

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Cabinet **DATE:** 19th September 2011

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WARD(S): Chalvey

PORTFOLIO: Councillor James Swindlehurst, Commissioner for
Neighbourhoods & Renewal

PART I NON-KEY DECISION

HIGHWAY CHANGES IN CHALVEY

1 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to update Cabinet with progress towards implementation of the highway changes in Chalvey, last considered by Cabinet on 18th July.

A number of the experimental Traffic Regulation Orders, which Cabinet authorised on 18th July, have now been advertised.

The Council has received a range of feedback from the Chalvey Community, both positive and negative.

At the time of writing, the detailed design is well advanced. It is anticipated that deployment of the experimental measures will commence on 12th September.

2 Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

The Cabinet is requested to note that, in response to feedback from the Chalvey community, a one-way system will be implemented in Chalvey Road West, with new parking provided for shoppers. This is in place of the full closure and pedestrianisation that was first considered.

It is proposed to update Cabinet in December 2011, when it is anticipated that the experimental measures will be installed on site.

3 **Community Strategy Priorities**

• Adding years to Life and Life to years

Regeneration in Chalvey is the Council's response to the identified needs of the area, which suffers from high levels of deprivation ranking amongst the 10% most deprived in the South East Region. Significant progress has already been made, with a new Early Years Centre now operating from the refurbished former Thames Valley Community Centre. The new community hub currently is now complete and was officially opened on 3rd September, providing a number of new community facilities including a library and adult learning facilities.

• Being Safe, Feeling Safe

A number of accidents involving pedestrians have been recorded over the past 3 years, including on designated crossing points and near to local schools. Standing traffic increases the difficulty of pedestrians to cross busy road junctions, and by working to address these issues the safety and wellbeing of residents can be supported while the environmental quality of the area, both aesthetically and in terms of pollution can be improved.

• A Cleaner, Greener place to live, Work and Play

Another of the stated aims of the regeneration is the improvement of the urban environment which can be achieved in part by reducing congestion and standing traffic. The declaration of an Air Quality Management Zone along the town centre section of the A4 has been made necessary by increased volumes of traffic and congestion. In this location the increased pollution is being addressed by improvements to the road network around the former Brunel roundabout and investment in smart technology to manage traffic flow. Due to the current road layout in Chalvey and the complexity of some of the junctions standing traffic is a common feature, which not only increases pollution output but presents difficulties for residential traffic.

• Prosperity for All

Regeneration taking place in a number of areas of the town, coupled with continued investment in education, skills training, parks and open spaces and key public services all contribute to individual wellbeing and personal development. The quality of the townscape influences the propensity of businesses to locate in Slough, so efforts to make the town more attractive will also have positive effects on the local economy.

4 Other Implications

(a) Financial

The cost of the experimental measures will be funded from the Chalvey regeneration budget.

Risk Management

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Risk/Threat/Opportunity</i>	<i>Mitigation(s)</i>
<i>Consultation exercise held to gauge resident support</i>	<i>Going ahead with changes to the road network without consulting local residents could miss the opportunity of utilising local knowledge and wishes</i>	<i>Consult residents' groups on a range of options to gauge resident support Experimental procedure allows the Council to test the preferred option before committing to a permanent scheme</i>
<i>Measures be considered to improve traffic flow and reduce congestion</i>	<i>These changes have the potential to significantly improve the urban environment in this area of the town, while improving the safety and wellbeing of local residents. Failure to act could lead to a worsening situation</i>	<i>Bring forward a range of proposals to consult local residents and gauge support for differing options</i>

(b) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

None at this stage.

(c) Equalities Impact Assessment

Consultation will be targeted at all members of the local community to capture a wide range of views on the proposed scheme. An Equalities Impact Assessment will be carried out to ensure that any proposals which gain support and are approved do not disadvantageously affect any section of the community.

5 Supporting Information

Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders

- 5.1 On 18th July Cabinet authorised the drafting and advertisement of a number of experimental Traffic Regulation Orders. The orders that concern movement of traffic have now been advertised:
- Closure and one-way operation of Chalvey Road West
 - One-way operation of Chalvey Road East, Ledgers Road and Ragstone Road
 - Reversal of one-way operation of Martin Road
- 5.2 The orders that concern experimental parking provision have not yet been advertised, as these depend on the detailed design for each road, which is expected to be complete in September.

