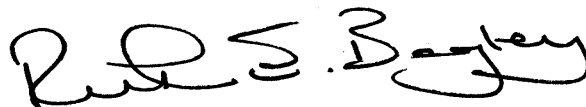


Date of issue: Friday 22 February 2013

MEETING:	NEIGHBOURHOODS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL (Councillors Minhas (Chair), Bains, Bal, Carter, Dar, O'Connor, Plenty, Sohal and Wright) <u>Non-Voting Co-Opted Members</u> Terry Conroy (Slough Federation of Tenants and Residents) and Vivianne Royal (Customer Senate)
DATE AND TIME:	WEDNESDAY, 6TH MARCH, 2013 AT 6.30 PM
VENUE:	MEETING ROOM 3, CHALVEY COMMUNITY CENTRE, THE GREEN, CHALVEY, SLOUGH, SL1 2SP
SCRUTINY OFFICER: (for all enquiries)	SARAH FORSYTH 01753 875657

NOTICE OF MEETING

You are requested to attend the above Meeting at the time and date indicated to deal with the business set out in the following agenda.



RUTH BAGLEY
Chief Executive

AGENDA

PART I

AGENDA
ITEM

REPORT TITLE

PAGE

WARD

Apologies for absence.

CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

1. Declarations of Interest

All Members who believe they have a Disclosable Pecuniary or other Pecuniary or non pecuniary Interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting must declare that interest and, having regard to the circumstances described in Section 3 paragraphs 3.25 – 3.27 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter is discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 3.28 of the Code.

The Chair will ask Members to confirm that they do not have a declarable interest.

All Members making a declaration will be required to complete a Declaration of Interests at Meetings form detailing the nature of their interest.

2. Minutes of the last meeting held on 10 January 2013

1 - 4

SCRUTINY ISSUES

3. Member Questions

(An opportunity for panel members to ask questions of the relevant Director / Assistant Director, relating to pertinent, topical issues affecting their Directorate – maximum of 10 minutes allocated.)

4. Review of Traffic Congestion in Slough

5 - 14

5. Date of the Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting of the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel is Wednesday 19 June 2013.

Press and Public

You are welcome to attend this meeting which is open to the press and public, as an observer. You will however be asked to leave before the Committee considers any items in the Part II agenda. Special facilities may be made available for disabled or non-English speaking persons. Please contact the Democratic Services Officer shown above for further details.

This page is intentionally left blank

Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel – Meeting held on Thursday, 10th January, 2013.

Present: Councillors Minhas (Chair), Bains, Bal, Carter, Dar, Plenty, Wright (Vice-Chair), Conroy and Royal

Non-Voting Co-optees: Terry Conroy (Slough Federation of Tenants and Residents) and Vivianne Royal (Customer Senate)

Also present under Rule 30: Councillors Sohail Munawar and James Swindlehurst

Apologies for Absence: Councillor O'Connor and Sohal

PART 1**79. Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Bal stated that his daughter was an employee of the Council.

80. Minutes of the last meeting held on 15 November 2012

The minutes of the last meeting held on the 15 November 2012 were approved as a correct record.

81. Member Questions

Councillor Wright submitted three questions, with responses circulated at the meeting:

Question – Why does the ‘green light’ at 30mph not work anymore?

Response – The signal co-ordination when it was first implemented in 2010 was to look solely at peak periods i.e. a.m. eastbound and p.m. westbound. Outside of these times, specifically the late evening period, the signals have reverted to an all red phase and are then activated by vehicle detection. It is possible that at some of these junctions there has been a detector fault resulting in longer than expected delays. However, in short-term we will look at improving the staging so that regardless of a fault the signal timing will be quicker.

Question – What improvement plan has been set up for Walpole Road?

Response – The Council does not currently have the funds to make the changes at this location nor is there the need to alter the junction for improving traffic flow. Therefore at this stage we do not anticipate that this project will move forward in the near future.

Question – What impact has the implementation of temporary traffic lights on Tuns Lane made?

Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel - 10.01.13

Response – The part-time signals on Cippenham Lane at the junction of the Copthorne Roundabout have proven to be successful in terms of reducing queues on the A4 from the town centre. Surveys prior to the implementation indicated that the journey time from the town centre was around 20 minutes in the peak period and since implementing the part-time signals this journey time has been reduced by 6-7 minutes. The Council is now looking at further changes to reduce this time further.

Resolved – that the meeting of the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel scheduled for March 2013 will be held to discuss the issue traffic congestion along the major routes in Slough, using the following terms of reference circulated at the meeting.

82. The Work of the Safer Slough Partnership

Louise Asby, Community Safety Manager introduced the report through a presentation, setting out the role of the Safer Slough Partnership (SSP), it's aims and priorities, the work it had done to reduce crime across Slough, and the challenges it faces going forward. Detective Inspector Andy Shearwood, Slough Local Police Area representative was also in attendance.

The Panel questioned the reactive nature of the SSP target around maintaining the level of all crime at 16,759 and whether setting this target at the average level of crime between 2007 and 2012 would allow for the level of crime in 2013 to rise and the target still be met. Officers stressed the importance of setting realistic targets, but agreed that the wording of the target could be misleading and would be reviewed; but also confirmed that the level of crime was reducing year on year and this was the continued aim for the SSP.

The Panel discussed how we were performing nationally and against our statistical neighbours. Officers confirmed that in terms of the Thames Valley, the work in Slough was achieving above the force average for All Crime and Stealing but below average for Violent Crime (with injury) and Sexual Offences. When comparing performance against the Most Similar Group (MSG), the reduction in All Crime, Stealing, Violent Crime and Vehicle Crime and Burglary exceeds the MSG average.

The Panel considered whether the Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2010, which ranked approximately 40 of Slough's 78 Lower Super Output Areas as ranking with the top 10% for crime deprivation could provide any evidence of performance; but noted that this data, published in 2010, was from 2008 and therefore more recent data may provide a more accurate current picture through hotspot mapping and tasking.

Members raised the issue of Asian gold theft, and were informed that the level of this particular type of crime in Slough was similar to levels in other towns such as Ipswich, Reading or Trafford. Intelligence had provided assistance in combating this issue through allowing for the targeting of resources, an method used successfully by the SSP across all areas of crime in Slough.

Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel - 10.01.13

The Panel also discussed the issue of under-reporting of domestic abuse, and the programmes being put in place to drive reporting levels up.

The Panel questioned why the Thames Valley had half the officer levels of the London Metropolitan Police Force, and was informed that resource allocations were made based on crime levels and population, and lobbying was taking place with the Home Office looking at the similarities between Slough and the London Boroughs. The more limited resources placed more emphasis on focusing resources for maximum impact, something that the SSP and Police had been successful at. The issue was not purely about staffing numbers, but smart use of resources, and this approach meant that the levels of crime in Slough were going in the right direction.

Resolved – to note the report.

83. Reducing Anti-Social Behaviour in Slough

Louise Asby, Community Safety Manager, introduced the report setting out the issue of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in Slough and the Safer Slough Partnership's actions to combat it.

The Panel noted that historical work to encourage reporting had led to a rise in the levels of reported ASB, but that this initial rise should settle down. Members were concerned, that while reporting numbers were increasing, there was still a lack of awareness specifically around the ASB Hotline, and that more needed to be done to reach those who most needed help.

Resolved – to recommend to the Cabinet that it direct officers to initiate another campaign to advertise the Anti-Social Behaviour Hotline and a budget to be identified for this purpose.

84. Member Call-In: Bus Station Communications

John Rice, Assistant Director for Regeneration and Estates, accompanied by Joe Carter, Head of Transport, Kate Pratt, Communications Manager and Councillor James Swindlehurst, Commissioner for Neighbourhoods and Renewal, introduced the report setting out the response to Councillor Plenty's call-in about the adequacy of communications relating to the bus station project.

