the way to the school gates. He added unfortunately, there was always an idiot that took no notice and they needed to be caught and put behind bars. Councillor Bicknell said some schools had control over the flashing lights that highlighted the 20mph zones but he felt having a patrol officer was the best way forward. If a patrol officer received abuse, there were smart phones that could record it and the abuse could be reported. Councillor Bicknell added there was no issue with insurance for patrol officers and a raised section outside the school would help.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Gill for her work on the petition and stated he was grateful to Mrs Gill for bringing the matter to Panel. Mrs Gill responded if there was a raised section outside the school, it would stop motorists speeding, that would be a good compromise if a zebra crossing could not be implemented. The Chairman asked how effective the school travel plan was. The head teacher stated families came from a wide catchment area so a large number of them arrived by car. The school did encourage families to walk. The Chairman stated he thought it was a good idea to install a raised table and have CCTV aimed at the raised section to monitor those that were speeding.

Councillor Da Costa stated the current costs of current proposals were £5,000. He wanted to know how much extra the new proposals would cost. Councillor Grey responded that the Council had embarked on a number of safety measures and suggested the school could contribute to the raised table element. The head teacher commented she would need to go back to the Board of Governors at the school to see if the school was in a position to contribute. Councillor Bicknell stated the Council

would find the extra money as safety was paramount. The head teacher said the school was already paying to use the nearby church car park. She added that if the raised table was part of the recommendations to Cabinet, the school would be very happy with that.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: The Panel noted the petition and the responding report and endorsed the:

- 1. Council's approach to comply with the Department for Transport's safety guidelines.**
- 2. School's commitment to securing a school crossing patrol.**
- 3. And also made recommendations to install a raised table outside the school and extend the 30mph zone closer to the Thames Valley Athletics Club.**

NEW BUS ROUTE SERVICE PRESENTATION

The Chairman explained to Members that First Group had eight depots and over 1,000 staff and that Mr Reddy had worked in the industry for many years and had won awards for his work. The work Mr Reddy had carried out had shifted the use from cars to buses by 20% and he had even driven a bus from time to time when the need arose. The Chairman stated the transport industry had gone through some radical changes in recent years; and went on to provide Members with a brief history of public bus services.

Mr Reddy of First Group gave a presentation to Panel on the bus services provided to the Royal Borough. Members noted the following key points of the presentation:

- First Group were based in Slough and ran 59 buses.
- First Group employed 150 local people.
- Customers made 12,850 journeys in a typical day.
- First Group were UK based but also operated in the US, Canada, Panama and Ireland.
- First Group ran school bus contracts in America
- Bus services were deregulated outside London in 1985
- First Bus had 1.6m passenger journeys daily
- The bus service had to give 70 days' notice to make any changes to routes
- The company did not receive subsidies for any routes
- They received rebates on tax paid for fuel but, that rebate was not as large as that received by rail or aviation sectors
- First Group had 90% punctuality since April 2018 due to contending with road works in Windsor and disruption in Staines.
- Challenges included traffic levels and unpredictability, Slough bus station costs and issues with access, costs of fuel, insurance and traffic air quality pressure on buses.
- The positives for buses are the expansion at Heathrow, Crossrail and joint working with rail partners including SWR.
- Changes to networks – networks had not changed in decades, there were complex cross-Slough routes, poor reliability due to knock on effects. First Group have resolved all those issues that with a simpler network.
- First Group withdrew a number of routes due to significant losses. The Green line went to Reading buses.
- First Bus consulted with officers from the Royal Borough, Slough Borough Council and Heathrow and delayed the withdrawal of Route 2.

