

DELEGATED DECISIONS BY CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT

MINUTES of the meeting held on Thursday, 21 October 2010 commencing at 2.00 pm and finishing at 2.13pm

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Rodney Rose – in the Chair

Non-Voting Members Councillor David turner – Shadow Cabinet
Councillor John Sanders

Officers:

Whole of meeting G. Warrington (Corporate Core); S. Howell, D. Tole, P. Egawhary, D. Gildea and M. Ruse (Environment & Economy)

The Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting, and decided as set out below. Except insofar as otherwise specified, the reasons for the decisions are contained in the agenda and reports, copies of which are attached to the signed Minutes.

32/10 QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

(Agenda No. 2)

Councillor Jean Fooks

As the Cabinet Member for Transport knows, the recent gas board works at the junction of Banbury Road with Marston Ferry Road and Moreton Road caused huge delays to traffic on all four arms. This resulted in many people in cars, vans, lorries and buses being held up for very long periods, sometimes for over an hour, and contributed to a doubling of the number of Cherwell School pupils being late for school during a two-week period compared to two weeks before the work was done. Could he assure the people of Oxfordshire, many of whom were caught up in this congestion, that lessons had been learnt to avoid a repetition of such traffic chaos when future works at this and other similarly critical junctions were planned?

Answer from Councillor Rose

The Gas Board works at the junction of Banbury Road with Marston Ferry Road and Moreton Road had been known to the County Council for many months. It was discussed at the coordination meetings held by Oxfordshire County Council with representatives of all utilities companies and its programme and progress also monitored at separate meetings between

County's Streetworks Team and Southern Gas Networks (SGN). SGN worked closely also with County's Traffic Signals team at the planning stage and even carried out a trial run of the traffic management for the works at this junction. This simulation exercise did not produce any unexpectedly high congestion and delay results.

The road users were advised of the forthcoming work by warning signs on site, the roadwork's notices and through web sites. There was information distributed by SGN to local residents fronting Banbury Road. Frequent travel advice was also broadcasted on Radio Oxford in their traffic bulletins.

Overall timing of the work was not easy. Bearing in mind the extent and location of the work County's Streetworks Team considered having it carried out during school holidays, however other works in Oxford (near Park Town and St. Giles as well as on Woodstock Road) were already planned for and around that period this summer meaning that it would not have been sensible to put this additional burden on the highway network. Furthermore, the extensive nature of the project made it impossible to complete the work at all the sensitive junctions during non sensitive hours.

It is worth noting that while the County Council can apply the statutory powers to minimise disruption caused by utility works, the utility companies in turn also have statutory powers and duties allowing them to carry out their works.

The initial programme proposed by SGN indicated duration of 5 weeks. However, through close collaboration with the County and by working a 13 hour day 6 days a week SGN managed to complete the work in 4 weeks.

I am confident that County's Streetworks Team worked very closely and effectively with the SGN and used all its powers to minimise the overall impact of this necessary work before and during the actual construction. It is worth noting that the same team managed to speed up other SGN work last year coordinating it with the County's environmental improvement project in Summertown and therefore minimising the overall disruption to all road users and local communities.

It will be seen from the above information that we have learnt from all past operations, and that the recent works along the Banbury Road benefited from the knowledge of all our staff. It was fantastic that the project was completed well ahead of schedule. The traffic problems would have been far worse had we not had this expertise. The Area Stewards now in place will have a big part to play in maintaining this efficiency in future. I will be looking at the plans for the coming works on the Woodstock Road on both desktop and in the field, but am happy this will be little more than a briefing exercise for me. Like yourself, I am determined that Oxford will remain a "World Class" City, but that you would agree with me that this also demands "World Class" utilities to the residents who live in the City. A project of this size and complexity can never be completed without some disruption to our daily lives.

Councillor David Turner

“At recent Parish Council meetings in Waterstock and Tiddington I have been quizzed on the following:

Please advise

- (a) Why has the resurfacing work on the A40 at Wheatley taken so long to complete, given that on several days the highway has had restricted access causing long traffic queues and there were very few if any workers evident?
- (b) Whilst the new surface is much quieter and this is very welcome, the quality of the work is very poor with ridges between areas of the surface. Will remedial work be undertaken?
- (c) How are Oxfordshire County Council engaged in providing noise barriers on the M40 in Oxfordshire between junctions 5 & 8 in support of the M40 Chilterns Environmental Group and Wycombe District Council?”

Answer from Councillor Rose

- (a) The original publicised works programme (8 weeks) has been exceeded by 4 weeks. Works included waterproofing of the bridge decks and with this operation there was always the risk of repairs to the concrete beneath being required. When concrete repairs became necessary a 7 day curing period was required before the waterproofing could be applied. Whilst some float in the overall programme was built in for the risk of this occurring, more repairs of this type occurred than anticipated. This accounts for approximately 2 weeks of the additional time it has taken to complete the works. Whilst the curing process was taking place the lane had to remain closed to traffic and at times, particularly with lane 2 (the central lane) there were not always other activities being carried out. Hence the minimal staff attendance on site.

In addition there have been difficulties with material supplies and also the availability of sub-contractors as a result of the original programme being extended. Our Term Contractor has advised that this accounts for a further 2 weeks delay.

Works will be carried out overnight on Thursday 21 October (9pm to 6am) at the A418 junction when the slip-road will be closed. Following that lining and signing works should be completed by the end of that week subject to sub-contractor availability and weather conditions. The road will then be opened up again until a date was agreed for a further daytime off-peak nearside lane closure for general tidying up of the verge areas.

