

DELEGATED DECISIONS BY CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT (INCLUDING TRANSPORT)

MINUTES of the meeting held on Thursday, 12 July 2018 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 12.28 pm

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Yvonne Constance OBE – in the Chair

Other Members in Attendance: Councillor John Howson (for Agenda Items 2 & 5)
Councillor John Sanders

Officers:

Whole of meeting G. Warrington (Law & Governance); C. Rossington (Planning & Place); A Kirkwood (Infrastructure Delivery)

The Cabinet Member for Environment considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting, together with a schedule of addenda tabled at the meeting and decided as set out below. Except as insofar as otherwise specified, the reasons for the decisions are contained in the agenda, reports and schedule, copies of which are attached to the signed Minutes.

42/18 QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

(Agenda No. 2)

Councillor John Howson

What are the rules for parking non-motorised vehicles (such as towed caravans) in CPZs across Oxford? How are they enforced against a] residents entitled to park in the CPZ and b] those residents in properties excluded from using the CPZ as a result of a planning condition?

Cabinet Member for Environment

The Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) behind each Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) varies from zone to zone, if a particular CPZ is a cause for concern this can be investigated and advised upon. The TRO states what is a permitted vehicle, some early ones allowed caravans. If a vehicle is parked which is not permitted, then the

County Council can progress enforcement action. This includes against non-motorised vehicles.

Supplementary question from Councillor Howson

I understand that these matters are being discussed with the County Council's legal officers and enforcement team. Do you know when these will be complete?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment

As you know there is currently a review of CPZs with no definitive timeline for completion nor can I give you an answer to your specific question regarding removal of non-motorised vehicles as that matter is under investigation. However, the two are not co-dependent and if powers do exist to take action with regard to non-motorised vehicles irrespective of the CPZ review then I hope that could be done as soon as possible.

43/18 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda No. 3)

<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Item</i>
Petra Lucacik – Tennyson Lodge Resident Richard Munro – for Tennyson Lodge Residents Niaz Mohammed – Royal Cars Bashir Ahmed – COLTA City Councillor Sajjad Malik)))) 4. Westgate Bus Link)))
Christopher Benton – Pedal & Post Simon Hunt – Cyclox County Councillor John Howson)) 5. Oxford – George Street, etc)

44/18 EXPERIMENTAL TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER ALLOWING TAXIS AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES TO USE THE WESTGATE BUS LINK

(Agenda No. 4)

The Cabinet Member for Environment considered CMDE4 key issues raised in a recent consultation on the county council's intention to undertake an experiment allowing taxis and private hire vehicles into the Westgate bus link in the Oxford city centre.

The officer report had recommended not to authorise an experimental TRO.

Petra Lucacik spoke in support of the recommendation. As a resident of Tennyson Lodge she had been pleased to see improvements to traffic congestion after the Westgate centre had opened but for this to come back now in the face of the approved planning permission could put that at risk and was worrying for residents. Jurisdiction for governing public highway issues was separate to the planning system and a decision to allow an experiment now would let residents down badly. If this experiment was approved she would like to see a direct focus on pollution issues.

Responding to the Cabinet Member Mr Rossington confirmed that the planning and highway processes were separate but that did not prevent changes being made by the County Council as highway authority having followed necessary procedures.

The Cabinet Member accepted that the request for taxis to use the link needed to be heard as part of the proper and due process.

Richard Munro spoke in support of the recommendation as a Director of the Tennyson Lodge Residents Company. Accepting the separate characteristics of the highway and planning process he pointed out that any variation to the current situation which might result from a TRO could have a bearing on matters entered into and agreed upon with third parties such as noise attenuation from buses which could be found to be inadequate if taxis were now allowed. There were also serious concerns regarding air quality, validation of equipment to be used by the City council and the need to provide at least one years worth of data.

Mr Rossington then responded to questions from the Cabinet Member:

Paragraph 3 of the report confirmed that the reasons for recommending not going ahead had not solely been due to noise and air quality.

There were approximately 1800 buses in a 12-hour period equating to 150 per hour with a 2-way flow.

It was estimated that 350 taxis would use the link over a similar 12-hour period.

He was not aware of any air quality monitoring report and would pursue the matter of validation of equipment. However, he confirmed that monitoring would be required before and after if an experiment went ahead.

