



# LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

## MINUTES OF THE HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE Thursday 11 October 2012 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor J Moher (Chair), Councillor Powney (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Beswick, Jones and Long

### 1. **Declarations of personal and prejudicial interests**

Councillor Beswick declared that he was a ward member for Harlesden.

### 2. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 17 July 2012 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

### 3. **Matters arising**

None.

### 4. **Deputations**

None.

### 5. **Petitions**

#### ***(i) Parking for the disabled in Harlesden***

Mr Jimmy Telesford of the Brent Association of Disabled People (BADP) addressed the Committee on the petition. Mr Telesford stated that although he was aware of the planned re-development of the town centre and welcomed the proposal to provide additional parking for the disabled in the area, he requested that local disabled persons be fully involved in the recently commissioned accessibility review, which will inform the planning and design of the scheme. The involvement of disabled persons in the accessibility review will ensure that the scheme is designed to take account of specific disabled access issues.

#### ***(ii) Request for consultation by group of Harlesden residents***

Cheryl Henry addressed the Committee on this petition. She was concerned that residents in some parts of Harlesden, in particular in the Church Road area had not

been consulted about the proposals for the re-development of Harlesden town centre.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the petition on parking for the disabled in Harlesden be noted;
- (ii) that the petition for consultation by a group of Harlesden residents be noted.

## 6. **Petition - parking for the disabled in Harlesden**

The Committee considered a report that responded to a petition seeking to keep parking spaces for disabled people in Harlesden Town Centre in relation to the town centre re-development. The results of a public consultation on proposals to improve Harlesden Town Centre were presented to the Highways Committee on 20 March 2012. Paul Chandler, Head of Transportation noted that the Committee decided at its meeting in March 2012 to provide dedicated parking bays throughout the area and to include this in the detailed design of the scheme. He continued that an independent access consultant had been commissioned to look into all related disabled access issues, including disabled parking, and that the consultants had been briefed to engage with local associations in the detailed design of the scheme with a view to advising on accessibility requirements.

The Head of Transportation outlined the scheme and added that as parking would not be permitted along High Street, Harlesden, between Manor Park Road and Tavistock Road, the detailed design would ensure that dedicated disabled bays were in close proximity to these areas, to facilitate accessibility to shops on the High Street. In his view, the provision of dedicated disabled bays was an improvement to the current situation as it would ensure spaces closer to the town centre were available.

John Quinn, Chief Executive of Brent Community Transport (BCT) drew members' attention to a Government Regulation that could permit parking by disabled persons in a pedestrianized area at the discretion of the local authority. He added that BCT vehicles required a 6metre clear space for disembarking passengers' and requested officers to take that into account when providing spaces for disabled parking.

In the discussion that followed, the Chair assured the petitioner that the Council would give attention to the issues raised by BADP including their involvement. Councillor Beswick, in welcoming the report, echoed similar sentiments. Councillor Long welcomed the appointment of access consultants to look into the issues raised by BADP and added that although the decision was made in March 2012, there had been no contact with BADP since then to address concerns about disabled parking bays and accessibility. Councillor Moher noted that this issue had been discussed in previous committee meetings and had been addressed. Councillor Long also enquired about the terms of reference of the accessibility consultants. Councillor Powney commended officers for the systematic approach to resolving the parking problems of the Harlesden area.

Paul Chandler undertook to pass on the requirements of Brent Community Transport to the attention of the accessibility consultants. In respect of the consultant's brief, he agreed to forward a copy of the brief to Councillor Long.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the contents of the petition and the issues raised be noted;
- (ii) that the course of action agreed at the Highways Committee on 20 March 2012 and the action taken by officers be noted and it be agreed that additional dedicated disabled bays would be incorporated into the detailed design to be implemented in 2013/14.

Councillor Long asked that her dissent from the above decisions be recorded.

#### **7. Petition - request to be consulted by group of Harlesden residents**

Members received a report from the Head of Transportation which responded to a petition that some areas of the Harlesden ward were not consulted on the proposed highway improvement scheme in Harlesden town centre, and that those areas should be re-consulted.

