



Minutes

TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE

Minutes from the meeting held on Tuesday 25 September 2018, in Mezzanine Room 1 - County Hall, Aylesbury, commencing at 10.00 am and concluding at 12.15 pm.

This meeting was webcast. To review the detailed discussions that took place, please see the webcast which can be found at <http://www.buckscc.public-i.tv/>
The webcasts are retained on this website for 6 months. Recordings of any previous meetings beyond this can be requested (contact: democracy@buckscc.gov.uk)

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr D Carroll (Chairman), Mrs L Clarke OBE, Mr D Dhillon, Mr S Lambert, Ms A Macpherson, Mr P Martin and Mr R Reed

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr M Averill, Mr M Dickman, Ms J Hancox, Mr P Lain, Dr L Leech, Mr M Shaw, Mr J Silvester, Stewart and Ms K Wager

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Mr S Bowles.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

3 MINUTES

The minutes were confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting.

4 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



The Chairman welcomed Mrs L Clarke, OBE back to Committee having recovered from an injury.

The Chairman thanked Ms K Wager for her support to the Committee.

5 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were none.

6 HIGH SPEED 2 UPDATE STATEMENT

The Chairman welcomed the Cabinet Member and his Officers and invited them to provide their update.

In response to a number of resident and Member concerns raised about traffic issues caused as a result of HS2 Ltd.'s exploratory investigations which had started, the Cabinet Member presented a verbal update statement to the Committee on High Speed 2. The statement read as follows:

"The HS2 Act provides powers for HS2 Ltd (and its contractors) to interfere temporarily with any highway in order to carry out the Phase 1 works. These powers are known as "Temporary interference" and are set out in paragraph 6 of Schedule 4 to the Act. The powers allow HS2 Ltd. to stop up, alter or divert the highway, divert traffic from it or prevent persons passing along it, break up or interfere with it or temporarily remove street furniture. In exercising these powers, HS2 Ltd. must provide reasonable access for pedestrians to or from premises abutting the highway.

Where the highway is listed in Table 3 of Part 4 of Schedule 4 to the Act, HS2 Ltd is required to consult the highway authority with respect to public safety and convenience before the power is exercised.

Where the highway is not listed within Table 3 (of the HS2 Act), then the consent of the highway authority is required. Consent cannot be unreasonably withheld.

In both cases, HS2 Ltd and its contractors consult with the Council and other key stakeholders through the local Traffic Liaison Group meetings, which have been established along the whole of the HS2 Phase 1 route to facilitate such engagement.

There are environmental controls in place to ensure that the impacts of construction are minimised, as far as reasonably practicable. In addition, HS2 Ltd and its contractors are required to comply with any Undertakings and Assurances given by the Secretary of State to Parliament as the Bill progressed through Parliament during petitioning.

We continue to work closely with HS2 Ltd and its contractors to ensure that all interference with the highway is appropriate, safe and minimises impacts on road users, as far as reasonably practicable, whilst recognising that Parliament has determined that the scheme must proceed.

The legislation allows for disputes between HS2 Ltd and the highways authority to be heard at arbitration if the parties agree or, failing that, must be determined by the Secretary of State.

The Council will use this course of action as and when it considers it is necessary.

The Council has not and will not compromise on the safety of road users. Congestion and delay are inevitable consequences of a construction project of this magnitude; however, the Council will use its limited powers to ensure as far as is reasonably practicable that the scheme is not prejudicial to users of the county road network”.

Following the Cabinet Member’s statement, Member questions and the resulting discussions raised the following points:

- **Communication and engagement with HS2 Ltd:** Members heard that the Council worked closely with HS2 Ltd and the Main Works Contractors and that a Council representative attended the Birmingham office once a week. The Chief Executive and the Leader met with HS2 Ltd four times a year to go through the strategic issues. The challenge for the Council was that not all the information requested from HS2 had been forthcoming which meant it could not be shared with the public., for example HS2 Ltd had yet to share the programme of works.
- **Access to information:** Members asked when the council would get proper information from HS2 Ltd as it was currently inadequate. Members were told that Council officers had been requesting the programme of works for the last two years. HS2 Ltd needed to step up in terms of communication and dissemination of information to the Council as the highways authority and to Members and residents. The Council genuinely did not have the information and answers they would expect to have. Members asked how this could be escalated to HS2 Ltd and were told that they needed to encourage residents to go to the HS2 website to complain, request information etc. in order to encourage HS2 to respond.
- **The Council’s role to ensure the safety of residents when exploratory work involved other utility services:** Members were told that the works of HS2 Ltd were not treated any differently than any other works and safety was always of utmost importance. There were review meetings held every Friday on certain works with contractors, utilities, and police etc. to discuss issues, concerns and ways forward. The Cabinet Member was confident that the appropriate mechanisms were in place; however, they were not always getting the right answers.
- **Integration of major infrastructure schemes and understanding of traffic movements:** A Member asked about whether there was an integrated picture and information on traffic movements resulting from HS2 and East West Rail and how these projects worked together. The Member highlighted that residents were finding it hard to respond to the East West Rail consultation without this information. Members were told that local Traffic Liaison Groups and day to day contact with HS2 Ltd considered the issues facing local communities. The Cabinet Member told the Committee that they knew it was an ideal opportunity to integrate works of the two major schemes where possible to minimise impact. Officers were extremely disappointed that HS2 Ltd in the development of their schemes had not adequately addressed the impacts of East West

Rail. Officers at the Council had been pushing for HS2 Ltd to take those issues and details into account. Members were reminded that it was an HS2 project and that the Council would keep the pressure on them. Further funding had been allocated for a new highways person who would focus on driving this work forward.

- **How local Members could be kept informed:** Members were reminded that this was not a County Council scheme, it was a HS2 Ltd scheme and so the Council can't be seen to lead on it. Residents and Members should contact HS2 Ltd rather than the Council with issues. The Council's role was to monitor how HS2 are dealing with the issues.

Members agreed that they wanted to call HS2 Ltd into a future meeting to follow up on some of the concerns raised and question them directly.

ACTION: HS2 Ltd to be invited to attend a future meeting.

Dr L. Leach and Ms K Wager

7 STREET LIGHTING

The Cabinet Member and supporting officers introduced the item and provided Members with an overview of the report.

The full overview can be viewed on the webcast alongside the supporting paper within the agenda pack.

The following points were made during the overview:

- There had been a significant reduction in complaints on street lighting over the past year.
- Performance indicators had all improved over the last year.
- There were 35,000 street lights in Buckinghamshire.
- Bucks had moved to an LED street lighting strategy which had produced the savings hoped for.
- By the end of the year all the old SOX orange lights would have been replaced with LED lamps.
- TfB were also doing a lamp column replacement programme.
- The biggest challenge was electricity supply issues – this could cause significant delays to street lights being fixed.
- Solar powered lamps were being used as temporary solutions whilst defects were being fixed.
- The budget of £2.8 m also had to cover the SALIX (LED lamps) loan repayments. There was £600,000 in the budget for repairs. Repairs were currently prioritised based on reporting of defects.
- The LED lamp replacement capital programme was almost complete.
- Responsibility for columns caused difficulty.
- Lots of activity was focussed on the lamp, but not on the columns, the life profile of a column asset was 25 years, however our current columns were at 40 years.

Member questions and the resulting discussion raised the following points:

- **Statutory Responsibility:** There was no statutory responsibility to provide light; the council had a power to provide light where it was deemed necessary for safety reasons. It had a duty to maintain minimum standards where lighting was put in place.
- **Ownership and responsibility of street and footway lighting:** Members asked about whether there was an accurate picture of ownership and responsibility for different street and footway lamps that Members and residents could have access to. Members were told that “Fix My Street” has all the County Council owned street lamps on, but not those provided and owned by parish, district and town councils. It was hoped that this information would be gathered within the next couple of years. Members were also told that every visit the crews did, they had been re numbering the street lights, by the end of the year, every light that had been worked on would have been re numbered.
- **Street Lighting Maps: Members suggested that information on the ownership and responsibility of all street and footway lighting should be mapped and recorded, and made accessible to Members and the public to enable accurate reporting of defects and to manage public expectations around responsibility for lighting within their areas. This could be made accessible on “Fix my Street”. This should include a summary of the authorities who own the lighting within each area.**
- **Devolution of footway lighting:** Members were told that the Council were looking to devolve more to parish councils for the fixing of defects. The County Council would have responsibility for maintaining highways lighting. Footway lighting is where there were opportunities to devolve more. There was an issue around those who were already the lighting authority and those who we had devolved to. In some areas it would be easy to devolve as County Council lights were few and far between as other authorities had responsibility for the majority of lighting already.
- **Consistency in how lighting assets are managed from a resident’s point of view:** Members were told that it would be difficult to get consistency as street and footway lighting was owned by different authorities in each area. In areas like High Wycombe which was unparished it would be difficult to get consistency. In some areas there were no county council owned lighting.
- **Performance:** Members questioned the 28 day target for defects to be repaired and whether this was acceptable. The target in the key performance indicator was also not being met. Members were told that delays were often as a result of some locations not being accessible by vehicle, so require different equipment. All crews were run from Griffin Lane in Aylesbury, and deployed on a day/week basis to specific areas, so this could cause some delays where defects occurred and missed the next programme of works and deployment of crews. However, Members were told that TfB were actually pushing targets of 7 days for repair. Members heard how in the winter sometimes the 28 day target could be harder to reach as the crews would also be out gritting.
- **Performance and programme of works:** A Member asked whether defects that are included within the programme of works were taken out of the performance targets, or whether they drew the targets down. Members were told that they were not taken out of the targets and could drive them down.

