

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Overview and Scrutiny Committee **DATE:** 17th January, 2012

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WARD(S): Chalvey

PART I **FOR INFORMATION**

HIGHWAY CHANGES IN CHALVEY

1 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to update Committee with progress towards implementation of the experimental highway changes in Chalvey, following the last update of 11th October 2011.

The detailed design is now complete, and a number of the experimental measures have been implemented already. Construction is ongoing on site, and is expected to be mostly completed by the time Committee meets on 17th January.

The Council has received a range of feedback from the Chalvey Community.

2 Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

Committee is requested to note the report.

3 Community Strategy Priorities

The community strategy priorities are:

- **Celebrating Diversity, Enabling inclusion**
- **Adding years to Life and Life to years**
- **Being Safe, Feeling Safe**
- **A Cleaner, Greener place to live, Work and Play**
- **Prosperity for All**

The proposed experimental Highway Changes in Chalvey are part of the ongoing Chalvey Regeneration project. The contributions made to the community strategy priorities are detailed in various reports to Cabinet.

4 Other Implications

(a) Financial

The financial implications are detailed in various reports to Cabinet.

(b) Risk Management

The risk management implications are detailed in various reports to Cabinet.

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

No Human Rights Act implications.

Various Traffic Regulation Orders made under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, as detailed in various reports to Cabinet.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

The EIA is now being drafted, to assess the potential impact of the experimental measures, now that they are close to completion, and also to inform the formal consultation process.

5 Supporting Information

Progress with experimental measures since 11th October

- 5.1 At the time of Committee's previous meeting of 11th October 2011 construction of the experimental measures was in progress, having commenced in September 2011. The council's works could only begin once Thames Water's works had advanced to a stage where the council's contractor could take possession of Chalvey Road East first of all, and later on Chalvey Road West. Implementation of the experimental measures is now well advanced.
- 5.2 Chalvey Road East
- The experimental one-way system has been implemented between the railway bridge and College Avenue;
 - A contra-flow cycle lane has been installed the full length of the one-way system;
 - New 30 minute parking has been installed for the benefit of the shops and businesses, as well new disabled parking.
- 5.3 Chalvey Road West
- The experimental one-way system has been implemented between High Street, Chalvey, and the railway bridge – Chalvey Road West was opened to traffic on 18th October 2011;
 - Two new road tables have been installed to slow traffic;
 - A contra-flow cycle lane has been installed the full length of the one-way system;
 - New 30 minute parking has been installed for the benefit of the shops and businesses, as well as new disabled parking;
 - The Pelican crossing near Alexandra Road has been removed and replaced with a wide informal pedestrian crossing on top of one of the road tables;
 - New planters have been installed to improve the environment for local residents and visitors;
 - New Christmas lights have been installed on the street lights.
- 5.4 At the railway bridge
- The railway bridge itself has been re-painted;
 - The new junction underneath the railway bridge has been completed and was opened on 14th December 2011, allowing motorists to turn right from Chalvey Road West into Ragstone Road.
- 5.5 At the junction of High Street, Church Street and Chalvey Road West
- Officers anticipate that by the time Committee meets on 17th January construction of the new junction and parking outside Ambala will be complete;
 - The traffic signals have been removed.
- 5.6 Ledgers Road
- Officers anticipate that by the time Committee meets on 17th January the measures in Ledgers Road will have been implemented in full;
 - Residents of Ledgers Road have petitioned the council to be consulted on provision of residents' parking as part of the experimental scheme, as the experimental one-

way system has made it possible to provide formal parking bays – officers will commence this consultation as soon as the formal parking bays are marked.

5.7 Ragstone Road

- The detailed design is complete;
- Residents and representatives of the places of worship at the southern end of Ragstone Road have requested that the section between Windsor Road and King's Road to remain two-way – we have been able to accommodate this request into the design – this will enable convenient access to Kings Road and the places of worship for a significant number of drivers who would otherwise have had to take a long detour through Chalvey, but without compromising the principal aims of the experimental scheme – to remove rat-running traffic;
- Implementation of the experimental measures commenced before Christmas with the installation of speed cushions and some of the experimental signs and road markings;
- Officers anticipate that by the time Committee meets on 17th January, the measures in Ragstone Road will be mostly complete;
- Residents of Ragstone Road have petitioned the council to be consulted on provision of residents' parking as part of the experimental scheme, as the experimental one-way system has made it possible to provide formal parking bays – officers will commence this consultation as soon as the formal parking bays are marked.

