

MINUTES OF THE FORWARD PLAN SELECT COMMITTEE
Wednesday, 4th February 2009 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Long (Chair) and Councillors Baker V Brown, Butt (alternate for Councillor Coughlin), Dunn (alternate for Councillor Castle), J Moher (alternate for Councillor Powney) and H B Patel.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Castle, Coughlin, Mistry, Powney and Tancred.

Councillor D Brown (Lead Member for Highways and Transportation) also attended the meeting.

1. Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

None declared.

2. Deputations

None

3. Minutes of Last Meeting – 7th January 2009

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the meeting held on 7th January 2009 be received and approved as an accurate record.

4. Matters Arising

None.

5. Call-in of the Executive Decisions from the meeting of the Executive on Monday, 19th January 2009 and of the Highways Committee Decisions from the meeting of the Highways Committee on Tuesday, 20th January 2009

Petition Against the Kingsbury Road Local Safety Scheme

Councillor D Brown (Lead Member for Highways and Transportation) presented the report, stating that the measures proposed in the scheme were designed to address the number of accidents that had occurred in the last 3 years and of the need to reduce opportunities for speeding, which in some instances had been in excess of 60 mph, along the road. One of the main proposals to achieve speed reduction was to reduce the number of lanes each way from 2 lanes to 1.

Irfan Malik (Assistant Director, Streets and Transportation, Environment and Culture) then responded to the reasons given for the decisions being called-in. With the agreement of the Chair, additional information was circulated with regard to the item. Beginning with the reason that there was insufficient

consultation with residents, Irfan Malik stated that some 155 questionnaires had been distributed, with 31 returned, representing a response rate of 20% which was fairly typical of such exercises. The results of the consultation showed 58% in support of the proposals, 39% against and 3% of no opinion. With regard to lack of consultation with Fryent ward councillors, Irfan Malik confirmed that the consultation documents had been sent to all Fryent ward councillors by e-mail. In addition, a meeting on 18th November 2008 had taken place between Councillors J Moher and R Moher and Gary Pidgeon (Metropolitan Police Sergeant for the Fryent Safer Neighbourhood Team) and officers and suggestions from that meeting had been taken into consideration. With regard to lack of consultation with partner agencies including the police, Irfan Malik advised that the scheme had the support of the Borough's Traffic Management Officer who felt it would help reduce speed and make the road safer and his response had been forwarded to ward councillors. Irfan Malik added that the 18 recorded accidents in that stretch of the road over the last 3 years was unacceptable and that funding had been approved from Transport for London (TfL) to proceed with the scheme.

Members then discussed this item in some detail. Councillor J Moher, speaking as one of the councillors who had called-in the decisions and also as a Fryent Ward member, then elaborated on the reasons for call-in. With regard to residents' consultation, he queried the reasons for making decisions based on a consultation response rate of 20%. He felt in any case that a far larger number of residents should have been sent the consultation document, including those on Valley Drive who had organised a petition against the proposals. Although the Valley Drive Residents' Association had been consulted, they were against the scheme and marginal amendments to the proposals had been made as a result of this. Nevertheless, such amendments in his view reflected that it was acknowledged that the proposals would affect these residents and therefore they should have been included in the consultation exercise. With regard to consultation with Fryent Ward councillors, Councillor J Moher asserted that no councillors from this ward had received the consultation documents and that the meeting on the 18th November 2008 had only been arranged following residents' concerns about the scheme being made to these councillors. He drew Members' attention in the report to Gary Pidgeon's comments recorded at the meeting which stated that the amount of accidents did not justify the need for traffic calming or speed reduction measures and that reduction from 2 lanes to 1 would increase tail backs and hold ups. Councillor J Moher stated that a draft drawing showing how formalised parking spaces and 1 lane each way could be accommodated were yet to be provided to ward councillors, as had been agreed at the meeting. He also did not believe that a reduction to 1 lane would help reduce vehicle speeds, especially in view that most accidents occurred at night. With regard to an offer by Transportation officers for a further meeting in January 2009, Councillor J Moher felt that this was too late to provide any useful feedback in view of its proximity to the date of the Highways Committee meeting where a decision was to be made and he suggested that consultation with Fryent Ward councillors at an earlier stage could have yielded a more positive outcome.