- **Members questioned whether defects that are within the programme of works should be included within the performance targets as they could drive the performance down. Members suggested that the pros and cons of recording these differently should be considered. This could give a more accurate picture of the planned works and performance monitoring.**
- **Opportunities to change programming of works:** Members asked whether there were opportunities to deploy crews from other depots rather than all being deployed from Griffin Lane in Aylesbury, with a view to reducing travel costs, time and improve efficiency. Members were told that TfB had considered this, there would be cost implications of storage, and delivery etc. of equipment, but a full cost analysis had not yet been undertaken.
- **Members suggested that the costings be looked into to consider whether deploying crews from a southern depot could improve efficiencies, or if the costs would outweigh savings of programming works in this way.**
- **Joined up working with other TfB works:** Members asked how TfB collaborate their work programmes across different areas of work within the contract to make best uses of resources. Members were told that each week TfB went through coordination of works to look at how they could be combined to work smarter and more efficiently. Examples were given where road works in areas had been combined with lamp replacement works to minimise the length of time disruption was caused. Members also heard that whilst combining works did not mean that works costs would be reduced for street light repairs, the efficiencies come from the fact that road closures would be minimised and each road closure cost £1000.
- **Improving work with other utility companies:** Members asked how TfB could improve working with other utility companies when carrying out works. Members were told that due to the danger posed by utility (gas and electricity) companies works on the highway, they did not usually want council contractors working on site at the same time. It was easier to work together where the council was the lead of the works. The costs that were saved would be the costs of road closures. Members were told that the Council and TfB wanted to see coordination of road closures improved.
- **Members suggested that TfB should identify ways to improve coordination of road closures to minimise impact of works being carried out and reduce costs.**
- **Degradation and replacement of lamp columns:** Members were told that by the end of the year TfB would have an accurate picture of the degradation of every column unit. There was a shortfall of 1877 columns that needed to be replaced and an Medium Term Financial Plan bid was being used to replace the columns and bring those up to standard.
- **Budget:** Members heard that the budget was constrained; therefore the policy had to ensure that it was structured in a way that allowed the service to perform within budget. For example, whilst the 28 day target for repair, could be seen as too long, it was what could be delivered within budget. The LED programme had reduced outage costs and the gain of the programme (Salix) would be realised later down the line. However, the programme had not reduced the budget as the reduction in costs was being used to pay back the SALIX loan.

- **Removal of column stumps:** Members heard that there had been a significant number of stumps caused this year through road traffic collisions. 93 stumps removed to date, 165 stumps remaining, with all stumps planned to be removed by March 2019. Members were told that TfB were looking at how to build the removal of stumps into the programme of works.
- **Members agreed that the removal of stumps should be added to the programme of works to ensure that all remaining stumps were dealt with by the target of March 2019.**
- **Night Switch off:** Pilot night switch offs in the county during 2006-2008 had evidenced that there had been no increase in collisions as a result. The Council installed lights where there were safety issues on the highway. Members asked whether night switch off would be extended and were told that the Council could consider further wholesale night switch offs where evidence based assessments of safety prove that it would be safe to do so. Members asked if there was any evidence of crime increasing where lights were switched off at night. They were told that the council had looked to Essex County Council for evidence, and they found that crime went down when the street lights were out at night. If the Council implemented night switch off there would need to be liaison with the districts to ensure it would not have any impact on CCTV. Switching off every other column could mean that the council would go below minimum standards of lighting – where they had installed lighting they had to meet minimum standards, however if safety assessments had been carried out and it was deemed safe to do so, they could switch light off completely at night.
- **Members were of the view that where safety assessments had been carried out and it was deemed that there were not any safety issues, night switch off should be explored.**