5.8 Three Tuns Crossroads

- The westbound approach has been modified to lengthen the left turn lane, and improve left turn capacity;
- The northbound approach has been modified to encourage drivers to use both the second and third lanes to turn right, improving right-turn capacity.

Thames Water

5.9 Thames Water's programme of works has moved on since 11th October 2011. They have completed their works in Chalvey Road East and Chalvey Road West, and also underneath the railway bridge. Thames Water suspended their works on 13th December 2011 to avoid over-staying their notice period under the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991. An over-stay would have resulted in fines being imposed by the council. Rather than complete their works and face the possibility of a fine, Thames Water simply stopped their work.

5.10 This means that Thames Water still have works to complete in:

- Ragstone Road, near the railway bridge;
- Ragstone Road, near its junction with Windsor Road;
- Ragstone Road, service connections to properties;
- Ledgers Road, near its junction with Montem Lane;
- Ledgers Road, between Montem Lane and Ellis Avenue.

5.11 In addition Thames Water also have significant works to start and complete in Windsor Road, between Ragstone Road and Arborfield Close.

5.12 Thames Water has indicated to the council that they would like to start these works in January. At the time of writing officers are planning to meet Thames Water to explore how best to manage their works, given the potential for disruption, the impact on the experimental scheme, and also the forthcoming Olympic embargo.

Feedback received so far

5.13 Representations have been received both from Chalvey residents and also from those who use Chalvey roads to travel around the town. The first responses were received immediately after the proposals were announced, and have continued through every stage of the project so far. Comments received prior to 18th October

2011 were received before Chalvey Road West was re-opened to traffic. Many responses received before 18th October 2011 raised concerns associated with the full closure of Chalvey Road West, and the disruption this caused, rather than responding to the current one-way operation. Thames Water's works in Ledgers Road and Ragstone Road continued up until 13th December 2011. The council was only able to start implementing measures in Ledgers Road and Ragstone Road after 13th December, and so at the time of writing the residents of these roads do not yet have full benefit of the experimental scheme.

- 5.14 Many of the very early representations concerned the initial proposal to implement a full closure and pedestrianisation of Chalvey Road West. In response to feedback from the community, it was decided not to implement this full closure, but rather to implement a one-way system in Chalvey Road West instead. This decision was taken by Cabinet on 19th September 2011.

Representations received in response to full pedestrianisation

- 5.15 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, as was originally proposed. In response to the strength of public feeling it was decided to implement an experimental one-way system in Chalvey Road West, instead of a full closure.

- 5.16 On 19th September (at Cabinet's meeting that day) officers received 156 signed leaflets from individuals opposed to the experimental measures in general. Officers believe that this was an organised response, akin to a petition, rather than 156 individuals acting on their own initiative.

- 5.17 Three petitions have been received. The first reads: *"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"*. This petition has 259 signatories, representing approximately 204 households. The number of households has been approximated as 45 signatories did not provide a house number. This petition was gathered at the time of the protest in August, with further signatories added in the lead up to Cabinet on 19th September. There is some overlap between the signed leaflets and the petitions – 52 people have signed both a leaflet and the petition.

- 5.18 The petition was organised before the decision was taken not to implement a full closure of Chalvey Road West. Signatories for the petition were being gathered during the protest, which was specifically focussed on the full closure. Therefore officers cannot be certain whether the petitioners were objecting just to the proposed full closure, or to the experimental measures in general.

Representations received in response to amended scheme

- 5.19 A petition dated 11th October from 35 residents (32 households) in Ledgers Road reads: *"We the undersigned residents of Ledgers Road agree that since the experimental changes to the road system have been introduced; the volume of traffic along the road has reduced resulting in less noise, improved air quality and less waiting times at road junctions. Therefore we support an experimental one way system along Ledgers Road and wish to be consulted by the council on introducing residential parking as well."* The implementation of the experimental one-way system makes it possible to mark out formal parking bays, which could be considered for residents' parking. At the time of writing officers are preparing to commence the requested consultation.