With regard to the number of accidents reported, Councillor J Moher suggested that 15 were not in the proposed area of the scheme and were in Queensbury Ward. Of the other 9 accidents, he asserted that none of these were speed related. Therefore he felt that the information provided to the Borough's Traffic Management Officer was incorrect. In addition, he suggested that most accidents were slight and the one involving a fatality was due to a vehicle performing a u-turn and was not speed related. Members noted that Fryent Ward councillors had suggested introducing speed cameras and he queried why the use of speed chicanes or speed cushions had not been considered. Councillor J Moher concluded by stating that more consideration of the scheme was needed and that a detailed re-consultation be undertaken prior to a new scheme being proposed and that emphasis should be placed on introducing a suitable scheme as opposed to ensuring that funding was used within the specified period.

Councillor Dunn acknowledged that the stretch of road that the scheme was proposed for did experience speeding traffic, however he did not believe that reducing the road to 1 lane each way would significantly slow vehicles. He suggested that other measures, such as chicanes, speed humps, electronic signage warning drivers to slow down, double yellow lines or restricting overtaking to one side of the road should be considered. He also enquired about the number of vehicles that had been observed travelling at 60mph or more. Councillor H B Patel commented that the road already suffered from heavy traffic flow and that the scheme proposed would exacerbate this. He remarked that only 5 accidents were as a result of speeding and he suggested that more appropriate measures could include introducing single cushion speed humps and signage asking drivers to reduce their speed. Councillor H B Patel felt that in any case that reducing the road to 1 lane would not be effective in reducing speeds and he added that the consultation should have included a wider area, including Valley Drive. Councillor Butt sought further details regarding the consultation and commented that speed cushions in the Kingsbury Station area had proved effective and should be considered, along with speed cameras, for this scheme.

Councillor V Brown stated that Kingsbury Road was used as an alternative when there were blockages to the North Circular Road and that as Kingsbury Road was reduced to 1 lane each way in the shopping area, that the proposed scheme was merely extending the funnelling effect of this. The Chair sought further details with regard to proposals to upgrade existing road markings and pedestrian crossing points at the junction of Kingsbury Road and Roe Green and whether a traffic island was already located there. She remarked that a local safety scheme had been identified as necessary for a number of years and that the options were to either proceed with the scheme before funding was lost, or to re-consider the scheme and re-consult, taking into account that it could be another 2 years before funding would be available again.

In response to the issues raised, Councillor D Brown advised that the proposals would not narrow the road and traffic flow capacity would not be affected, however speeds would be reduced. This would be achieved by reducing the number of lanes each way from 2 to 1 lane and by formalising parking spaces on both sides of the road. Members heard that most accidents

occurred during dark hours and one accident which occurred along Kingsbury Road at just after midnight, approximately 87 metres from the junction with Old Kenton Lane, had involved a fatality and speed had been a contributing factor, as it had been for a number of accidents. He asserted that all 18 reported accidents occurred within the area that the scheme was proposed. With regard to consultation, Councillor D Brown stated that in addition to the consultation forms sent to residents, the meeting on 18th November 2008 had involved Fryent Ward Members and Julia Day, a representative of the Valley Farm Residents' Association. He felt that it would not be appropriate to introduce speed humps in view that the road was a major distributor route. The Select Committee was advised that TfL funding would not be available for speed cameras as the fatality rate was below the threshold required. Councillor D Brown advised that if the scheme was not approved, an alternative scheme would not be in place for at least 2 years.

