

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Overview and Scrutiny **DATE:** 10th September 2015

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WARD(S): Haymill and Lynch Hill, Farnham and Cippenham Green

PART I **FOR COMMENT & CONSIDERATION**

SIGNIFICANT OFFICER DECISION CALL IN - BURNHAM TRAIN STATION AND ROAD NETWORK IMPROVEMENTS

1. **Purpose of Report**

To advise the Committee of the receipt of a Member call-in and to seek the Committee's views and instructions on how it wishes to deal with it.

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

The Committee is requested to consider the call-in from and to decide what action it wishes to take in response to it.

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 and 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, London and beyond, improving access and reducing journey times of local bus services and general commuter traffic.

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 scheme will be funded through the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) approximately £2m has been set aside to deliver the improvements in and around Burnham Station.

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 with the process the council has followed to facilitate a closure on Station Road in the Haymill and Lynch Hill ward.

5. **Supporting Information**

Call-In Process

- 5.1 A Member Call-In has been received from Councillors Strutton, Chahal, Morris and Smith, as attached at Appendix B to this report.
- 5.2 A schedule of significant decisions taken by officers is circulated to Members on a monthly basis, and Member call-ins of significant decisions taken by officers, post decision, are dealt with in the same way as other post decision call-ins. Implementation of a significant decision by an officer is not be halted by a call-in and the decision is subject to post-decision scrutiny.
- 5.3 The Committee may take the following action on the call-in:
 - Agree to take no further action on the request (the reason for that decision to be recorded in the minutes and Members are advised).
 - Make alternative recommendations to the Cabinet or Council (if applicable).
 - Make representations/views known to the Cabinet or Council (if applicable) in respect of decision taken and implemented within Cabinet or Officer delegated powers.

Significant Officer Decision – Burnham Train Station Public Realm and Road Network Improvements

- 5.4 Burnham station is located between Burnham Lane and Station Road. The area is subject to considerable congestion in the morning and afternoon peaks due to not only the number of schools in the area, but also the commuter traffic from South Bucks heading for the station, trading estate and M4. Traffic has steadily increased over the past decade and as a consequence has resulted in the peak time delays starting sooner and ending later leading, now, to congestion being present for large parts of the day.
- 5.5 The council has been approached in the past by residents and local community groups to improve traffic flow and address commuter parking issues in the area. However due to the severity of the congestion and the restricted space available for improvements it has not been possible to approach these issues with conventional solutions such as widening the road, installing traffic lights or encouraging modal shift. A more radical solution was required if we are to properly and fully address the severe congestion and parking issues around Burnham Station.
- 5.6 The Council submitted in November 2014, two bids as part of the Local Growth Fund 2 (LGF2) to the LEP for improvements to Burnham Station and Langley Station. These bids focussed on improving accessibility to the stations (including the road layout) and constructing new buildings on the station forecourt. The bids were given programme entry subject to the Local Transport Body (LTB) financial approval process, however in order to receive full approval, a business case compliant with the Department for Transport (DfT) criteria needs to be met.
- 5.7 Transport modelling was commissioned by officers in 2014 to assess 12 different scenarios. The scenarios included reversing the one way on Burnham Lane, making Station Road one way northbound and then southbound and closure of Station Road. The report found that all options would result in an improvement around the station but would also have some impact on other local roads. This report formed part of the Significant Decision (appendix A).
- 5.8 The modelling report indicates that traffic will move to various surrounding roads therefore officers have widened the scope of the works to cover the predicted impact. Huntercombe Lane North, Burnham Lane, Dover Road and the Five points junction will be affected therefore traffic signal changes will be made to accommodate the additional traffic.
- Additional time on Burnham Lane/A4
 - Additional time allocated to Dover Road
 - Changes to Huntercombe Lane north/A4 for left and right turning vehicles
 - Potential suspension of the signals at the Huntercombe bridge if queues are excessive
- In addition all junctions along the A4 and the Five points will be upgraded to have smarter signal software (MOVA), this will enable the junctions to respond more rapidly and efficiently to the greater traffic demands expected during peak times.
- 5.9 Officers set up a working group consisting of Network Rail, Crossrail, Rail for London, First Great Western and Segro to discuss the options and the outputs from the assessment and to also understand how the area including the station could be improved. The working group collectively agreed that if Station Road

could be closed, then this would help realise wider benefits including regeneration of the sites surrounding the station.

- 5.10 It is clear that the assessment indicates that a closure on Station Road will have an impact on the surrounding roads but it is also important to note that this is a software modelling report and as a result may differ from what is actually going to take place on the road network. To meet the DfT requirements, officers have recommended that an experimental order be trialled to determine the actual affect before deciding on the preferred scheme. Once agreed, the design will then be subject to the LEP approval process including submission of a formal business case. Tenders will be produced early next year with work due to start in 2016/17 financial year.
- 5.11 In response to the “Call In” (appendix B) a claim is made that “due diligence” has not taken place. Officers can state that the following work was undertaken before the recommendation was signed off:
- Modelling assessment on 12 different scenarios;
 - Widening the scheme limits as a result of the assessment to capture Huntercombe Lane North, Burnham Lane, and Dover Road;
 - Consultation with the statutory stakeholders i.e. emergency services and bus operators;
 - Alterations to the traffic signals to mitigate against congestion;
 - Air Quality impact reviewed;
 - Briefing ward and lead members
- 5.12 There will be an impact on local residents. We expect an improvement through reduced congestion along Burnham Lane and Station Road. However, it is recognised that local residents will also need to alter their journey patterns to accommodate the new road network and that the effects of this can only really be determined once the closure is in place. It is also expected that air quality will improve as a result of fewer cars in the immediate area, but that there will be displacement on to other local roads. The exact impact on those roads will be monitored during the experimental period. It is not anticipated that there will be any effect on local schools or education centres in the locality as traffic congestion will have reduced. However, there is recognition that journey times, patterns and choices will be affected particularly for those who continue to choose to drive to and from the schools.
- 5.13 With respect to social care provision, officers are liaising with the social care teams and will assist where necessary in minimising the impact on those who are affected. It is anticipated that some re-routing will be needed as part of a closure or a northbound option therefore dialogue will continue throughout the experimental period.
- 5.14 The proposal by officers is to trial the closure through an experimental order, giving officers the flexibility to monitor and amend the scheme where necessary. The council has used this process many times before to understand the real issues on the network, whereby the first six months is used as the consultation period. However, due to the scale of proposal the council has released information about the closure in advance to help its residents and the businesses prepare for the change.

5.15 Consultation leaflets and information on the council webpage will be made available to those who wish to comment on the scheme. The communication strategy for this scheme will also include advance warning signs on site, diversions routes and use of the variable message signs around the borough.

6. **Comments of Other Committees**

None

7. **Conclusion**

Members are requested to consider what action to take on the call in, noting that officers have followed a thorough process to ensure that the scheme has been rigorously tested and will continue to be scrutinised during the experimental period.

8. **Appendices Attached**

'A' - Significant Decision

'B' - Call in request

9. **Background Papers**

None