

ELSTREE AND BOREHAMWOOD TOWN COUNCIL

TRANSPORT FORUM

MINUTES of a meeting held in the Council Chamber, Elstree Way Borehamwood on Thursday 1st November 2012 at 7.00pm

Present: Cllr C Butchins (Chairman in the Chair)
Cllr S Rubner (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr E Butler

In attendance: Cllr Mrs S Parnell
Cllr Mrs F Turner
J Clappison MP (Member of Parliament)
A Dismore AM (London Assembly)
N Hardy (Transport for London)
I Blackmore (Transport for London)
HCC Cllr A Plancey
HCC and HBC M Bright
HBC Cllr A Harrison
J Cartledge (London TravelWatch)
Mr and Mrs C Blake
S Alford (Resident)
A Scott-Norman (Resident)
A De Swarte (Resident)
J Brown (Pensioners' Rights)
A Slater (Borehamwood Times)
L Stack (Resident)
Mrs E Butchins (Resident)
J Berkowitz (Resident)
D Sullivan (Sullivan Buses)
S Simmonds (Sullivan Buses)
H Jones (Town Clerk)

9. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr S Dobin (Other Business), Cllr Ms S Maughan (Other Business), Cllr Mrs P Strack (Other Business), HCC Cllr J Usher, PC R Gadd (Herts Traffic Police) (Other Business) and A Tuncel (Morrisons) (Other Business).

10. DECLARATIONS OF COUNCILLORS' INTERESTS

There were none.

11. TRANSPORT FORUM MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 19th July 2012 were approved and duly signed as a true record by the Chairman.

J Cartledge reported that as a result of the widely-reported difficulties encountered by the government in the re-letting of the West Coast rail franchise, all other franchise renewals had been put on hold pending a review of the principles on which this policy was based. The letting of a new Thameslink contract (the consultation on which had been discussed at the previous Forum meeting) had therefore been deferred, and First Capital Connect would continue to provide services to Elstree & Borehamwood (and to operate the station) for the time being. In a separate parallel exercise, the Government was ordering a fleet of new trains for the route. It had announced that these would be built by Siemens, and that this process would not be affected by the slippage in the franchise renewal process. However, the contract had not yet been signed, and the need to resolve financing issues meant that this was not now expected to happen before January 2013.

12. STIRLING CORNER (BY MORRISONS)

Forum Members made representations to the representatives of Transport for London (TfL), reiterating the comments made by the Forum at previous meetings calling for improvements to the safety of the roundabout at Stirling Corner. The articles from The Borehamwood Times of 27 September and 15 October 2012 were noted together with other anecdotal accounts of accidents at Stirling Corner in recent weeks and months.

Forum Members agreed with Cllr E Butler that there was a consensus of opinion about the need for improvement at Stirling Corner which crossed County, Borough and Town Council as well as party political differences. This view was supported by J Clappison MP.

Forum Members asked TfL to recognise that statistical evidence of accidents did not in itself demonstrate the problem as it was believed that many people avoided using the roundabout altogether because of the perceived high risk of accident or personal injury.

Members pointed out that there were two distinct issues affecting the junction : (a) the speed and continuous flow of vehicles which made it difficult at busy times to pull out onto the roundabout, and (b) the absence of safe crossing facilities on the A1 for pedestrians and cyclists. Traffic lights on the approach lanes could be used to mitigate problem (a), but these would not assist those affected by problem (b) for whom the exit lanes were a greater threat because vehicles using them were accelerating and were often obscured by the roundabout itself.

It was noted that local residents had been involved in conducting a consultation exercise (with over 200 surveys being handed out) about the issue.

J Clappison MP noted that he had received a number of representations from constituents about Stirling Corner and felt that the evidence suggested that a disproportionate number of accidents had taken place at this location.

A Dismore AM sought assurances that efforts were being made to improve safety for both cyclists and pedestrians, recognising that the Highways Authority had a duty of care to all road users.

Cllr M Bright welcomed the discussion at the Transport Forum, noting that there was a genuine opportunity for progress to be made. Responding to a query from the Chairman, he kindly agreed to obtain information from Borough Council officers for inclusion in the minutes relating to action in tackling the problem of fast food vans and large vehicles parking on Stirling Way.

The response by Officers follows:

“We have made changes within our daily enforcement programme which has meant that enforcement in roads such as ‘Stirling Way’ has been more frequent and where operationally possible visited each day of the week and sometimes more than once a day, at different times.

Since July 2012 we have served 58 penalty charge notices to vehicles parked on the double yellow lines in Stirling Way, some of which have been large lorries. There will also be a number of vehicles that would have been moved on when drivers are sitting in the vehicles.