The overriding theme of the call-in looked at why there had been a level of surprise at the outside nature of the new bus station facility, and whether more could have been done through consultation, use of the Citizen newspaper or communication with Members throughout the process.

The Panel was informed that a public exhibition had taken place in the Queensmere Centre, which had included a model of the proposed bus station, with pictures included in the Citizen newspaper, on the hoardings surrounding the site and on the outside of the old bus station. It was recognised that advertising inside the old bus station was not made use of as well as a lack of

Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel - 10.01.13

follow up articles in the Citizen specifically about the bus station after it's opening, and that including the bus station within the wider consultations and exhibitions for the whole Heart of Slough project meant that the individual elements did not receive focused attention.

These lessons had been learnt and changes had been made to how messages about The Curve were being handled, in particular greater focused engagement with users. However, users must also be willing to engage with consultations.

The Panel discussed the issue of keeping elected members informed of progress during major regeneration projects, and stressed the need to take a proactive approach to this so that correct information is given out to constituents.

Resolved – that the lessons of the communications relating to the bus station project have and were being learnt and improved for current and future regeneration projects.

85. Prostitution - Update and Future Actions

Resolved – to note the report.

86. Police and Crime Commissioner

Resolved – to note the report.

87. Forward Work Programme

Resolved – to note the report.

88. Date of Next Meeting

Resolved – that the date of the next meeting be confirmed as the 6 March 2013.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.50 pm)

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Neighbourhoods & Community Services **DATE:** 6 March 2013
Scrutiny Panel

CONTACT OFFICERS: Gillian Ralphs – Assistant Director for Enforcement and
Regulatory Services
(For all enquiries) (01753) 875081

WARD(S): All

PORTFOLIO: Councillor Sohail Munawar (Commissioner for Social and
Economic Inclusion)

PART I
CONSIDERATION & COMMENT

TRAFFIC CONGESTION ON THE STRATEGIC ROUTE NETWORK IN SLOUGH

1 **Purpose of Report**

1.1 To present information on the current and future situation regarding levels of traffic using Slough's strategic route network and to discuss possible areas for investigation to deal with the issues identified.

2 **Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action**

2.1 That the Panel consider the issue of traffic congestion on the strategic route network in Slough, what is currently being done to combat these issues and what the next steps should be.

2.2 That the Panel recommend to Cabinet:

- a) the formation of a Working Group to investigate possible solutions and report back on its findings;
- b) that this Group include the relevant Cabinet Member and a Representative from the Scrutiny Function; and
- c) that the Group's Terms of Reference are published, for information, in the next agenda of the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel.

3 **Sustainable Community Strategy Priorities**

3.1 Work to improve traffic congestion in Slough contributes to the delivery of the following of Slough's Sustainable Community Strategy's priorities:

- Economy and Skills – providing access to jobs through improvement on the network, as well as attracting businesses to the Borough through journey time reliability
- Safer Communities – ensuring residents have safer crossing facilities at junctions and locations where there is a demand

- Health and Wellbeing – encouraging sustainable transport modes includes walking and cycling, which contribute to the improvement of health in the Borough
- Regeneration and Environment – reducing congestion, pollution and CO2 emissions, thereby resulting in better air quality for residents and the attainment of local carbon reduction targets

Cross Cutting themes:

Civic responsibility – success at reducing traffic congestion in Slough will require engagement by those using the strategic route network in order to bring about the modal shift in transport habits that is required.

Improving the image of the town – improving levels of traffic congestion will improve the image of Slough and help make it an accessible, safe, economically vibrant and healthy place to live, work and visit.

4 **Other Implications**

(a) Financial

The Intelligent Transport System is funded through various streams including the Council, Better Bus Fund and the Local Sustainable Transport Fund.

There are no other financial implications.

(b) Risk Management

There are no reported risks associated with the recommendations contained within this report.

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no Human Rights Act or Other Legal Implications related to the recommendations in this report.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

There is no identified need for the completion of an EIA related to the recommendations in this report.

