

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Cabinet

DATE: 6th February 2017

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PORTFOLIO: Cllr Matloob –
Commissioner for Transport and Highways

PART I **NON-KEY DECISION**

REFERENCES FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY – **SLOUGH ROAD NETWORK – ALTERNATIVE PROVISIONS TO MARKET LANE**

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to ask Cabinet to consider the recommendations of the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel (17th January 2017).

2. Matters for resolution from Cabinet

The Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel has referred the matter of the possible alternative provisions for the local road network in the Market Lane area. The wording of the resolutions is as follows:

1. The Panel recommend that, given the fact that only permanent counters are currently collecting data relating to the impact of the bridge closure, Cabinet ends the experimental scheme at the first opportunity.
2. The Panel recommend that Slough Borough Council (SBC) develop a package based on the reopening of Market Lane and a realigned bridge (as offered by High Speed Two Limited (HS2)).

Given the slippage in the likely timetable to deliver Western Rail Access to Heathrow (WRAtH), the Panel therefore noted that the final permanent mitigation package could not yet be constructed.

3 The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Corporate Plan

3a Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy (SJWS) Priorities

- Health: Improving wellbeing by improving transport and considering the most viable options to alleviate congestion.
- Economy and Skills: Improving journeys between work, home, leisure, school and exploring road infrastructure when linked to development or housing needs.
- Regeneration and Environment: Improving transport facilities, increasing sustainable transport and providing deliverable solutions.
- Housing: Ensuring road infrastructure is linked to housing growth.

- Safer Communities: Working towards reducing traffic congestion at key locations to improve the environment and safety for residents.

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 traffic flow and congestion in key areas in Langley and working towards future proofing the local road network.

4 Other Implications

(a) Financial

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

(b) Risk Management

Risk	Mitigating action	Opportunities
None	None	There are no risks, threats or opportunities arising from the report.

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no legal or Human Rights Act implications relating to the content of this report.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

There is no identified need for the completion of EIA relating to this report.

5 Supporting Information

- 5.1 The experimental scheme has previously been discussed by the Panel and Cabinet. This was taken at the meeting on 19th September 2016, with the Panel expressing their desire to see the scheme terminated as soon as was possible. However, Cabinet responded that data needed to be collected in order for future alternatives to be designed on the basis of sound, comprehensive information.
- 5.2 However, at the Panel's meeting on 17th January 2017 it became clear that the amount of data being gathered has decreased in recent weeks. At the time of that meeting, the only information being compiled was that taken from permanent traffic counters in the area; the other, temporary units were not being employed. As a result, the Panel recorded its view that this raised questions as to the justification for the continuation of the experimental scheme, given a) the issues it caused for local residents and other road users seeking to travel through Langley and b) the fact that alternative road networks do not need the scheme to be in operation whilst they are be devised.
- 5.3 Recent meetings with local residents' groups had also given a clear indication as to the views of those in the area. Whilst a very small number of residents directly beside the bridge had noted the quietness of recent months, this was an isolated matter and otherwise feedback had been almost entirely unanimous in its frustration at the traffic

caused by the scheme. Given the clarity and uniformity of this view, the Panel made the first recommendation outlined in Section 2 of this report.

- 5.4 In addition, SBC's Assistant Director for Assets, Infrastructure & Regeneration sought Government advice as to whether there is a legal minimum period of data gathering required. The advice given by the Department for Transport was that no such legal minimum exists. This advice is included as Appendix A.
- 5.5 The Panel also discussed the evolution of the long term package being offered. Initially, SBC had planned for the formation of a mitigation package based on HS2 and WRAtH being completed on schedule. However, whilst HS2 was progressing largely in line with the initial timescale, WRAtH was proving to be more prone to possible delays. At the time of the Panel's January 2017 meeting, it was difficult to provide specifics as to when WRAtH would be in a position to make proposals regarding the road network.
- 5.6 As a result, the Panel considered that a staged approach to making alterations to the road network would be required. HS2 was offering mitigation in the form of a reopened Market Lane and a realignment of the bridge. Whilst it was recognised that this would not be the permanent solution, it was also considered that this would relieve the situation at the moment and was a desirable outcome in the absence of clarity on the impact of WRAtH.
- 5.7 Given this situation, the Panel wished to support SBC officers in their request to be commissioned to form a package based on HS2's proposals. The matter of the final mitigation package would be returned to once WRAtH's position and all other variables had been clarified.

6 **Comments of Other Committees**

The issue of the experimental scheme had previously been discussed by the Panel on 8th September 2016, and referred their recommendations to Cabinet on 19th September 2016.

7 **Conclusion**

The Cabinet is requested to decide upon recommendations outlined in section 2 and discussed in sections 5.1 – 5.7 of this report.

8 **Appendices**

'A' - Letter from Department for Transport to SBC, 24th October 2016

9 **Background Papers**

'1' - Agenda papers and minutes, Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel (8th September 2016)

'2' - Agenda papers and minutes, Cabinet (19th September 2016)