- First Bus were launching a Fast 9 Service which started on 2 June 2018. It would fill in the Slough to Terminal 5 gap in Route 8 and would be a direct route via the A4. The service would go to Windsor and Heathrow and it would start at 4.29am to help airport workers get to work on time.
- First Group had launched new ticket machines to allow contactless payments
- There was a system that provided real-time information to the Borough for timetable screens
- The new ticket machines were able to read QR codes.
- First Bus were improving ticketing by introducing M-Tickets which were 5% cheaper.
- Simpler fares were introduced in November 2017
- The company had introduced a direct debit scheme which made journeys 10% cheaper
- Over £7m had been invested in the fleet with the average fleet age well below government targets
- A journey planning app had been produced
- New vehicle branding
- Up to date driver training
- New radio system for the driver to talk to the control room
- Improved roadside publicity
- First Bus were trialling innovative pilot schemes such as First Mile (short hop service connections), and also a 30 month trial of passenger carrying autonomous vehicles
- All buses met the TfL Low Emissions Zones standards
- 40% of buses were hybrid vehicles
- The fleet took 1,700 school movements a day off the road using the school bus unit in Surrey.
- First Bus were providing drivers with driving performance information to improve driving standards which meant routes were producing less emissions.
- First Bus believed bus services were best delivered in partnership with Local Authorities
- Congestion was the key challenge which needed to be tackled
- First Bus wished to develop further opportunities in the area.

The Chairman stated he had attended a meeting in London and found a range of new technology which was challenging bus companies such as Uber. Customers expected an up to date service ability and to be able to compare prices, have WiFi and phone charging. He added UCL had invented software to obtain real-time information with new technology monitoring data to improve services and customer experience. Councillor Bicknell said he would be interested to know if bus usage was in decline. Mr Reddy stated routes had not changed and there had been no decrease in the area but, that varied by region. The figures on journeys were stronger in London but not so strong in the North of the country. He added footfall was decreasing on high streets which was making an impact. The Christmas shopping rush did not happen like it used to with Click and Collect services making up for the decrease in footfall.

Councillor Bicknell stated the M-Ticketing technology was interesting and wanted to know if there was a way to find out who was travelling and how. He stated that the bus company did not need discounted tickets as they knew where passengers were going on individual data. Therefore, if they were a frequent traveller, the bus company would know. Bus companies could offer a scheme such as pay for nine journeys and get the 10th free. Mr Reddy responded if someone paid by cash, the company would not know where they were heading. If the passenger used contactless, the company would

know where the passenger got onto the bus, but they would not know when they got off. Councillor Bicknell suggested a 'tap off' point at bus stops that would tell the company where passengers alighted. Mr Reddy stated that could only be done if infrastructure was upgraded. He added that most passengers made the same journeys; they were not able to identify individual users but, could track and individual ticket.

The Chairman stated bus journeys had not changed for decades but, mobility and technology were changing rapidly such as autonomous vehicles. He felt that by removing the human element and using driverless vehicles, it would reduce accidents and that was the way forward. Mr Reddy explained to the Panel he had a vision where he did not need to buy a ticket as the bus stop would recognise his smart phone. The bus would connect to his smart phone and would welcome him. He felt that was the right direction to go. He had held focus groups and following that, there were improvements to the service and since then, they had increased passengers by 65%.

The Chairman thanked Mr Reddy and his team for attending the Panel and for taking the time to answer questions.

HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT WORKS PROGRAMME 2018/19

The Head of Transport and Highways introduced the report and stated the budget for 2018/19 had been approved by Full Council on 21 February 2018 which included significant investment of £7.47m to maintain and improve the Borough's highway network. Within the £7.47m was an allocation of £2.7m for the annual highways work programme which included roads and footways and other highway assets such as bridges. A further investment of £240,000 had been made available to repair potholes and damage caused by the winter weather.

The report sought approval for a large number of schemes which made up the highway works programmes, the details of which were listed in appendices A and B. the reserve list enabled acceleration of specific schemes into 2018/19. The annual highways work programme was derived from the annual machine driven assessment of the structural condition and skid resistance of the primary highways network. Standard practice was for an assessment to be completed in one direction in one year and the opposite direction the next year. The Borough committed to both directions being assessed each year which had been delivered.