Irfan Malik advised that all councillors from Fryent and Queensbury wards had been sent by e-mail the consultation documents that had been distributed to residents. Furthermore, there had been amendments to the proposals following the meeting that took place on 18th November 2008, including the inclusion of space for two lanes of traffic on the westbound side of the road starting before Old Kenton Lane and extending to Valley Drive and the introduction of a right turn facility into Valley Drive from Kingsbury Road. Irfan Malik confirmed that the consultation undertaken was in accordance with the Council's procedures and processes, adding that the consultation process for Transportation issues was due to be reviewed. Members were advised that any delay to the scheme could jeopardise the funding that had been made available for it and there was not sufficient time to amend the scheme. If the scheme was not implemented, the funding provided by TfL would no longer be available and a new bid would need to be submitted. It was confirmed that the funding for this scheme would need to be used by 26th March 2009. Irfan Malik advised that the Police's Borough Traffic Management Officer supported the scheme and that this was the official response from Brent Police. Furthermore, the Borough Traffic Management Officer's opinion was more qualified than that offered by the Sergeant for the Fryent Safer Neighbourhood Team and a technical judgement had been made regarding the proposals. The Borough Traffic Management Officer had also advised that there were in fact more accidents than the 18 identified by the Council. Irfan Malik reiterated that speed was a major factor with regard to accidents and he advised that use of chicanes would be inappropriate for a road of this nature due to the heavy traffic flows it experienced. With regard to speed cushions, again these were deemed inappropriate for roads with heavy traffic flow and it was anticipated that there would be considerable resident opposition to such a proposal, whilst it was also a policy of the Mayor of London to reduce the number of speed cushions. Speed cameras were subject to meeting Metropolitan Police criteria and electronic slow signals would need additional funding, although such a measure could be considered during a review of the scheme. The proposals in the scheme were designed to make drivers slow down and drive more safely. Members were informed that more road markings would be added at the junction of Kingsbury Road and Roe Green, whilst a traffic island would also be added to reduce the road crossing distance and increase safety for pedestrians. It was noted that nearly 400 vehicles had

been recorded travelling in excess of 60 mph on a 30 mph road over a period of 7 days.

Members then agreed that the Executive be requested to re-consider the scheme and to re-consult residents, ward councillors and partner agencies prior to a new scheme being proposed.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that upon considering the report from the Director of Transportation, the decisions made by the Highways Committee be noted; and
- (ii) that the Select Committee requests that the Executive re-consider the Kingsbury Road Local Safety Scheme, including re-consulting residents, ward councillors and partner agencies before a new scheme is proposed.

6. The Executive List of Decisions for the meeting that took place on Monday, 19th January 2009

The Chair issued a reminder that any differences between the recommendations in the report and the decisions made be highlighted at future meetings.

RESOLVED:-

that the Executive List of Decisions for the meeting that took place on Monday, 19th January 2009 be noted.

7. Briefing notes/information updates requested by the Select Committee following consideration of Version 8 of the Forward Plan (2008/09)

- (i) ***Council-Wide Review of Fees and Charges 2009/10***

RESOLVED:-

that the briefing note on Council-Wide Review of Fees and Charges 2009/10 be noted.

- (ii) ***Security Services***

RESOLVED:-

that the briefing note on Security Services be noted.

- (iii) ***Partnering Arrangements with St Mungo's***

RESOLVED:-

that the briefing note on Partnering Arrangements with St Mungo's be noted.

8. **The Forward Plan – Issue 9 (2008/09)**

Issue 9 of the Forward Plan (09.02.09 to 15.06.09) was before members of the Select Committee. Following consideration of Issue 9 of the Forward Plan, the Select Committee made the following requests:-

(i) ***Energy Procurement***

The Select Committee requested a briefing note on this item informing Members how this would tie in with the Climate Strategy. The request was made by the Chair.

(ii) ***Provision of Bailiff Services for Parking Enforcement***

The Select Committee requested that the Executive report be provided. The request was made by Councillor H B Patel.

(iii) ***Moving Traffic/Parking CCTV Enforcement***

The Select Committee requested a briefing note on this item updating Members on the progress of the Executive report and to include details of the source of funding and the locations of the cameras. The request was made by the Chair.

9. **Items considered by the Executive that were not included in the Forward Plan**

There were none.

10. **Date of Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Forward Plan Select Committee would take place on Wednesday, 4th March 2009.

11. **Any Other Urgent Business**

There were none.

The meeting ended at 8.50 pm.

J LONG
Chair