

Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Meeting held on Tuesday, 4th June, 2013.

Present:- Councillors O'Connor (Chair), Bal, Hussain, Malik, M S Mann, Minhas, Nazir, Small and Smith (Vice-Chair)

Also present under Rule 30:- Councillors Abe (left at 8.03pm), Coad (left at 8.03pm), Plenty, Plimmer and Wright (left at 8.03pm)

PART I

1. Declaration of Interest

Cllr Bal declared a personal interest as his daughter worked for the Council.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 9th April 2013

Resolved – That the minutes of the last meeting held on 9th April 2013, subject to the inclusion of Cllr Bal's apologies.

3. Appointment of Scrutiny Panels

The Committee considered a report seeking approval to the establishment of three Scrutiny Panels and the members to serve on them for the 2013/14 municipal year.

The Committee noted the seat allocations that had been calculated to reflect Political Group membership and statutory proportionality entitlement, which equated to eight appointments for the Labour Group, and one for the Conservative Group. The Chairs of the Panels would be offered to a member of the Administration and Vice-Chair positions would be offered to the Opposition Group. The Leading Group had indicated that a seat would be offered to Cllr Plimmer (Liberal Democrat) on the Health Scrutiny Panel. Details of the nominations received from the political groups were received, including a late change to the effect that Cllr Malik will replace Cllr Aujla on the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panels and the nominated members. Details were also presented of the co-opted members (with details of the nominations where known) for formal approval.

Resolved –

- (a) That the Panels set out in paragraph 5 of the report be appointed for the 2013/14 municipal year.
- (b) That the Committee note the allocation of seats to the Panels as set out in paragraph 5.2 of the report.
- (c) That the Committee agree the allocation of Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Panels on the basis set out in paragraph 5.3 of the report and that each Panel be invited to appoint a Chair and Vice-Chair at its first meeting.
- (d) That Members be appointed to serve on each of the Panels in accordance with the wishes expressed by Political Groups in respect

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of seats allocated to them as set out in paragraph 5.4 of the report, subject to the replacement of Cllr Aujla by Cllr Malik on the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Panel.

(e) That the co-opted Members listed in paragraphs 5.5 to 5.7 of the report be appointed to the respective Panels.

4. Member Questions

There were no question received from Members.

5. Cllr Coad Call-in: Officer Delegated Decision 14/13 - 20 mph zone covering Langley Road, Station Road and High Street, Langley

The Committee considered a report advising receipt of a Member call-in (by Cllr Coad) of a significant officer decision relating to the implementation of an experimental 20 mph zone in Langley Road, Station Road and High Street, Langley. The report included a summary of the reasons why Cllr Coad had submitted the call-in and she addressed the Committee amplifying those reasons. In addition she referred to material circulated in supplementary agenda papers for the Committee which contained copy correspondence and emails between local residents and Transport Officers, a report by the Langley St Mary's Neighbourhood Action Group and photographs and maps illustrating traffic congestion.

Cllr Coad's address to the Committee referred to the following main points:

- She had received a large number of representations from local residents objecting to the experimental scheme and the congestion caused.
- Although the poor accident record in the area had been cited as the reason for implementing the scheme, this was not borne out by data supplied by Thames Valley Police.
- There was severe traffic congestion at peak times (with some queues even off peak) resulting in difficulties for traffic to emerge from the residential side roads with junctions on Langley Road, Station Road and Langley High Street, together with increased noise and pollution.
- There was confusion about cycle routes and the interaction of cyclists and pedestrians.
- The congestion problems were exacerbated (and road safety further compromised) by pupils and parents going to and from Langley Hall School crossing the road at or close to the roundabout rather than using the appropriate zebra crossing.
- Increased bus journey times of 12 minutes had been reported.
- The scheme had been implemented against the wishes of residents expressed during the public consultation.

The Chairman invited a response from the officers (Lynsey Brookfield and Hayley Fails from the Transport Department) who referred to details of the significant decision contained in the supplementary agenda papers, tabled a

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large scale map of the area showing the type and location of accidents, and related the following background to the scheme:

- The Council had a statutory duty to reduce and prevent road accidents.
- Following recent successful actions to reduce fatal/serious accidents in the Borough, seven areas with a concentration of vulnerable road users and a record of minor injury accidents (of which Langley was the worst) had been identified for action.
- The accident record of 39 injury accidents (resulting in 47 casualties) recorded at the Harrow Market roundabout and along Langley Road in the three years to May 2012 prompted an initial consultation about traffic calming measures in July 2012.
- As the majority of residents responding did not support the scheme and objected to the vertical traffic calming measures such as raised tables and speed cushions, a design workshop was organised in conjunction with the Langley Neighbourhood Forum (attended by over 50 members of the public) on 11th September 2012.
- The outcome from the workshop was that a smaller 20 mph zone be established, to which were added traffic calming measures such as road narrowing, textured surfacing and signing and temporary cycle lanes, to be implemented in an experimental traffic scheme.
- A significant officer decision was taken under delegated powers to make the necessary traffic order and the works were carried out on 8th April 2013.
- It was proposed to maintain the experimental schemes for six months to allow time to undertake journey time surveys, speed surveys, monitor congestion, collate accident figures and collect and assess all feedback received.

In considering the matter the Committee questioned the officers about:

- The number of accidents, their location and possible cause.
- Whether measures could be targeted on the side road junctions with Station Road and Langley High Street where the majority of accidents seemed to occur.
- How much longer the experimental scheme would need to be in place before any updated accident figures were available.
- The effect of indiscriminate crossing of the road by pedestrians.
- Whether there would be any advantage in erecting barriers on the footway to force pedestrians to use the designated crossings.
- The details of the consultation and the views expressed at the design workshop.

Having considered responses to these points, the Committee drew the conclusion set out in the resolution below, taking particular account of the strength of views expressed by local residents, by ward and other local Councillors, who had experienced the significant disruption to the flow traffic in Langley.

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Resolved – To RECOMMEND the Cabinet to direct officers that because of the impact on levels of congestion in Langley:

- the narrowing of the approaches to the roundabout be removed as soon as possible;
- the 20 mph zone be retained; and
- alternative measures be considered to assist road safety in the area, particularly in Station Road.

6. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered a report outlining a number of topics suggested for scrutiny during the coming year, allocated against the timetable of meetings, with some items yet to be programmed.

Members made a number of suggestions for additions to the programme, some of which were appropriate to refer for scrutiny by the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Panel. Other suggestions could be forwarded direct to the Scrutiny Officer, Sarah Forsyth.

Appendix B to the report set out a draft programme for a detailed review of childhood obesity, which had been held over from 2012/13. This included a plan of the areas it was proposed to investigate together with the aims for each element of the review.

Resolved-

- (a) That the work programme for the 2013/14 Municipal Year be agreed, subject to the inclusion of items on work apprenticeships, the Aspire programme and the effect of Benefit changes.
- (b) Members be invited to submit any other suggestions for the work programme to Sarah Forsyth.
- (c) That items on rent arrears, the role of landlords, service charges for Council tenants in blocks and business rates be referred to the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Panel for inclusion in their work programme for the coming year.
- (d) That the programme for the Obesity Review be approved.

7. Members Attendance 2012/13

The Committee received a report setting out Members' attendance over the past year.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

8. Date of Next Meeting - 8th July 2013

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 8th July 2013.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.12 pm)