Councillor Bicknell stated all roads in the current report had been scored to see how priority they were. He added the street lighting changeover scheme was completed with all street lights converted to LED. Each individual light could be dimmed or made brighter for a central control point. Councillor Da Costa requested a report be brought to Panel regarding how successful the lighting scheme had been and also on the position of lighting being effective in the fight against crime. Councillor Bicknell stated when the Borough replaced a light column, workmen used a machine which measured if the column was likely to fail. If it was likely to fail, the column was replaced. The Council then notified the street where the column was to be replaced to consult as to where the new column should be placed. It was a very flexible system. Councillor Bicknell went on to explain to the Panel that in terms of crime, the Council were driven by the police on lighting and where rapes had occurred, the police had confirmed that the CCTV had been perfect and clear.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: The Panel endorsed the recommendations that Cabinet:

- i. Endorses the works programme set out in Appendix A.**
- ii. Delegate authority to the Managing Director, in consultation with the Deputy Leader of the Council, the Lead Member for Highways, Transport and Windsor, to agree minor amendments to the approved schemes (within approved budgets) and implement reserve or substitute schemes should this become necessary.**
- iii. Endorses the indicative programmes for 2019-20 and 2020-21 set out in Appendix B.**

PUBLIC BIKE SHARE

The Panel agreed to discuss the Public Bike Share Scheme and the Cycling Action Plan together as one item.

The Principal Transport Planner stated that Bike Share Schemes allowed members of the public to hire bikes for short term or longer journeys similar to the Santander Bike Scheme in London. Various schemes had been considered and two providers had been invited to give a presentation on docked and dockless bike share schemes. Investigations also considered guidance from Bike Plus and the experiences of other schemes across the UK.

The report recommended that the Borough defer introduction of a bike share scheme until cycle routes to Maidenhead and Windsor town centres had been improved and that further work be carried out to see how cross-boundary trips could be accommodated and integrated with local Borough schemes. If a scheme was introduced, it would need to be designed with sensitivity due to heritage, security and space limit issues.

With regards to the Cycling Action Plan, the Principal Transport Planner stated that a draft of the plan had been presented to Panel in 2017. The Panel requested that a Task and Finish Group be set up to review the document. The Task and Finish Group had looked at the plan in great detail, and the final document incorporated track changes showing the changes made due to the consultation and Task and Finish Group process, shown as the appendix to the report.

The changes included an updated evidence base, a reference to the Borough Local Plan, policies on Bike Share Schemes, the Close Pass Initiative and highlighted the recommendation from the All-Party Parliamentary Cycling Group to increase spend on cycling to £10 per head. A number of new schemes had been incorporated and all of the proposed schemes had been objectively assessed and prioritised. A list of the high priority schemes has been included at the back of the document, with a total value of £5 million. The Cycle Forum was keen to have the plan adopted and the Principal Transport Planner commended the Task and Finish Group on their enthusiasm and expertise when producing the Plan.

The Chairman expressed his sincerest thanks to the Task and Finish Group for all their hard work, particularly attending meetings earlier in the year due to the terrible weather. He added that the vision set out in the document was to establish a cycling culture. It was to make cycling be seen as a safe, attractive and normal way of transport. Cycling should be an integral activity when designing new builds. The Chairman thanked Councillor Derek Wilson for chairing the Task and Finish Group.

Councillor Derek Wilson thanked the Cycle Forum and officers for their dedication and hard work in bringing the Cycling Action plan together and working hard on the amendments. He stated he would like the Panel to endorse the contents and push it to Cabinet to be officially adopted. He added that if the Borough wanted to encourage people to cycle, then all departments within the Council needed to look at the Cycling Action Plan and use it when making plans or implementing schemes.

Councillor Derek Wilson said of the Bike Share Scheme, the Cycle Forum had looked at suppliers of both dockless and docked bike systems and there was the possibility of getting sponsorship for the scheme. However, before a Bike Share Scheme could be implemented, the Council needed to look at the missing links such as going to and from Maidenhead town centre as the routes could be quite hazardous.

