

TRAFFIC CONGESTION WORKING GROUP

25th September @ 4pm
Mercury 1, St Martin's Place

Attendees

Roger Parkin:	Director Customer & Community Services, SBC (Chair)
Tony Browne:	Head of School Services, SBC
Joe Carter:	Head of Transport Services, SBC
Councillor Malik:	Councillor for Wexham Lea
Debbie Richards:	Head teacher, Arbour Vale School
Michelle Perkins:	PA to Roger Parkin (notes)

1. Welcome and apologies

- Apologies were received from Councillor Munawar, Councillor Mann and Clair Prosser (TVCC).
- RP welcomed everyone to the group which has been set up as requested by Scrutiny Panel due to the traffic congestion issues across the town. The purpose of the group will be to look at how to manage these issues going forwards.
- The draft Terms of Reference were circulated which set out what the group wants to achieve and how they will operate. The group agreed the terms of reference.

2. Previous minutes

N/A

3. Local Transport Plan (Joe Carter)

- JC outlined SBC's Local Transport Plan which encompasses a 20 year vision of transport in Slough. The main priorities of the Plan are as follows:
 1. Environment – to reduce carbon emissions, protect heritage and habitats and adapt to a changing climate.
 2. Economy and Skills – to make sure Slough remains a competitive place to do business as well as to facilitate development for new jobs and housing.
 3. Community Cohesion – to improve access to opportunities such as jobs and education and reduce social exclusion.
 4. Health and Wellbeing – to encourage people to be fitter and healthier through walking and cycling and to improve air quality and local neighbourhoods.
 5. Safer Communities – to reduce number of road accidents and to tackle anti-social behaviour and crime.
- 1-3 year action plans have been created to deliver the aims and priorities of the plan going forwards.
- JC explained the six main packages of LSTF funding:
 1. Employer shuttle bus.
 2. Cycling Infrastructure – bike hire scheme, bike hub, cycle grants for local employers.

3. Improvements to local cycling and walking networks, footpath widening etc.
 4. ITS (Intelligent Transport Systems) – traffic signals etc.
 5. Workplace behavioural change programme – SBC visiting business to look at travel patterns of staff, encouraging walking and cycling.
 6. Talking to local schools.
- Please see link below to view the full Local Transport Plan on SBC's website:
<http://www.slough.gov.uk/council/strategies-plans-and-policies/local-transport-plan-ltp.aspx>

4. Effects on Schools and Businesses

- JC explained that the difference in the level of traffic on the roads between term time and school holidays is as little as **10%** therefore we are looking at the redistribution of a small proportion of traffic to make a noticeable difference.
- Morning peak issues are all brought about by school traffic. The number of schools and pupils in Slough has a huge influence. A possible solution could be to look at changing school opening times, term times.
- Evening peak issues are largely governed by businesses due to the large number of staff leaving offices at 5pm. A possible solution could be to look at options of flexible working, working from home and challenging business to change working hours.
- The group will look at these options and decide whether they are appropriate and/or come up with alternative ideas.

- JC outlined some of the work already ongoing to help deal with traffic and congestion:
- **Better Area Bus Fund** – this encourages people to use public transport by improving the service and creating extra bus lanes so they can bypass the queues.
- **Improvements to traffic lights.**
- **Urban Traffic Management Control Centre** – this links all transport information into one place which the public can access. It will provide information about road works and how long they are likely to be going on. It will also provide real time passenger information regarding tubes, airports, buses and railway and provide the information to businesses to allow them to make travel choices. Currently still in development. It should be launched next month. SBC's role in this is to manage the network.

- The group decided upon the following ideas to investigate:
- Talk to schools to ask about the average journey to and from school and determine whether behavioural changes are needed where it is less than a mile.
- DR confirmed that schools would be able to provide this information. However, pupils are often scattered across the Borough and parents often have to drive to drop them off at various schools and the buses are not reliable.
- TB said it is important to create school places near to where they are needed and that there have been improvements in this area.

- JC asked whether information could be found about how many families have pupils scattered across the Borough. If it is a minority, the focus could be on getting the majority walking to school.
- DR said that the teachers who commute to Slough then take a taxi from the station to the school could take the bus if the service was improved.
- Could also look at teachers who drive in from outside the Borough and look at other ways such as car sharing.

- JC summarised the main areas to investigate as a starting point as follows:
- School and Businesses start times. The starting point will be to gather the information from schools and also from TVCC about flexible working of local businesses.
- **Action:** MP to contact Clair Prosser to ask for the information prior to the next meeting.
- Look at incentives such as free fruit for pupils who walk to school.
- Issues are that parents might not feel it is safe to walk and they also might be busy and need to get to work.
- TB suggested introducing financial incentives such as free bus passes. Free school buses.
- RP suggested approaching local supermarkets to ask about free fruit, free smoothies for pupils who walk to school.
- Information also to be collected from schools about how many pupils live within half a mile of the school.
- **Action:** DR to gather the relevant information prior to the next meeting.
- JC reiterated that only a small reduction in traffic is needed. Such as 10% per day or 20% every other day. Any amount would help and it doesn't have to be all the time.

Future meeting dates to be confirmed