

## **SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Neighbourhood and Community Services Scrutiny Panel

**DATE:** 29<sup>th</sup> June 2015

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### **PART I**

#### **FOR INFORMATION**

#### **A4 Brands Hill**

1. **Purpose of Report**

The purpose of the report is to provide an update to the NCS Scrutiny Panel following the February meeting.

2. **Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action**

The Committee is requested to note the progress the council is making on the service improvements associated with the No 78 service to Heathrow as a result of the Better Area Bus Fund.

3. **The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan**

3a. **Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities**

Priorities:

- Health: Providing transport facilities that ensure residents can access the health services they need.
- Economy and Skills – Continue to provide residents with access to essential services by improving connections and journey times between work, home, leisure, school and making alternatives to the car more attractive.
- Regeneration and Environment; Improving facilities and access to bus services to increase the use of sustainable form of transport.
- Housing: Improved public transport links to the area, with quicker journey times for the bus routes serving the area and giving greater choices for residents as to where they can live and access work facilities.
- Safer Communities: Reduced traffic congestion at the location to improve the environment for residents at the location. This should make a place where people feel safe to live and visit.

Cross-Cutting themes:

**Improving the image of the town:** By enhancing the sustainable transport links to Heathrow Airport and beyond, with the reduction in journey times of local bus services.

3b. **Five Year Plan Outcomes**

- Slough will be the premier location in the south east for businesses of all sizes to locate, start, grow, and stay. By improving access to Heathrow Airport from Slough Trading Estate through alternative forms of sustainable transport in this instance buses, with the journey times reduced to appeal to more commuters.

4. **Other Implications**

(a) Financial

The better area bus project was entirely supported from funds allocated by the Dept. for Transport as part of a national scheme and this amounts to £1.415m of ring-fenced capital.

There are no further financial implications.

(b) Risk Management

There are no reported risks associated with the recommendations stipulated in section 2.

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no Human Rights Act Implications associated with the recommendations of this report.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

There is no requirement for an EIA as this report is to provide members on an update on current services and projects within the passenger transport section.

5. **Supporting Information**

- 5.1 Following the implementation of the Better Bus Fund scheme in Brands Hill, a number of complaints were received. The scheme introduced two eastbound lanes including the closure of the bus lay-bys on both the east and westbound carriageway. As a result the parish council asked for changes to be made to reduce the delays that they felt were being caused as a result of scheme. The issues were also raised at NCS Scrutiny earlier this year; below are the responses to assist members in understanding the progress made to date.
- 5.2 Are we too willing to fill-in bus lay byes? What do the main 2 bus operators say on this issue? (First Bus and London buses)

Bus companies were consulted before the scheme was implemented and no objections were received from them. *Please see attached supporting letters from Bus companies.*

The scheme follows both national and local transport policies and directly serves to implement elements of Slough Borough Council's Local Transport Plan 3 with regard to access to transport services. It also contributes to community cohesion by improving journey time and reliability of bus journeys in Slough for journeys to work, home and school.

5.3 Should the project have started without putting parking restrictions in place?

Historically there have not been any parking issues on the site therefore there was no reason for this to be raised prior to the introduction of the scheme. However, once the scheme was implemented it was obvious that there was an issue and the required works to introduce the waiting and loading restriction were undertaken. The public consultation for the parking restriction has taken place without any objections being received.

The double yellow lines have now been implemented at the location with a programme of enforcement starting around the 18<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

5.4 Are 3 lane roads safe if there is no solid white line to separate traffic from head on collisions?

A single solid white line is not used to separate opposing traffic, double white lines maybe used to prevent overtaking on roads with very limited visibility to oncoming traffic or on three lane hills. Neither which is the case here. The appropriate marking for this road will be a standard centre longitudinal line to highlight the lines dividing the opposing traffic streams. Vehicular Traffic on roads with a speed limit of 40mph or less should not cross or straddle the line unless it is safe to do so. (Traffic Signs and Regulations and General Directions 2002).

5.5 Was citing bus stops opposite each other an error that should have been identified at the design stage?

The design of the scheme did not move the location of the bus stops as they have always been opposite each other, however they were situated in lay-bys. Following concerns after the implementation and the delays that were resulting from this alteration, a new location was identified. The Council is currently waiting for TfL to carry out the permanent works. However, we are currently trialling the location of the new bus stop to see the impact on the network after concerns raised by local residents. To date the trial and impact has allowed vehicles to safely overtake the bus and has reduced the delays.

Following the successful trial the bus stop has been relocated with the appropriate road markings.

5.6 Why, once alternatives to the safety audit recommendations were decided upon, did the changes take so long to implement?

The reason for the delays to the works is due to the Council having to wait for third parties to carry out the works. We have been in contact several times with TfL to

try and ask for the works to be carried out sooner but due to their work schedule we are still waiting for the works to be undertaken.

6. **Comments of Other Committees**

Please refer to the O&S Panel recommendations in December 2012

7. **Conclusion**

Members are requested to note that progress is being made on service provision through the supported bus subsidies and improvements to bus service journey times through the investment of the Better Area Bus Fund.

8. **Appendices Attached**

'A' - Consultation document and letters of support

'B' - Overview and Scrutiny Committee Report 4-12-12

9. **Background Papers**

*None*