It is difficult to confirm if our increased presence is deterring drivers from illegally parking in this area, but the number of PCNs served is a fairly high number for just one road and especially the type of restriction. We will continue to keep the level of enforcement.”

It was AGREED that:

- (i) a Special Meeting of the Transport Forum (if required) be held at the earliest opportunity to accommodate the timing of a report from Transport For London after the one year anniversary of the new arrangements at Stirling Corner being completed;**
- (ii) the date of the meeting be agreed by the Chairman in consultation with the Town Clerk and Transport for London representatives; and**
- (iii) Barnet Council be asked by the Forum to issue a clear statement on its position in relation to the traffic problems at Stirling Corner.**

13. BUS ROUTE CHANGES

The Town Council was thanked for reporting the alterations to the bus routes in and around Elstree and Borehamwood on its notice boards, website and in the Town Crier publication.

J Cartledge reported that the main changes in September had been to integrate the B1 and B2 routes within the town with the 306 to Watford and the 398 to Potters Bar. This made more efficient use of vehicles, and eliminated the need for many passengers to change buses, but could result in delays originating elsewhere affecting the punctuality of journeys within the town.

Representatives from Sullivan Buses provided further clarification regarding the rationale of some of the route and timing changes. It was noted that every effort had been made in an attempt to provide the maximum service for school start times. However, some of the Council grant reductions had necessitated cuts to certain services, because priority had been given to services to schools in neighbouring towns, utilising vehicles and drivers previously deployed on other routes.

14. ELSTREE CROSSROADS

At the Chairman's direction, the update on proposals for alterations to traffic flow at Elstree crossroads was deferred to the next meeting when more information would be available to report to Members.

15. IRREGULAR PARKING

It was noted that a detailed report would be sought from the Traffic Policing Unit at the next Forum meeting should a representative be able to attend.

16. OPEN SESSION

Chicanes in Gateshead Road

It was noted that the chicanes in Gateshead Road continued to cause problems for Bus Drivers and that a further letter would be sent on behalf of the Forum to the County Council (as Highways Authority) with jurisdiction over improvements in this area.

Parking on Pavements

It was AGREED that:

representations be made to the local PCSOs to factor into their patrols, monitor and take action against parking on pavements in the Town, especially as the problem appeared to have increased at school start and finish times (and in particular outside Summerswood school).

Digital Safety Cameras

The Chairman reported that he had received a response to his request for further information on Digital Safety Cameras from Hertfordshire Constabulary. It was noted that Herts Safety Camera Partnership was one of the first safety partnerships to convert from wet film to digital technology, beginning the process in 2008 with currently nearly 75% of stock now being digital.

Due to the nature of the sites, some areas were not digital and in the Potters Bar area this included the A1000 Barnet Road. However, it was anticipated that wet film would soon become obsolete.

It was reported that there had been no instances of wet film cameras running out of film in Hertfordshire.

Elstree & Borehamwood Railway Station

It was noted that the county council's out of date bus route map outside the railway station had been replaced with an up to date version. Cllr A Plancey reported that, similarly, the map by Tesco's had been replaced.

J Cartledge reported that following adverse comments in the local press a portable ramp was now available on platform 1 to assist wheelchair users bridge the gap between the platform and the train. But it could only be operated by railway staff, so any intending passenger requiring it was asked to give at least 24 hours' notice. For the time being, the other platforms were still inaccessible for anyone unable to use the footbridge.

The plan to build a new footbridge with lifts (funded by the government's Access for All programme) had been put back by seven months. Network Rail had originally planned to start building new lifts in September 2012, but problems with where to place the crane had delayed the start date until March 2013. In addition, funding restrictions meant that unlike (e.g.) its counterpart at West Hampstead, the new bridge and steps would not be roofed, unless additional funds were made available locally.

J Cartledge also reported that, in order to shift more of the cost of funding the railways towards their users, the government had announced that regulated fares would rise in January (on average) by 3% above the rate of inflation in July, i.e. a total of 6%. But this decision had subsequently been reversed, so that the average rise would now be 4% - though individual fares might change by +/- 5% above or below the average.

17. CLOSURE AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the date of the next meeting was originally scheduled for Thursday 7th March 2013 at 7.00 pm, Hertsmere Civic Offices. However, in view of the Forum's request for feedback from TFL shortly after the one year anniversary of the new

arrangements at Stirling Corner being completed, it was acknowledged that the meeting date could be altered to suit the desired reporting timescale.

The meeting closed at 8.35pm.

Date:..... CHAIRMAN.....