5 **Supporting Information**

- 5.1 At its meeting on the 10 January 2013, the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Committee agreed Terms of Reference to review the issue of traffic congestion on the strategic route network in Slough. The Terms of Reference are attached as Appendix A.
- 5.2 In order to do this, the Panel will look at the current situation in Slough and proposals for future development, commercial, residential and educational in Slough. This report looks to set these out, and then put forward current schemes aimed at reducing congestion, before bringing forward future proposals for discussion.

6 Introduction

- 6.1 It is a recognised issue that during peak times, there is a significant amount of traffic using Slough's strategic route network. On a typical weekday, approximately 40,000 people commute into Slough, with 25,000 Slough resident's commuting out of the town to work elsewhere.
- 6.2 If, through various schemes, we could look to reduce the level of traffic on the road during the morning and evening peaks by 10% that could have a dramatic effect on the flow of traffic through the Borough.

7 Strategic Planning

- 7.1 The Core Strategy sets out the Council's strategic planning policies, including a number of Strategic Objectives for Slough, a Spatial Strategy and a number of Core Policies which are designed to deliver these.
- 7.2 The Strategic Objectives are:
- Meeting Slough's housing allocation
 - Maintaining a sustainable buoyant and diverse economy; and
 - Encouraging the regeneration of the town centre, district centres and the existing business areas
- 7.3 In order to meet these objectives, the Spatial Strategy establishes the principle that "concentrating development but spreading the benefits to help build local communities." The effect of this will be to focus future development on the town centre, which is the most accessible location for public transport and provides the best opportunities for carrying out more than one activity in a single journey.
- 7.4 A key reason for development in the town centre is that it can take place with much lower levels of car parking. This will allow for maximum restraint to be applied to parking for residential schemes, and the principle of there being no overall increase in parking within any commercial redevelopment schemes. The Core Strategy also endorses the limit of 5,000 public car parking spaces set out in the Town Centre Parking Strategy. And whilst this does not address the issue of through traffic, the use of parking restraint is intended to reduce the level of car trip generation.
- 7.5 Town centre residential developments would restrict the ability of those residing to own cars, through car parking space restrictions. These would then be aimed at those who are seeking the accessibility of public transport through the bus and train station.
- 7.5 One of the most significant developments outside of the town centre in terms of traffic generation is SEGRO's new commercial hub for the Trading Estate. This is the subject of a parking spaces cap, which means that parking levels of the trading estate must remain at current levels, and supports the introduction of a package of public transport improvements to ensure that there is no increase in car commuting to the Estate.
- 7.6 The Strategic Objectives, along with the natural growth of the town means that there is likely to be a gradual increase in car ownership within the town, however, moves

towards encouraging journeys to be made by public transport rather than cars through car parking restrictions can help mitigate some of the effects of this growth.

8 Business Impact

- 8.1 As has previously been explained 65,000 people commute into and out of Slough every day, including 7,200 who work at Heathrow. Of those commuting into Slough, many are destined for major concentrations of employment in the town centre, along the A4 Bath Road corridor, Poyle Trading Estate and Wexham Park Hospital. Slough Trading Estate is a key destination, currently home to approximately 17,000 employees.
- 8.2 The private car is the most common mode of travel to work, albeit less dominant amongst those who both live and work in Slough, for those who are likely to have shorter commuting distances. Indeed, for this group, walking is the second most popular mode of travel to work at 20%. The most popular method of public transport used by those commuting into Slough is train, predominantly through Slough station.
- 8.3 Therefore, travel in Slough is dominated by the car, with 450 million vehicle kilometres travelled in the Borough each year (excluding M4 traffic). This results in severe peak period congestion on the principal road network. It is estimated that congestion costs the town £34 million each year in wasted travel time alone, reducing average speeds by 8%. During the morning peak the average speed on the strategic road network falls below 20 miles per hour.
- 8.4 Without further action, traffic levels could increase by at least 20% by 2026 and congestion on the A4 during peak hours is predicted to reach stress levels by 2021.