Niaz Mohammed for Royal Cars spoke in favour of an experimental order to allow taxis. His company provided transport for colleges; business parks and was the largest service provider for the County Council's special needs support. They had undertaken serious investment in eco-friendly hybrid cars with 70 – 80% of their fleet hybrid vehicles. The company had worked hard with the local community to improve its image and had been recognised nationally for its endeavours winning a number of green awards. Currently service users were having to pay extra in fares with drivers frequently accused by passengers of taking longer routes when buses were seen using the link. He felt taxis and PHVs were being treated unfairly and should be allowed to use the link or if not then it should be closed off completely.

He then responded to questions from the Cabinet Member:

The company were looking at securing a fleet of full electric vehicles but at the moment that type of vehicle did not give them the mileage they needed. The best available option therefore was the hybrid which allowed predominantly electric use within the city while reverting to fuel outside.

Vehicles used electric power when travelling under 30 mph and over 30 reverted to fuel.

Mr Rossington confirmed that prior to Westgate hackney carriages/taxis and PHVs had been able to use Norfolk Street and Castle Street.

Bashir Ahmed for COLTA supported the introduction of an experimental order. There were 107 hackney carriages in operation and since the changes following the opening of the Westgate taxis were now often gridlocked. That had affected their trade badly. It seemed to him that by allowing buses to use the link they were being given preferential treatment. 46,000 people commuted into the City for work resulting in huge traffic problems and allowing taxis to use the link would help offset that. Referring to increased journey times outlined in paragraph 9 of the report it was clear that the system was not working. He questioned concerns which had been raised regarding emission levels when the Westgate car park had been sited under flats etc. He tabled photographs setting out a scheme introduced in Reading which he felt was worth consideration and offered a way forward for Oxford.

He then responded to questions from the Cabinet Member.

COLTA had objected throughout the entire process.

With regard to the Reading scheme he confirmed that a report on this had been commissioned in 2016 when the tabled photographs had been taken.

With regard to concerns expressed regarding enforcement and identification of vehicles he pointed out while PHVs were very similar to other cars hackney carriages were easily distinguishable.

The Cabinet Member raised the issue of how taxis could be excluded when it seemed that the 1984 Traffic Regulation Act linked taxis and buses. She was further interested in this issue as the Reading signs in the photographs tabled by Mr Ahmed had used that legislation to distinguish between and exclude different types of vehicles.

City Councillor Saj Malik spoke in support of an experimental order. As a taxi driver for a number of years he felt qualified to point out that by the very nature of its siting Tennyson Place was a noisy area and that residents had chosen to live there. Delivery lorries to the many retail outlets in the area were not hybrid vehicles. He accepted that officers had a difficult job but there was lot of support for taxis to use the link road including the Oxford Civic Society. Clearly 24-hour access would be best but as a compromise for drivers and residents he suggested access be allowed for

wheelchair access vehicles for certain periods during a 24-hour period. He was confident that such a scheme if introduced would be observed and enforceable.

He then responded to questions from the Cabinet Member:

Oxford was a unique city which at times was susceptible to gridlock traffic. Everyone wanted the Westgate to be successful through a lawful and common-sense approach and he felt his suggestion represented a way forward.

He confirmed that the Old Greyfriars taxi rank was not suitable for all passengers and therefore not functional. Likewise the pick-up point in the new car park was not fit for purpose as the roof space was not high enough. He suggested that 2 cab ranks in front of the Swan and Castle would go some way to meeting demand which was likely to increase with further development.

Responding to a question from the Cabinet Member Mr Rossington confirmed that vehicles would be allowed to drop off on a red route but if access were limited to only those vehicles with wheelchair access that would allow in those vehicles with the worst emissions while preventing the majority of PHVs with more emission friendly vehicles.

Councillor Sanders stated that in his experience buses were noisier than taxis particularly when stopping and moving off so that coupled with the pollution from the underground car park seemed to undermine the aims of achieving a pollution free zone. He was sympathetic to residents and had some concerns at the suggested compromise of time limited access for taxis as that would allow vehicles in at possibly the most congested times of the day. He had no sympathy with the arguments of cost, which he felt were trivial in comparison with the money invested in the scheme set out at Item 5 on this agenda. Bearing in mind that people wanted to get in and out of Oxford the current situation seemed to him to be both an inconvenience to passengers and a reduction in amenity. Taxi companies had consistently objected to this ban and he felt it was unfair to restrict their movement. He felt the time was right to conduct an experiment to prove one way or another whether a change was acceptable or not.

