

Cabinet Highways Committee

Meeting held 18 June 2013

PRESENT: Councillors Leigh Bramall (Chair), Harry Harpham and Bryan Lodge

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 An apology for absence was received from Councillor Isobel Bowler.

2. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

2.1 No items were identified where resolutions may be moved to exclude the public and press.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

4.1 The minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 14 March and 15 May 2013 were approved as correct records.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

5.1 Petition in respect of Blackbrook Road Speed Restrictions

Vonny Watts submitted a petition, containing 12 signatures, requesting speed bumps and a 20mph zone on Blackbrook Road to protect the safety of pedestrians and other motorists.

RESOLVED: That the report be referred to the Cabinet Member for Business, Skills and Development for consideration.

6. ITEMS CALLED IN FOR SCRUTINY/REFERRED TO CABINET HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE

6.1. There were no items called-in for Scrutiny or referred to the Cabinet Highways Committee.

7. PETITIONS

7.1 New Petitions

There were no new petitions to report.

7.2 Outstanding Petitions List

The Committee received and noted a report of the Executive Director, Place setting out the position on outstanding petitions that were being investigated.

8. OBJECTIONS TO THE PROPOSED CHANGE IN HOURS OF OPERATION OF THE EXISTING AT ANY TIME WEIGHT RESTRICTION ON BOCKING LANE TO NIGHT TIME ONLY

- 9.1 The Executive Director, Place submitted a report outlining and considering the objections received to the proposed change in hours of operation of the existing weight restriction on Bocking Lane from at any time to night time only and seeking approval for the recommendations.
- 9.2 John Bann, Head of Transport, Traffic and Parking Services, reported that he had received late representations from Councillor Ian Auckland who commented that he supported the recommendations as a compromise. Councillor Auckland urged further work be undertaken with partners to reduce the impact of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) and supported the introduction of a Speed Indication Device (SID) on Bocking Lane. Two further late representations were received from residents of Bocking Lane requesting that the Committee reject the proposals.
- 9.3 Margaret Chisholm, resident of Abbey Lane, made representations in support of the proposals. She stated that no resident of Abbey Lane or Bocking Lane wanted HGV's on the roads. However, they were not going to disappear so a compromise needed to be reached. Splitting the loads between both roads as a result of the proposals was the fairest solution for all.
- 9.4 Sally Evans, a resident of Abbey Lane also commented that she supported the proposals. She believed it to be a fairer solution to the one currently in place as currently all the HGV's went down Abbey Lane and this would be shared if the proposals were agreed. She further commented that the Council should prioritise work to reduce HGV's on the two roads.
- 9.5 Duncan Batty attended the meeting to make representations on behalf of residents of Bocking Lane and Greenhill Avenue. He questioned the figures in the report in relation to the number of lorries. There was also no factual evidence to say that lorries were using other local roads as a result of the ban.
- 9.6 Residents were objecting to the proposals for safety reasons and for the impact on the health of residents and other users. The sound impact was also a major issue. Should the recommendations be approved this would involve unnecessary spending on a project that was not needed. HGV's were not using Bocking Lane as a rat run but as a necessity.
- 9.7 Mr Batty further commented that Members of the Committee needed to visit the area to see for themselves that the road was too narrow for HGV's to use without causing a safety impact. The entry to the junction of Bocking Lane and Greenhill Avenue was dangerous and would be increased with the use of HGV's. The health of residents was also a concern with the potential for increased levels of pollution in the area. Residents were also concerned with the speed of the lorries and the

sharp descent on Bocking Lane was much more dangerous than the flat road of Abbey Lane. In conclusion, Mr Batty stated that residents believed the current solution was the best solution for the wider area.

- 9.8 John Barber, a resident of Bocking Lane, added that he supported the objections made to the proposals due to the unsuitability of Bocking Lane to accommodate HGV's. Previous Cabinet Highway reports on the issue had supported this view so he questioned why the current report said it was suitable as the characteristics of the road hadn't changed.
- 9.9 Mr Barber further stated that anyone using the central reservation would be placed in danger by HGV's using the road and it was an accident waiting to happen. He did not believe the accident data was reliable as there had been a number of other incidents which did not get recorded. The Committee should have a duty of care to local residents and a health and safety assessment.
- 9.10 John Bann responded that, although officers were mindful of potential for accidents, resources meant that that had to base decisions on where accidents did actually happen. The original decision had been taken on the recommendation of the South Community Assembly and officers had always stated that Bocking Lane could support HGV's.
- 9.11 Chris Galloway, Project Manager for the Scheme, reported that the published figures for Abbey Lane were a typing error and apologised for this. The pollution statistics had been collected in line with strict scientific rigour and the figures collected were well below the limits recommended by the World Health Organisation and the Government. Officers were working to improve signage on the route and believed that the cost of the scheme was good value for the work that was being done. The area could be investigated for a priority gritting route in the future. The Greenhill Parkway/Avenue junction would be signalised to reduce any potential danger.
- 9.12 Members commented that it was a difficult to please everyone all of the time and the proposals represented a fair compromise for residents. The Chair, Councillor Leigh Bramall, added that he could see nothing in the report which changed his mind from the original decision made in December 2012. The funding used could not be allocated elsewhere as it was Local Transport Funding and had to be allocated for transport schemes. He had been on site with the Cabinet Adviser prior to the original decision and believed there were no major differences in the speed of vehicles on Abbey Lane or Bocking Lane.
- 9.13 Councillor Bramall further commented that local Councillors acknowledged the difficulty which Members had in trying to achieve a scheme supported by everyone. A ban on HGV's using Bocking Lane between 7am and 7pm was still being maintained which was not there three years ago. He welcomed the introduction of a Speed Indication Device and requested officers investigate what crossing facilities were needed on Bocking Lane.
- 9.14 **RESOLVED:** That:-

- (a) the Traffic Regulation Order be made to change the hours of operation of the weight restriction on Bocking Lane in accordance with the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and the signing changes be implemented;
- (b) the objectors be informed accordingly;
- (c) Bocking Lane be included in the Speed Indicator Device rotation schedule to address residents speed concerns; and
- (d) an assessment be undertaken as to what traffic calming and crossing facilities were needed for Bocking Lane between Abbey Lane and Greenhill Avenue which could be included in the Streets Ahead zonal works.

9.15 **Reasons for Decision**

- 9.15.1 HGVs are vital for delivering goods around the City and transporting goods nationwide. However, in some areas the journeys they make are a cause for community concern. Encouraging HGVs to concentrate on using suitable routes will minimise the impact of HGV journeys and reduce community concerns.
- 9.15.2 The approval of the relaxation of the HGV ban on Bocking Lane will help improve the situation for residents of Abbey Lane and other nearby roads which HGVs have used as an alternative including Twentywell Lane, Mickley Lane, Prospect Road and Queen Victoria Road.
- 9.15.3 Having considered the objections to the change in hours of operation of the existing weight restriction on Bocking Lane from at any time to night time only, the reasons set out in the report for making the amendment to the Traffic Regulation Order outweigh the objections.

9.16 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

- 9.16.1 A number of alternative options had been considered previously in the 12th December report on the City Wide Review of HGV Routes when it was agreed to include both Abbey Lane and Bocking Lane (day time only) in the route network for HGV trips within the City. These included removing the ban on Bocking Lane altogether, introducing additional road engineering measures on Abbey Lane to deal with speeding as well as a 'do nothing' option.