9 Education Impact

- 9.1 Currently, schools travel can account for a significant share of traffic and already contributes towards congestion. For example, traffic levels during the morning peak hour on Wexham Road and the A4 are typically 10% lower in school holidays. Nationally, during the morning peak time one in five journeys is taking a child to school; in Slough this is one in three journeys. There are journeys where parents are taking children to school by car and going on to work is one aspect, but there are also a significant proportion of parents who drive their children to school and immediately return home.
- 9.2 As the Local Education Authority, Slough Borough Council has a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places available in Slough.
- 9.3 Slough has one of the fastest growing birth rates in the country, with a 48% increase in the number of births since 2001/2. This has led to an increasing demand for school places initially in reception, but shortly in secondary schools as well. This increasing demand will require an additional seven to 10 classes in primary schools by 2015/16 and up to six additional secondary schools (34 classes) by 2019/20.
- 9.3 This expansion and the numbers accessing these schools, on top of the current levels, will have an impact of the ability of the strategic route network to cope.

10 Network Management

- 10.1 As a Council, we have recognised the problem this level of traffic poses for Slough. The third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) focuses on encouraging economic growth sustainable. The LTP3 contains 12 objectives for transport, each of which relate to one or more of the five themes of our Sustainable Community Strategy, for example:
- a) Objective – to ensure that the transport system helps Slough sustain its economic competitiveness and retain its position as an economic hub of the South East (Economic & Skills);
 - b) Objective – to facilitate the development of new housing in accordance with the Local Development Framework (Housing)
 - c) Objective – To reduce transport's CO2 emissions and make the transport network resilient to the effects of climate change (Regeneration & Environment)
 - d) Objective – To mitigate the effects of travel and the transport system on the natural environment, heritage and landscape (Regeneration & Environment and Health & Wellbeing).
- 10.2 Traffic congestion already has an adverse impact on business efficiency and inward investment and therefore is a threat to the future economic viability of Slough. In June 2012 the Council was awarded an additional £4.305m, through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF), over three years (ending in March 2015). The outcomes from this award are aimed towards modal shift and congestion reduction through encouraging behavioural change, not just within the community but with visitors to the town, by providing suitable attractive alternatives.
- 10.3 The objectives of the LSTF funding are:
- to improve the efficiency of Slough's businesses;
 - to support retention and growth of employment in Slough by protecting and enhancing the connectivity advantages which make Slough a good place to do business and a focus on future inward investment;
 - to reduce CO2 emissions from road traffic; and
 - to improve the health of our residents by improving air quality and encouraging active travel.
- 10.4 The LSTF package contains six elements designed to achieve these objectives by delivering changes in travel behaviour:
- coordinating an employer shuttle bus club to rationalise existing services, and provide supporting infrastructure, to generate a mode shift from car to rail/shuttle bus;
 - a step-change in cycling infrastructure, in particular a new east-west cycle spine route, two new cycle hubs, match-funded employer cycle grants, and a bike share scheme;
 - improvements to local walking and cycling networks to improve access to employment locations and schools. In particular measures to improve safety, security and permeability to and from key destinations;
 - broadening the Intelligent Transport System (ITS) and Split Cycle Offset Optimisation Technique (SCOOT) network coverage to enhance traffic management, bus priority and real-time information on the strategic road network, together with greater parking enforcement;

- a major workplace behavioural change programme in the key employment sites in Slough; and
- a focused schools' behavioural change programme.

10.5 The Better Bus Fund is one element in this process. The Council was awarded £1.415m in March 2012 for the improvement of the No.78 service. In real terms this award improves not only the No.78 service, but congestion in general. The award concentrated on the specific roads causing congestion to the No.78 route, namely Farnham Road and the A4. This will entail the improvement of a number of junctions along Farnham Road and A4 with SCOOT.

