

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Council

DATE: 22 September, 2015

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WARD(S): All

PART I **FOR DECISION**

PETITION – BURNHAM TRAIN STATION AND ROAD NETWORK IMPROVEMENTS

1 **Purpose of Report**

To advise the Council of a Petition that has been received under the Council's Petitions Scheme. The Petition contains 5151 signatures, of which 118 signatures were submitted online, of people who live, work or study in the area and reads as follows:

'We, the undersigned call on Slough Borough Council to not implement / reverse the current proposal from its Transport team to implement an Experimental Road Closure to all motor vehicle traffic through Burnham Station bridge. Without trying alternative road traffic calming measures first. Ideally with width restrictions, better signage, improved signalling and improvements to the bus stops nearby.

Also we request that full consultation with local residents and local businesses be carried out first.'

2. **Recommendation**

Following debate, the Council is requested to resolve what action it wishes to take with regard to the Petition.

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**

- 5.1 Under the Council's published Petitions Scheme a Petition that contains 1500 signatures triggers a debate at Council.

Debate

- 5.2 The Petition Organiser has been invited to the meeting to speak on the Petition (up to five minutes) and the Petition will then be discussed by Members of the Council for a maximum of 15 minutes. The Mayor has discretion to extend this time taking account of the degree of public interest in the issue, the level of support given to the petition and the number of elected members wishing to express their views on the subject.

- 5.3 Following this discussion the Council will need to decide what action to take with regard to the Petition. Where the issue is one on which the Cabinet is required to make the final decision the Council will decide whether to make recommendations to inform that decision.
- 5.4 The Scheme indicates that the Council's response to a Petition will depend on what a petition asks for and how many people have signed it but may include one or more of the following;
- Taking the action requested in the Petition
 - considering the Petition at a Council Meeting
 - Holding an Inquiry
 - Commissioning relevant research
 - Organising a public meeting
 - Mounting a wider public consultation
 - Meeting with the Petition Organiser or representatives of signatories
 - Providing a written response outlining the Council's views on the subject
 - Referring the issue to the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee **OR**
 - Referring the issue to the relevant Committee/Cabinet
 - Consulting statutory partners and local service providers
 - Instigating discussions with the voluntary and community sectors
 - Making representations to Commercial or other Interests

Background

- 5.5 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.
- 5.6 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.
- 5.7 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.
- 5.8 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).

5.9 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.

5.10 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.

5.11 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.

5.12 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 The petition focuses on “alternative road traffic calming measures” such as width restrictions, better signage, improved signally and improvements to the bus stops. The reason for the scheme is to improve access and traffic flow not to slow down vehicles therefore traffic calming is not relevant. The experimental closure is not linked to bridge strikes though as a consequence will result in no further bridge incidents, however improvements to the traffic signals and to the bus stops will be made.
- 5.16 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.

Comments of Other Committees

- 5.17 A Member Call In was received from Councillors Strutton, Chahal, Morris and Smith regarding the Significant Officer Decision relating to Burnham Train Station and Road Network Improvements. The matter was considered at a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 10th September 2015.
- 5.18 Representations were made at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from Members who submitted the Call In, the Commissioner for Social and Economic Inclusion and the Commissioner for Neighbourhoods and Renewal. A number of Members present under Rule 30 and local residents were also given the opportunity to address the Committee.
- 5.19 Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members recommended to Cabinet that Option 1 - implementation of a one way system - as outlined in the Significant Decision (attached at Appendix A) should be trialled as an Experimental Order. Furthermore, it was recommended that monitoring data regarding the effectiveness of the scheme and its impact on the road network, local residents and businesses be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee after a three month period.
- 5.20 The recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are due to be considered at a meeting of Cabinet scheduled for 14th September 2015.

6. **Conclusion**

Members are requested to consider what action to take with regard to the petition, as outlined in Paragraph 5.4 of the report.

7. **Appendices Attached**

‘A’ - Significant Decision

8. **Background Papers**

Petition