

**Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel – Meeting held on Wednesday, 2nd April, 2014.**

**Present:-** Councillors Minhas (Chair), Dar, Malik, M S Mann (until 7.40 p.m.), Plenty, Shah, Sohal and Wright (Vice-Chair)

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

**PART 1**

**50. Declarations of Interest**

None.

**51. Minutes of the last meeting held on 27 February 2014**

**Resolved** – that the minutes of the last meeting held on 27 February 2014 be approved as a correct record.

**52. Member Questions**

There were no questions received from Members.

**53. Traffic Congestion Working Group**

Roger Parkin (Director, Customer and Community Services) and Savio DeCruz (Acting Head of Transport) introduced the report setting out the work that the Transport Working Group had undertaken over the past year to reduce peak time congestion in the borough, and options for further improvements to the road network.

The Group had been formed following the Neighbourhood's and Community Services Scrutiny Panel recommendation, which was accepted by Cabinet in spring 2013. Officers had worked hard to engage with businesses and schools to take forward collective approaches to tackling the issues identified around peak time congestion.

The schools had been more willing, to date, to engage, discussing their travel plans and recognising that these had not necessarily been utilised to provide suitable alternatives to car usage. The council had looked to promote cycling, and had improved enforcement action for those stopping illegally outside of schools in order to keep the traffic moving. The Local Sustainable Transport Fund offered the opportunity of match funding for sustainable transport schemes, and this was available to all schools.

Businesses had proved harder to engage, with limited attendance from the Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce, although some individual businesses on the Slough Trading Estate had demonstrated a commitment to some key projects such as improving sustainable transport schemes to the Trading

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Estate. The Bike Rental Scheme had provoked interest from businesses, and uptake of the scheme was beginning to grow with the onset of spring.

The council had also launched its E-Merge website, providing real-time traffic information for residents and those commuting in/out of the borough. Variable message signs are also planned providing details of travel times.

The Panel discussed specific areas of the borough where engagement with schools would have a significant impact, such as Wexham Road, although the Transport Working Group had not focused on specific roads, but taken a broader A-Road approach across the whole borough. Members concluded that a broader collective engagement from all schools would be essential to bringing about a solution to peak time congestion.

Members also discussed the broader aims of schemes currently being worked on to improve the flow of traffic along the artery roads, such as the A4/A355. The Panel noted that individual elements of the scheme fitted into a longer term aim and that the whole scheme would need to be complete before it could be effectively judged. Members, however, were concerned at the levels of congestion current roadwork schemes were causing.

Members questioned officers on specific elements of the Transport Working Groups remit, expressing concern that the appointed Cabinet representative had not attended any of the Group's meetings, and the need to be flexible with the meetings to make it easier for attendees. Officers were also asked to ensure that analysis of schemes and approaches that had been used elsewhere were investigated.

### **Resolved –**

- 1) to stress the importance of engagement by the Commissioner in the Working Group;
- 2) to write to the Chairs of the Slough Association of Secondary Headteachers and the Slough Association of Primary Heads to encourage collective engagement with the Working Group; and
- 3) that the Working Group should look at more flexible meeting arrangements, such as evening meetings to make it easier for partners to attend and engage.

### **54. Attendance Record 2013/14**

**Resolved** – that the Members' attendance record be noted.

### **55. Date of Next Meeting - 3 July 2014**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 3 July 2014.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.30 pm)