8 **SUSTAINABLE SCHOOL TRAVEL INQUIRY: 12 MONTH RECOMMENDATION REVIEW**

The Chairman welcomed the Cabinet Member for Transportation, Mr M. Shaw, Ms J Hancox, Head of Transport Strategy, Mr J Silvester Transport Strategy Manager and Ms P Campbell-Balcombe, Schools Commissioning Manager.

The Cabinet Member gave a brief overview of the progress towards implementation of the Committee's Inquiry recommendations. This can be viewed on the webcast in full, but included the following points:

- There had been issues with dedicated resource to drive this work forward after the experienced officer left 18 months ago. There had been a graduate in post, but this person had also left.
- The vacancy was about to be advertised again for a full time person to come into post to drive this work. The school crossing patrol manager was currently covering this work and they had experienced difficulties filling the post over the last 18 months.
- The Cabinet Member agreed that this was still a very important area of work and that the Council should still be encouraging walking and cycling.

- There was more that could be done to make walking and cycling routes safer to use.

The discussion highlighted that due to resourcing issues some of the recommendations not being progressed as much as they should have been. Members asked questions and had some discussion around particular issues within the recommendations; however, the Committee recognised that without resource the work could not be driven forward.

The full discussion can be viewed on the webcast.

Areas that were discussed through Member questions included:

- **Resource Issues:** Members sought reassurance that all steps had been taken to successfully recruit to the post of school travel planner. Members were concerned about how the council would deliver this work without resource. Members were told that last year a graduate had been recruited and trained but this time candidates with a wider range of experience were sought
- **Vision for the service:** Members asked whether this was still a priority area and if work would be picked up and taken forward. The Cabinet Member told Members that as a service they felt it was vitally important, especially as the county grows.
- Members were very concerned that there was a policy and inquiry recommendations but that there had been no one to deliver it and that 18 months since the inquiry recommendations were accepted, progress was lacking..
- **Budget and Public Health:** Members asked whether public health contributed to the resource for sustainable school travel, given the significant links to improved health. Members were told that there had not been any discussion on this to date, but that the Cabinet Member would value having those discussions.
- **Need for accurate maps for walking routes:** Members raised concern that the maps sent to school did not take into account where footpaths had been closed due to works taking place, without informing schools and parents. The Service agreed that more could be done to make sure that at the beginning of term they informed schools and parents if walking routes were disrupted.
- **Recommendation 3 - Planning permission for new and expanding schools:** In relation to Recommendation 3, Members heard how the S106 policy had been changed, so that sustainable travel infrastructure was now funded by the developer rather than falling to the council. This recommendation was viewed as completed.
- **Recommendation 4:** Members were told that this would be taken forward within the integrated transport review. There was a member briefing on 26 September on this.
- **Unsafe routes:** Members were not convinced that routes were being fully assessed and cleared to make them safe. Members felt that what constituted “safe” was not the same within the TfB contract and what Members and the public would expect. Members asked for there to be a clear definition drawn up for local Members of what “safe” and “unsafe” routes would look like.
- **Recommendations 5 and 6 and 7:** Members were told that these recommendations had not been progressed and would be taken forward once the post had been filled.

Members were disappointed that recommendations had not been successfully implemented, but recognised the issues the service had faced with resourcing the school travel planning and significant loss the council had when they lost the experience travel planner 18 months ago.

Members agreed that they would complete the RAG status against the recommendations after the meeting, with a focus on the key areas outstanding and question areas they specifically required further updates on in 6 months' time once a new person had been recruited. The RAG status would be shared with the Cabinet Member and Officers and would be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

9 COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Members noted the committee work programme and agreed they would like to invite HS2 Ltd to a future meeting to question them following concerns raised during the update at this meeting.

10 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on the 6 November 2018, in Mezzanine Room 1, County Hall.

CHAIRMAN

