

**PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
4 FEBRUARY 2016**

**CALL IN OF A DECISION BY THE CABINET MEMBER FOR
ENVIRONMENT – PROPOSED BUS LANE & PARKING/WAITING
RESTRICTIONS – ORCHARD CENTRE (PHASE 2), DIDCOT**

A request has been received to call in the decision for scrutiny by the following Councillors:

Councillor Greene
Councillor Hards
Councillor Christie
Councillor Tanner
Councillor Beal
Councillor Curran
Councillor Pressel
Councillor Price
Councillor Webber
Councillor Smith

The background and reasons given for the request by the councillors are:

“At the Cabinet Member for E&E meeting on 14 January, Councillor Hudspeth standing in for Councillor David Nimmo Smith, approved various traffic orders to allow a through route for buses along the pedestrianized section of Station Road Didcot.

Councillor Greene (Didcot East and Hagbourne) in speaking against the application raised the issue of a petition which was presented at Council last year and which had about 1500 signatures. That petition was not brought to the attention of officers who prepared OCC's response to the planning application for the Orchard Centre Phase 2, as was acknowledged on the 14th.

Councillor Hards (Didcot West) spoke referring to a pre planning public consultation on the possible Orchard Centre Phase 2 development in November 2013, which was the first time the public had been alerted to the possibility of closing the bus link along High Street, but in granting the order Councillor Hudspeth said that the possibility went back some years before 2013. That is believed to be based on a misunderstanding and the matter should be reconsidered (issue 2).

Councillor Hards also referred to the granting of Garden Town status to Didcot and the public statement that the completion of the Northern Perimeter Road was the Leader of SODC's number one priority. If that is the case, and if the completion of the Northern Perimeter Road would as claimed relieve the congestion at the Jubilee Way roundabout, then an alternative route for buses may not be required (issue 3).

PSC5(a)

A representative from Hammersons also spoke at the meeting and he made a new offer, to pay £10,000 towards the cost of establishing a Residents Parking Zone on the affected part of Station Road. Councillor Hudspeth established that that was a new proposal and it is considered that the offer needs to be formalised BEFORE any work starts on the proposed bus link.

Reasons for this Request

1. That the officers dealing with the matter had not been made aware of the fact that a 1500+ signature petition had been presented to Council opposing the proposal;
2. Ian Hudspeth, in giving his decision, was wrong to say that routing buses along Station Road had been around before November 2013. Previous work to extend the Orchard Centre had made no mention of closing High Street and sending buses along Station Road instead;
3. Whilst it is true that the final section of the A4130 Northern Perimeter Road has been planned for about 30+ years, Garden Town status clearly makes the prospect of completion of it a realistic proposition. Paragraph 8(a) of item 11 on the Cabinet Agenda for 26 January refers. Also John Cotton is on record as saying that that road would both relieve the congestion at the Jubilee Way Roundabout, and that its completion would be his number one priority should money become available through the Garden Town designation. Therefore if Mr Cotton is right on both counts a new bus link would not be required.
4. New information about funding of £10000 for a controlled parking zone was provided at the meeting by the Consultants and that offer needs to be properly evaluated before any irrevocable steps to open up Station Road are taken.”