The Cabinet Member for Environment recognised that exclusion of taxis and PHVs had not been intended just for pollution reasons but also congestion and safety and these issues had to be given equal gravitas. Use by taxis was small when compared to bus numbers and it was clear that there had been improvements to air quality because of technical improvements to buses and PHVs and it was to be hoped that those improvements would continue with further improvements to technology. She remained very concerned regarding enforcement and the issues of picking up and stopping along this road. She agreed regarding loss of amenity and if vehicles were allowed in then that would need to apply to both types. She accepted the points raised about the inadequacy of the Greyfriars taxi rank and concerns regarding the underground car park and acknowledged a comment by Councillor Howson regarding the new Uber style pick me up service stating that as that vehicle qualified as a bus it seemed inevitable that it would use the Link Road regardless of what decision was reached today.

On balance she felt that a 6-month experiment should be undertaken allowing taxis and PHVs to use the Westgate bus link as a through route only and time limited to particular periods of the day. She wished to see minimal signing and called on the City Council to undertake vigorous monitoring. She also sought assurances from the taxi company representatives that they would ensure that their drivers would not stop along the route by adding a term to drivers' contracts to prohibit stopping along the Westgate link and if that was found to be happening then the experiment would end. That assurance was forthcoming from taxi representatives. She asked that the experiment be set up as soon as possible but accepted that it was unlikely that that could be in place before the end of the year.

Therefore, having regard to the information set out in the report before her and the representations made to her at the meeting the Cabinet Member for Environment decided as follows:

to authorise an experimental TRO to allow taxis and PHVs into the Westgate bus link with details of the hours during which the experiment would apply to be agreed in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment.

Signed.....
Cabinet Member for Environment

Date of signing.....

45/18 OXFORD - GEORGE STREET/HYTHE BRIDGE STREET/WORCESTER STREET JUNCTION - PROPOSED AMENDED JUNCTION LAYOUT AND PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE PROVISION

(Agenda No. 5)

The Cabinet Member for Environment considered (CMDE5) responses to a statutory consultation on a proposal to amend the layout of the George Street/Hythe Bridge street/Worcester Street junction in central Oxford.

She also noted that the local member Councillor Susanna Pressel had expressed disappointment on behalf of pedestrians and cyclists who were forced to use this dangerous junction to hear that they would have to wait even longer for it to be made safe and efficient adding that people who lived nearby, for instance in St John Street and Upper Fisher Row would also be bitterly disappointed, and would worry about their health, since the queuing traffic was making air quality very poor in the vicinity. Furthermore, if improvements had to wait on the emerging proposals for Botley Road and the city centre, it could be many months before there were any improvements for which local groups had been campaigning for years.

Christopher Benton for Pedal and Post spoke in support of recommendations (b) and (c) but could not support (a) on grounds of safety. As a cycle delivery company this junction was a key route for his company operatives into central and eastern Oxford yet it posed serious safety issues for his operatives who collectively cycled 65,000

miles per annum as well as other cyclists. There were often serious delays and there was an urgent need to get improvements at this junction right.

Responding to questions from the Cabinet Member he confirmed that Pedal and Post had not been consulted specifically as part of the proposal but had found details online. His company had a fleet of 13 bikes with 4 larger trikes being introduced.

Simon Hunt for Cyclox also supported recommendations (b) and (c) but was concerned that (a) was being recommended to go ahead in advance of those two elements. The "Teardrop" junction as it was referred to it had 11 police recorded injuries with many more incidents unrecorded. If the recommendations were accepted they would want to see a detailed redesign with improvement to the junction within 6 months with non-motorised user audits carried out.

The Cabinet Member confirmed that with regard to (c) that would be considered by her in a public forum.

Graham Jones on behalf of ROX expressed disappointment at the lack of reference to business needs in the City. ROX supported (b) and (c) but had reservations with regard to (a) which they felt needed further consideration.

Endorsing the earlier comments Councillor Howson also expressed support for (b) and (c). However, drawing particular attention to the needs of pedestrians on Hythe Bridge Street he felt a decision on (a) needed to be held back as he felt the proposals therein were not robust enough to deal with predicted increased movement. It was a main route from the station with narrow pavements and he considered there was potential for a more permanent solution in conjunction with Nuffield college proposals for their car park and the Royal Oxford site. Removing buses from Gloucester Green would also be a step forward. The retail world was changing and it was not just about Westgate and with access to many retail outlets at this end of the city it was important to get it right this time.

