

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Overview & Scrutiny **DATE:** 12th January 2017

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(For all enquiries)

WARD(S): All Wards

PART I **FOR COMMENT AND CONSIDERATION**

Transport – Strategy for Slough

1 Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to provide the Overview and Scrutiny Committee a summary of the issues related to congestion and how the Transport and Highways service is addressing delays on the network.

2 Recommendations/ Proposed Action

The Committee is requested to note how the transport and highways service is planning to deal with traffic growth and the existing congestion issues in the borough at a strategic level.

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

3a. Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy (SJWS) 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 from Burnham to Heathrow Airport from Slough Trading Estate through alternative forms of sustainable transport in this instance rail, with the a fully accessible station to appeal to more commuters.

4 **Other Implications**

a) Financial

No Financial implications.

Risk Management

No risks associated with this report.

b) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

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

c) Equalities Impact Assessment

An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required as part of this report.

(d) Workforce & Property

No issues.

(f) Carbon Emissions and Energy Costs

No issues, however options for improving transport will see significant reductions in CO2/NO2 and NOX emissions.

5 **Supporting Information**

- 5.1 The transport and highway service area has developed since 1999/2000 developed Local Transport Plans (LTP's) to address issues such as congestion and modal shift. The town has approximately 40,000 journeys entering with 30,000 leaving and as a result this contributes to significant delays and congestion around the peak periods with the off peak periods being relatively free flowing.
- 5.2 The borough also has a number of schools in close proximity of which there are a proportion of both Faith and Grammar schools attracting children from outside of the borough again in the peak period this adversely affects the road network.
- 5.3 The current LTP 3 has focussed on having an implementation plan which has been successful in securing over £6.5m of investment from the DfT to contribute to modal shift such as the Bike Hire scheme, Bikeability training for children, Bike It, school travel plans, Bus improvement schemes including junction upgrades and new pedestrian and cycling infrastructure. This has to a certain extent worked well but in reality has limited the impact of traffic growth.

- 5.4 In spite of the investment and the access to parking in residential developments, we are still seeing a rise in car ownership. The town is also seeing more vehicles using Slough's road network as a short-cut to the M4 or M40 to avoid other congested roads outside of borough. This is leading to major delays on residential and estate roads resulting in longer journey times and in some cases safety being compromised.
- 5.5 In appendix A, typical examples of congestion can be seen on a Monday morning and afternoon in the peak periods. It is clear that the network is at capacity and therefore intervention is needed if the town wants to be open for business.
- 5.6 To help address congestion in the town, the council and the Berkshire LEP have invested heavily in funding major projects such as the A355 and A332 widening schemes and the SMaRT bus scheme. These projects, some of which are near completion, are starting to show signs of improvement on the network for motorists and road users.
- 5.7 The Council and the LEP are also investing in cycleways and rail infrastructure at two stations (Burnham and Langley) to provide alternative options for travel. These will help promote the Elizabeth Line (Crossrail) when it arrives in Slough in December 2019 and will offer a real alternative for residents wanting to travel from one side of the borough to the other.
- 5.8 The council has in the past four to five years improved around 10 major junctions along the borough's strategic road network (Appendix B) however, as the town grows in population so does the demand not only from cars but also from pedestrians. Provision for pedestrians is essential but it does come with a cost and that cost is additional crossing facilities and more green time being allocated at major junctions for pedestrians.
- 5.9 Reducing capacity on the network for pedestrians and cyclists needs to be balanced against pollution, congestion and growth, therefore officers are minded to consider the impact before they provide such facilities.
- 5.10 The council is keen to improve transport and is continuing to work with its partners to promote public transport through real time information, improve journey times and decision making via Variable Message Signs and providing affordable alternatives such as the Bike Hire scheme.
- 5.11 The Local Plan review is well underway but this will put further pressure on Slough's roads if the housing allocation is to be met. To ensure the network is able to cope, a Transport Vision is being developed which has recently involved all members. Difficult decisions will need to be made but this will shape what Slough will look like in 20 years.

6 **Comments of Other Committees**

None

7 **Conclusion**

The Council is conscious of the impact that congestion is having on the town and its residents and has a programme to help deliver journey time reliability and improvement.

8 **Appendices Attached**

Appendix A – Morning and afternoon typical peak traffic
Appendix B – Road improvements