Susy Shearer thanked the Borough for the opportunity to take part in the Task and Finish Group. As a member of the Task and Finish Group, she could say that everyone that contributed had intimate knowledge of the areas they commented on. She added there really needed to be investment to encourage cycling and to make it a safer activity. Councillor Bicknell stated one issue was the cyclists that race. They used the road and refused to use any other routes or paths. It was important to make it clear that there were cycle routes and cycle paths that needed to be used. Councillor Bicknell's son used shared pathways and sometimes used the pavements as it was safer but, some cyclists refused to use cycle paths. The Principal Transport Planner responded if people were confident cyclists, they could use the roads if they wanted to. If the Council provided good facilities, people would want to use them so it was about standards of provision.

Councillor Ed Wilson stated the policy of maintaining bike racks in academy schools was not addressed. These are supposed to be financially independent of the council. He would like to have seen something in the Plan about that as residents might ask why the Council was spending money in academy schools installing and maintaining the bike racks. Councillor Sharpe said the Council should support cycling but it should be looking at how to join communities together by cycling and join routes away from roads such as using fields and keeping cyclists away from roads. He added there needed to be a better join between Ascot and Windsor as there was no off road facility through Windsor Great Park. Councillor Hunt stated the Panel were looking to try and get people to cycle for work and leisure but they were two different activities. A list of routes included the A4 but, very few people would use that as it was so dangerous. The list needed to be looked at again. Susy Shearer thanked Members for their comments and stated a great deal of time had been spent trying to locate as many different off road routes as possible. Where possible, the Council should try and improve road conditions to improve the road for all users. Cllr Ed Wilson pointed out that the Cycling Action Plan made provision for cycle racks at shopping parades along Dedworth Road, but that some of these already had cycle racks. The Principal Transport Planner stated he was happy to check which sites had bike racks and to amend the plan accordingly. He said the Ascot to Windsor route was a real challenge. Cyclists could use the paths in Crown Estate land after dark now, which was an improvement.

Councillor Da Costa stated he liked the idea of the docked Public Bike Share Scheme and that there was a high level of interest in the scheme. He requested a similar Task and Finish Group for the Bike Share Scheme when the idea was ready to move forward with. Councillor Quick said she agreed with everyone regarding the huge

amount of work that had gone into the Cycling Action Plan. She stated it needed a joined up approach. Local schools were running Bikeability schemes and she wanted to encourage children and schools to increase cycling. Councillor Quick suggested helping children stay safe on their bikes by providing equipment such as lights and hi-vis clothing and ensuring bikes were in good, safe working order. Tony Carr, Traffic and Road Safety Manager responded he could look into running a road safety campaign and that it was a legal requirement to ensure bikes were safe. He added that roadside advertising could be used to warn of the dangers of close pass manoeuvres by drivers in order to make cycling safer. The Principal Transport Planner stated that some schools had adopted hi-vis backpacks as part of their school uniforms. The Council also offered Bikeability courses at levels one to three in schools depending on the age and ability of the pupils.

Councillor Ed Wilson stated the Principal Transport Planner might want to talk to Children's Services regarding reviewing bike shelters when schools were expanding. This could be one area where bike shelters could be considered for academies. The Principal Transport Planner stated he nearly all schools in the Borough had already benefited from new / upgraded cycle parking and explained that once installed, it was up to the school to maintain the bike shelters.

1 DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Highways, Transport and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel noted the report.

CYCLING ACTION PLAN

As agreed by the Panel, this item was discussed along with the Public Bike Share Scheme report.

1 DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

RECOMMENDATION: That Highways, Transport and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel notes the report and:

- i) Reviews and comments on the Cycling Action Plan.**
- ii) Requested the Cycling Action Plan be added to the Cabinet Forward Plan.**

The meeting, which began at 6.30 pm, finished at 9.00 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....