Paul Chandler, Head of Transportation in outlining the extent of the consultation area stated that in addition to the normal letter drop, there was an extensive publicity on the scheme proposals for those that did not receive consultation packs. This included information on the radio, local press, Brent magazine, permanent exhibition in the local library, a staffed exhibition at the Salvation Army and information provided on lamp columns in the town centre. He continued that every effort was made to ensure that residents who lived outside of the town centre were made aware of the proposals and invited to comment on them.

In welcoming the report, Councillor Beswick noted that there was still an opportunity for residents to comment on the proposals for the scheme and suggested that consultation documents be dropped to the Unity Centre for static display. Councillor Powney enquired whether there was any further opportunity for residents to find out about the scheme proposals. Councillor Long expressed a view that the consultation did not always cover the entire Harlesden ward and suggested that residents be involved in determining the whole spectrum of consultation from the outset. The Head of Transportation undertook to send the consultation package to Cheryl Henry (speaker) to be distributed to the residents in the Church Road area and to the Unity Centre.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the contents of the petition and the issues raised be noted;
- (ii) that the consultation process undertaken be approved and it be agreed that it met and exceeded the statutory consultation process.

Councillor Long asked that her dissent from the above decisions be recorded.

## 8. Travel plans and parking permits for schools

The report provided the Committee with a progress report for the development of STPs (School Travel Plans). It also informed members of the current position regarding the issue and renewal of special "School Parking Permits" and their phased withdrawal, as determined by the Executive on 19 September 2012.

The Head of Transportation informed the Committee that the Council supported school travel plans and actively encouraged all schools to develop and regularly review their plans. Officers were available to support schools and provide guidance relating to their travel plan development and implementation. He added that in order to encourage more schools to review their STPs, the Schools Safer Roads scheme (subject to the confirmation of funding) would only be available to schools that had carried out an approved plan review. The scheme (Schools Safer Roads) aimed to make the area outside a school safer for pupils by targeting parking issues through education and enforcement. Officers were also working closely with Brent's Healthy Schools Co-ordinator to potentially award a small grant to schools that both reviewed their STP & achieved Healthy School status. This initiative was at an early stage but the target was to have it in place by April 2013

He then referred to the Special Parking Permits for schools, which had been provided by Brent since 2008 and were issued subject to the following criteria;

- schools that were experiencing difficulties recruiting teachers;
- schools that had a current approved travel plan at bronze or higher standard;
- schools located within a CPZ area; and
- schools that did not have sufficient on site or local parking for staff.

Member's noted that currently there were 157 permits in circulation within 12 schools and that the number of individual permits issued for a school ranged between 5 and 20. The schools were responsible for the £75 charge per permit and for issuing individual permits. The permits are valid for one year, are for use by specific vehicles only, not transferable and restricted to the CPZ in which the school was located.

At their meeting on 19 September 2012, the Executive considered proposals to rationalise and simplify permit charges and issuance throughout the Borough. The availability of school permits was considered as part of this process and, as a result, members resolved to withdraw the current school permit scheme in a phased manner.

To incentivise travel plan improvements and provide an opportunity for schools to "phase out" their use of special school permits, the Executive proposed that if a school with existing permits achieved Silver STP standard by October 2013 that school would be allowed to renew two-thirds of their existing permits for a further 24 months. After that period, any schools that achieved Gold STP standard by October 2015 would have a final option to renew one half of any remaining permits for a further 12 month period. This reduction was intended to reflect the schools commitment to sustainable travel and reduce the number of journeys using private cars.

Jenny Issac, Assistant Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods added that she had written to all schools explaining the new system.

Councillor Beswick added that the new system of awards, designed to incentivise travel plan improvements, was a step in the right direction.

Mr Ron Chambers, a local resident of Harlesden, in addressing the Committee circulated photographs to demonstrate his point that the school travel plan was not being properly enforced. He cited as an example, Maple Lodge School in Longstone Avenue where teachers and parents were illegally parking, to highlight his point.

The Head of Transportation undertook to pass on the photographs to the Road Safety Officer.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the progress made on developing School Travel Plans be noted;
- (ii) that the decision by the Executive on 19 September 2012 to adopt a phased withdrawal of School Parking Permits be noted.

**9. Any Other Urgent Business**

None.

**10. Date of Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting will take place on 18 December 2012.

The meeting closed at 8.00 pm

J MOHER  
Chair