10.6 The Better Bus Fund is part of a broader requirement that future growth is sustainable through ensuring that the bus is a transport mode of choice for people who live and work in Slough. In 2011 over 5 million people travelled on buses in Slough. The Council is committed to delivering the necessary infrastructure to facilitate more reliable and attractive transport corridors for bus operators, through infrastructure projects such as selected bus lane implementation; filling in bus stop lay-bys to reduce delays at stops; and a highway widening scheme to improve link capacity and thereby reduce bus journey times along with those for other vehicles.

10.7 The Urban Traffic Management Control (UTMC) and Common Database is new to Slough, and is in the process of being finalised. However, the system is able to assist the signals team in dealing with complex issues on the network through advance planning. This means that the team are able to develop strategies for dealing with planned or non-planned events, such as processions or motorway closures, through providing changes to signal timings if certain thresholds are triggered by heavier traffic. This system also enables us to set up, through Variable Message Signs in the Borough, advice to motorists if there are delays.

10.8 These are the mitigation measures currently being worked on, but there are still others that could be investigated and tested for viability.

Businesses:

- a) peak spreading – this would entail working with businesses to stagger working hours. Whilst this might expand a one hour peak time to two hours, the levels throughout would not reach stress levels;
- b) parking place levies – this would expand on the current strategic planning principle that parking places are restricted;
- c) guided bus ways – these are used elsewhere and provide a more reliable (time-wise) route for buses to travel, but are restricted by space and cost.

Schools:

- a) in order to lessen the impact of school runs on the morning peak, in particular, whether there are options for staggering start/finish times of schools across the Borough;
- b) changing school term dates;
- c) looking at how effective school travel plans are, such as where journeys are of a short distance; could there be options for incentivising walking instead.

11 Conclusion

- 11.1 Despite the dominance of the car there is potential to increase the share of travel by sustainable modes of transport, as many car journeys are relatively short: over a third of the employees on the Slough Trading Estate live within five kilometres of work; whilst, for the town centre, the comparable figure is 68%. There is also potential to encourage many of the 40,000 people commuting into Slough each day from further afield to car share or switch from car to other modes, in particular rail through the improvement of links between the stations and employment clusters.
- 11.2 In addition to this, there is significant potential to build on successes to date by increasing the percentage of school journeys made on foot, by bicycle, by public transport or by car share.
- 11.3 Most of the traffic on Slough's strategic road network starts or ends its journey in Slough. For example on the A4 west of the town centre only 9% of traffic in the morning peak has both its origin and destination outside of Slough. Therefore, we have the opportunity to influence the vast majority of car traffic by 'nudging' short trips to walk or cycle and longer trips to use public transport. Recent surveys have shown that many car commuters are willing to consider alternative modes of travel, and some of the schools contributing most to car traffic are keen to implement measures to reduce car dependency such as more environmentally friendly travel options.

12 Appendices Attached

A - Terms of Reference

13 Background Papers

None.

This page is intentionally left blank

Terms of Reference – Meeting of the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel

Title	Traffic Congestion in Slough
Membership	Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel
Chairing	Councillor Minhas
Lead Executive Member	Councillor Swindlehurst – Commissioner for Neighbourhoods and Renewal Councillor Munawar – Commissioner for Community and Leisure
Strategic Director	Roger Parkin – Strategic Director, Customer and Community Services
Officers	Joe Carter – Head of Transport Gillian Ralphs – Assistant Director, Enforcement and Regulatory Services Paul Stimpson – Head of Planning Policy Sarah Forsyth – Scrutiny Officer
Objectives	To seek realistic and effective suggestions and solutions to the traffic congestion issues facing Slough, concentrating on the major trunk roads of the A4, A355 and A412.
Key Lines of Enquiry	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To investigate the measures currently being undertaken to alleviate congestion on major traffic routes in Slough. 2. To investigate methods used elsewhere, in areas with similar problems. 3. To consider the major challenges to improving traffic congestion in Slough, and what additional/alternative steps that could be taken to improve the situation.
Operation	The Panel will produce a report following evidence gathering at the meeting, which will be submitted to Cabinet for consideration of any recommendations.
Schedule of Meeting(s)	To be confirmed.
Commissioned	January 2012

This page is intentionally left blank