Representations received after re-opening of Chalvey Road West to one-way traffic

- 5.20 A petition dated 19th October from 29 residents (22 households) in Ragstone Road reads: *"(1) We, residents of Ragstone Road, Slough, have been subject to substantial traffic and vehicle parking pressures for many, many years. (2) There has been an extra-ordinary volume of traffic from both directions, as Ragstone is*

treated as a convenient by-pass from the main adjacent Windsor Road (easy cut-through). A significant number of vehicles are parked on the road, by individuals who do not live or work on the road; as Ragstone Road is walking distance from Slough town centre. There is illegal parking, by individuals who use Ragstone as a short stopping point with no regulation by traffic wardens. (3) We urge Slough Borough Council to urgently review this serious and highly pressurised situation, and introduce measures to ensure parking access and safety for residents, such as by means of a one-way traffic and/or residents only parking. We urge Slough Borough Council to consult with the local residents about this urgent and expanding problem.” The petition allowed the signatories to express their support for residents’ parking and the one-way way system. 27 signatories supported resident’s parking. Only 4 signatories supported the one-way system in its current form – however only by making Ragstone Road one-way is it possible to mark out formal parking bays, which are necessary for residents’ parking. At the time of writing officers are preparing to consult residents of Ragstone Road in relation to residents’ parking – we will make residents aware that residents’ parking is only possible if Ragstone Road remains one-way.

Individual representations

- 5.21 At the time of writing officers have received 80 separate representations by e-mail. Of these 18 were generally supportive, and 54 were generally opposed. Others simply requested information, or did not express support or opposition. Nearly all those opposed to the changes were concerned about increased journey times for their car trips, either for commuting journeys or local residents. Other concerns included the availability of parking for residents, displacement of traffic onto other routes, and the changes to the bus routes.
- 5.22 Officers have received six letters in relation to the Chalvey proposals, two of which were from the same resident. The first letter was received in August and encouraged the council to proceed with the full closure of Chalvey Road West, despite the protest. One letter expressed concerns about the changes to the 3 and 8 bus routes. The other four were generally opposed to the scheme.

Summary of responses so far

- 5.23 The responses so far have been mixed. Members should note that there are approximately 2,500 households (c. 7000 residents) in Chalvey that are likely to be affected by the proposed changes – in an area bounded by Windsor Road, Tuns Lane, the M4 and the A4. Comments have been received from a much wider area than this, and many responses have been received from people who are not Chalvey residents. Excluding the protest, which was specifically to do with the full closure of Chalvey Road West, officers have only received approximately 450 responses so far in various different forms, which represents a small sample.
- 5.24 Members should note that the full package of experimental measures has not yet been completed, so all the feedback received so far is in response to a partially complete scheme. In conversation with individuals on site, some residents have indicated that they are waiting for the measures to be complete before forming a firm view on the success or otherwise of the scheme. Other residents have changed their views even during the construction phase.
- 5.25 All responses that have been received so far, together with all the responses to the public engagement exercise (described below) will be analysed and presented to Cabinet to enable Cabinet to make final decisions on which aspects of the scheme should be made permanent.

Local bus services through Chalvey and elsewhere

- 5.26 Members should be aware that some of the feedback to the experimental changes in Chalvey relates to the reduction in the bus services in Chalvey, Cippenham, and to Wexham Park Hospital.

- 5.27 On 26th November 2011 First Berkshire made a number of modifications to the number 3 and 8 bus routes, which had previously both served Chalvey Road East and West. There is now no bus service in Chalvey Road East, and only one route serving Chalvey Road West. In addition to the changes in Chalvey, the extent of these routes in Cippenham has been reduced, and neither route now provides a through service to Wexham Park Hospital.
- 5.28 The experimental one-way systems in Chalvey apply to all traffic, including buses. First Berkshire believes the experimental changes in Chalvey have forced them to curtail the 3 and 8 routes in Cippenham, and have publicised this view widely. First Berkshire's plans to stop through running to Wexham Park hospital pre-date the council's experimental proposals for Chalvey.

Public Engagement

- 5.29 The public engagement for the experimental proposals is divided into two phases:
- Phase 1 – In September 2011 approximately 2,500 leaflets were distributed to residential premises in Chalvey. These leaflets described the council's plans, approximate timescales and so on. Contact details were included and comments were invited from affected stakeholders.
 - Phase 2 – January 2012 to Spring 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 officers will also distribute a second leaflet, with a questionnaire designed to identify which aspects of the scheme are supported, and which aspects are not welcome.
- 5.30 Officers will aim to conclude the public engagement in Spring 2012, and will aim to report the results to Cabinet towards the end of Spring 2012.

6 Comments of Other Committees

This report has not been considered by any other Committees.

7 Conclusion

This report has updated Committee with progress towards implementation of the proposed experimental measures in Chalvey since Committee's last meeting in October.

There has been a range of feedback from the Chalvey community so far. Officers are preparing a comprehensive public engagement exercise to establish which elements of the experimental proposals are supported by the community, and which are not welcome.

Completion of the experimental measures is expected in January 2012.

8 Background Papers

None