- (b) The surfacing works in lane 1 (nearside lane) comprised planing out and replacement of a 40mm depth of surfacing material to remove rutting defects. A thin surfacing system of 25mm depth was then overlaid on top of this on lane 1 and also on top of the existing surface of lane 2 (the central lane). Due to the thin layer being applied the scope for ironing out existing features within the carriageway had been minimal, particularly with the transverse working joints. If the joints between the working areas exceeded the tolerances for acceptance these would be identified on completion. Should remedial works be required they would be carried out after the winter period with minimum lengths of 50 metres recommended.
- (c) We have in the past made financial contributions to Chilterns Environmental Group for the assessment of measures.

Supplementary Question

Would the Cabinet Member take a more proactive approach in the provision of noise barriers between Junctions 5 and 8 on the M40 by talking to the Chairman of the Chilterns Environmental Group.

Answer from Councillor Rose

He would but could give no undertaking to commit any finances.

Councillor John Sanders

"With regard to the Bicester Residents Parking Scheme – Minor Amendments can the Cabinet Member for Transport explain why he thinks the increased costs of the parking permits for residents in these 140 properties of between 100% and 165% (as and when civil enforcement is introduced) is justifiable?"

Answer from Councillor Rose

I regret that my answer is very similar to the one I gave to Councillor Sanders at Cabinet earlier this week on a similar issue. Due to the awful mess we are left in by the last Labour Government, every one of these schemes must "wash its own face". The only place I could take any subsidy from would be Highway Maintenance, and this I am not prepared to do.

The residents' parking scheme in Bicester covered a very small area and therefore there were no economies of scale as there were with larger schemes. Cherwell District Council had to bear the cost of administering and maintaining the issue of permits and, as and when Civil Parking Enforcement was introduced in the district, there would be a cost to enforcing the residents' parking bays. The reduced rate in place until Civil Parking Enforcement was introduced was in recognition of the fact that enforcement

would be limited to the resources that the Community Support Officers might be able to provide.

Supplementary Question

Every response from the Cabinet Member hangs on the last government but to continue to represent misinformation did not make it true. Under the last government costs for CPZs were calculated to ensure they were self financing. In the fullness of time Bicester residents would face increased charges. Could the Cabinet Member give an assurance that they would be limited.

Answer from Councillor Rose

In an ideal world schemes would be subsidised but this was not and it was out of the question to commit finances to subsidising resident parking schemes when the highways maintenance budget was in severe crisis.

The entire costs of introducing and operating the Scheme was the responsibility of Cherwell District Council who had stated that the current levels of charge did not cover their costs. Discussions between Oxfordshire County Council and Cherwell District Council officers had been ongoing for over a year and there was no direct link between the proposals for Bicester (which included increasing the costs of permits) and the current consultation on raising the cost of residents permits in Oxford.

33/10 HEADINGTON WEST CONTROLLED PARKING ZONE REVIEW

(Agenda No. 4)

The Cabinet Member for Transport considered a review of the Headington West Controlled Parking Zone which had been introduced in September 2006.

Having regard to the arguments and options set out in the documentation before him the Cabinet Member for Transport confirmed his decision as follows:

- (a) approve the making of The Oxfordshire County Council (Headington-West) (Controlled Parking Zone and Waiting Restrictions) Consolidation Order 20**;
- (b) authorise the Deputy Director for Environment & Economy Head of Highways & Transport to agree any further non-substantial variations he considered appropriate subject to him consulting the Cabinet Member for Transport on any material variation and undertaking any further consultation which he might consider appropriate.

34/10 OXFORD - TEMPLE COWLEY AREA - PROPOSED CHANGES TO PARKING

(Agenda No. 5)

The Cabinet Member for Transport considered changes to parking in the Temple Cowley Area in the light of comments received in response to a statutory consultation on proposals to vary the traffic regulation order.

Having regard to the arguments and options set out in the documentation before him the Cabinet Member for transport confirmed his decision as follows:

to approve the making of the Oxfordshire County Council (City Of Oxford Various Streets Cowley Area) (Traffic Regulation) Consolidation (Variation No.10*) Order 20** as advertised but with the following revisions:

- (i) To provide no waiting at any time instead of no waiting Monday to Friday 8am to 6.30pm opposite number 10 St. Christopher's Place.
- (ii) To provide no waiting Monday to Friday 8am to 6.30pm instead of no waiting at any time outside number 10 St. Christopher's Place.
- (iii) To provide no waiting Monday to Friday 8am to 6.30pm instead of no waiting at any time across the access to number 12 St. Christopher's Place.

35/10 BICESTER RESIDENTS PARKING SCHEME - MINOR AMENDMENTS

(Agenda No. 6)

The Cabinet Member for Transport considered comments and objections received to a formal consultation to introduce a new traffic regulation order to amend the residents parking scheme in Bicester.

Having regard to the arguments and options set out in the documentation before him the Cabinet Member for Transport confirmed his decisions as follows:

to approve the proposed changes to the Bicester Residents Parking Scheme as advertised in the Oxfordshire County Council (Various Roads, Bicester) (Parking) Order 20** (and revised in the supplementary consultation) and the Oxfordshire County Council (Bicester) (Traffic Regulation) Amendment Order 20**

..... in the Chair

Date of signing 2009