Mr Rossington accepted that recommendation (a) meant that some traffic would be required to travel further but officers felt the proposals would help traffic flow and therefore change now was justified although nothing would be done on the ground until (b) and (c) had been completed. He was not aware of any recorded accidents since introduction of the "teardrop" traffic island element.

Responding to the Cabinet Member he confirmed that consideration could be given to provision of a yellow box at the Worcester Street South entrance point to the car park and possibly moving the lights back into Park End Street.

Responding to a concern expressed by Mr Benton regarding the west to east flow and problems at the new junction with cyclists having to veer into the traffic Mr Kirkwood felt that as that manoeuvre was routinely done at many other junctions it did not give him cause for concern and in his experience was rarely associated with accidents. There was an alternative route in via Park End Street.

Mr Rossington agreed that would be a quieter and more attractive alternative route for some cyclists because of less traffic.

Councillor Sanders had no problems with the proposals as set out at Annex 1 to the officer report particularly if it relieved congestion. However, any proposals would need to be monitored carefully.

The Cabinet Member felt minded to approve (b) and (c) with a request that Pedal and Post be added as a consultee. With regard to (a) she initially felt that the puffin crossing element was approvable but that the rest of the scheme should be delayed pending progress on (b) and (c). However, on further advice from officers she accepted that it would be better if the whole of (a) was deferred. Therefore, having regard to the information set out in the report before her together with the representations made to her at the meeting she confirmed her decision as follows:

- (a) defer approval of changes to traffic movements and introduction of a new Puffin crossing on Worcester Street North as advertised;
- (b) instruct officers to consider the implications of the Botley Road corridor study and Phil Jones Associates report for the design and specification of this scheme;
- (c) instruct officers to investigate further improvements to the design in consultation with key stakeholders and as part of the road safety audit process with further monitoring to include non-motorised users and that Pedal & Post be added as a key stakeholder with regard to the investigation of further improvements as outlined here.

Signed.....
Cabinet Member for Environment

Date of signing.....

46/18 ABINGDON & RADLEY: DUNMORE ROAD, OXFORD ROAD AND TWELVE ACRE DRIVE - PROPOSED TOUCAN & PEGASUS CROSSINGS AND BUS STOPS CLEARWAYS

(Agenda No. 6)

The Cabinet Member for Environment considered (CMDE6) responses received to a statutory consultation to introduce a toucan crossing, Pegasus crossing and bus stop clearways at Dunmore Road, Oxford Road and Twelve in Abingdon and Radley. The proposals had been put forward and funded as part of a proposed residential development.

Having regard to the information set out in the report before her including confirmation regarding developer funding the Cabinet Member for Environment confirmed her decision as follows:

to approve proposals to introduce toucan crossings (signalled crossings for pedestrians and pedal cyclists), a Pegasus crossing (a signal controlled crossing for

horse riders) and bus stop clearways at Dunmore Road, Oxford Road and Twelve Acre Drive at Abingdon and Radley as advertised.

Signed.....

Cabinet Member for Environment

Date of signing.....

47/18 EYNHAM: THORNBURY ROAD & WITNEY ROAD - PROPOSED WAITING RESTRICTIONS

(Agenda No. 7)

The Cabinet Member for Environment considered responses received to a statutory consultation on a proposal to introduce waiting restrictions on Thornbury Road, Old Witney Road, Witney Road, Bartholomew Close and Willow Edge Eynsham put forward and funded as part of a proposed residential development off Thornbury Road and also in response to concerns over road safety and traffic delays arising from parking on Witney Road and adjacent side roads raised by Eynsham Parish Council.

The Cabinet Member noted that the local member Councillor Charles Mathew had expressed strong support for the proposals not least because Thornbury Road was narrow and met Witney Road beside the Zebra Crossing and opposite the main pupil entrance to Bartholomew School (1200 pupils) and it was currently the habit for those collecting their children to park and wait on these roads. Once the current development west of Eynsham was underway (160 houses), Thornbury Road would unfortunately also be the main/only entrance for all traffic to it so in the interests of safety and local residents, these measures were necessary although enforcement would be an issue.

She also noted advice from officers that most residents had off-street parking and the availability of alternative spaces in a nearby car park.

Therefore, having regard to the information set out in the report before her together with the representations including support from the local member and advice from officers given to her at the meeting the Cabinet Member for Environment confirmed her decision as follows:

to approve proposals to introduce waiting restrictions on Thornbury Road, Old Witney Road, Witney Road, Bartholomew Close and Willow Edge Eynsham as advertised.

Signed.....

Cabinet Member for Environment

Date of signing.....