Protest

- 5.3 The proposed programme of experimental measures, approved by Cabinet on 18th July, included the full closure of Chalvey Road West. On 11th August there was a protest by between 100-150 members of the Chalvey Community outside St Martin's Place, supporting the trials of experimental measures, but calling for the Council not to close Chalvey Road West to traffic. In response to this protest and subsequent conversation with the protest leaders and a number of the individuals involved, it was decided not to close Chalvey Road West but instead to make Chalvey Road West one-way eastbound (towards the railway bridge).
- 5.4 Many of those involved in the protest were business owners and employees, concerned that a complete closure of Chalvey Road West would reduce the volume of passing trade, and therefore damage their business interests. The change from closing Chalvey Road West to implementing a one-way system offers a number of advantages, which it is anticipated will help the business community:
- Customers arriving by car will be able to access the full length of Chalvey Road West – all the shop frontages – albeit in one direction;
 - Significant new parking facilities can be provided in Chalvey Road West, on both sides of the road – in discussion with the business owners this is proposed to be 30 minute parking to encourage turnover of business.
- 5.5 A letter and a new sketch plan were distributed in response to the protest. These are shown in Appendix A.

Petition

- 5.6 A petition has also been received: *"We, the residents of Chalvey strongly oppose the proposals regarding Chalvey congestion because it will badly affect the life of Chalvey residents. We demand that Slough Borough Council should reject these proposals"*
- 5.7 The petition has 154 signatories, representing approximately 123 households. The number of households has been approximated as 45 signatories did not provide a house number.
- 5.8 Officers believe that this petition was being circulated during the protest on 11th August.

Further feedback from individuals

- 5.9 In addition to the protest and petition the Council has received a range of other feedback from individuals. Cabinet should note that there hasn't been time to analyse the feedback in detail. However up to 5th September, eleven individuals were generally supportive of the experimental measures, including the full closure of Chalvey Road West. Three individuals supported the one-way proposals. Twenty-one individuals objected specifically to the closure and pedestrianisation of Chalvey Road West, which is no longer going ahead. Twenty-one individuals were opposed to any of the experimental measures, with the main concern being increased car travel time and increased congestion elsewhere on the network. Four individuals expressed concern but did not state their objection or support for the proposals.

Progress with implementation of experimental measures

- 5.10 The detailed design for the following elements of the scheme is complete:

- Chalvey Road West
 - Chalvey Road East
 - High Street junction with Church Street and Chalvey Road West
 - Junction underneath the railway bridge
- 5.11 Detailed plans will be available for viewing on the evening of Cabinet on 19th September.
- 5.12 By the time of Cabinet's meeting on 19th September, it is expected that works will be underway in both Chalvey Road West and Chalvey Road West. The council's contractor will be working around Thames Water, who during September and October have works underneath the railway bridge, in Ledgers Road and Ragstone Road.
- 5.13 It is expected that the experimental measures in Chalvey Road West, Chalvey Road East, and the junctions mentioned above will be complete by the end of October. It is expected that works in Ledgers Road and Ragstone Road will be completed by the end of November.
- 5.14 At the latest Quality Bus Partnership First Bus raised a number of concerns regarding the possible impact of the experimental proposals on the number 3 and 8 bus routes. In subsequent discussion officers have requested information and evidence that would demonstrate and quantify the likely impact. This evidence would be presented to Cabinet at a future meeting.

Public Engagement

- 5.15 Public engagement started in earnest in early September. There will be two phases of public engagement:
- Phase 1 – early September to November – information will be publicised to inform the community, and other expected stakeholders, what the council's plans are, approximate timescales and so on. During this phase we will invite comment from affected stakeholders. Officers have drafted an information leaflet that will be used during this phase, which is included as Appendix B.
 - Phase 2 – November 2011 to February 2012 – proactive engagement with identifiable groups within the community – the council is aware of at least 30 different groups and organisations that officers believe represent different groups within the Chalvey community. Officers will offer to meet each of these groups, to discuss the proposals, identify the benefits and disadvantages to each group, and garner the opinion of each group to report back to Cabinet. During phase 2 consideration will be given to more traditional forms of consultation, including drop in sessions and letter drops.
- 5.16 Officers will aim to conclude the public engagement in February 2012, and will aim to report the results to Cabinet in Spring 2012.

6 Comments of Other Committees

This report has not been considered by any other Committees.

7 Conclusion

This report has updated Cabinet with progress towards implementation of the proposed experimental measures in Chalvey, and summarised the feedback received so far.

There has been a range of feedback from the Chalvey community. In response to this a one-way system will be implemented in Chalvey Road West, with new parking provided for shoppers. This is in place of the full closure and pedestrianisation that was first considered.

Installation of the experimental measures is expected to commence on 12th September. It is expected that the installation of the experimental measures will be completed in time to update Cabinet at its meeting in December.

8 **Background Papers**

None