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OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 25.3.2021

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY, 25 MARCH 2021

COUNCILLORS

PRESENT Achilleas Georgiou, Edward Smith, Lee David-Sanders, Hass Yusuf, Birsen Demirel, Margaret Greer, Sinan Boztas and Kate Anolue

ABSENT Susan Erbil and Elif Erbil

STATUTORY CO-OPTES: *1 vacancy (Church of England diocese representative), Mr Simon Goulden (other faiths/denominations representative), Mr Tony Murphy (Catholic diocese representative), Alicia Meniru & 1 vacancy (Parent Governor representative) - Italics Denotes absence*

OFFICERS: Sarah Cary, Executive Director Place, David Taylor, Head of Traffic & Transportation, Jonathan Goodson, Principal Engineer Traffic & Parking, Claire Johnson, Head of Governance, Scrutiny & Registration Services, Susan O'Connell, Governance & Scrutiny Officer

Also Attending: Councillor Guney Dogan (Cabinet Member for Environment & Sustainability)
Councillor Maria Alexandrou (Call-In Lead)

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WELCOME & APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Susan Erbil (substitute Cllr Sinan Boztas) and Cllr Elif Erbil (Substitute Cllr Kate Anolue). In the absence of Councillor Susan Erbil, the Vice-Chair, Councillor Margaret Greer chaired the meeting.

The Panel were reminded of the current Purdah period during the meeting as follows:

"We are now in Purdah and during this heightened period of sensitivity it is important that we ensure that Council resources are not used for political purposes. With this in mind, councillors are reminded that when at Council events or public meetings, councillors must not use that platform for political purposes. If Officers in attendance at the meeting believe this is happening the Chair of the meeting will be informed.

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DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 February 2021 were agreed.

4 CALL IN: FARM ROAD YELLOW LINES AND BUS ROUTE 456

The Chair introduced this item and explained the process to be followed in hearing the Call-in. Cllr Maria Alexandrou was welcomed as the Call-In lead and presented reasons for issuing the Call-in.

1. There will be a negative impact from the proposed yellow lines and a loss of parking spaces.
2. Loss of on street parking spaces will result in residents parking further away from their properties. This will impact on elderly residents, families with small children and residents with disabilities making simple tasks difficult
3. The report fails to take into account that it is highly unusual for petitioners and other people's objections to include an alternative course of action in the detail, for instance alternative routes were proposed such as Barrowwell Green, an extension of the Queens Avenue CPZ to houses with off street parking nearest Queens Avenue was dismissed as inappropriate. Yet it ignores the fact that the bus stops and yellow lines remove parking options for residents. Free parking for Farm Road residents at Fords Grove carpark and extend the current 45-minute free parking.
4. The level of opposition from residents, councillors and MP- has not been taken on board. Many households on Farm Road opposed by presenting a petition as did those on Firs Lane. There is also opposition from Station Road, and Hazel Green Close residents. There was an online petition on the 23 December 2020 against the bus route. Residents are incensed that the council delivered just a handful of letters at 10 pm on a Friday night a week before Christmas with a deadline of the 30 December which was later extended to 11 January. Only 9 letters were hand delivered to Bincote Road consulting on the bus route.
5. The report in paragraph 28 seems more concerned with reputational damage to the council with the Mayor than it does Farm Road residents' views.
6. The report does not reflect on the fact that the original consultation on the bus route that requires the stops and yellow lines was carried out two years ago
7. The trial period for a no waiting experiment in a residential road such as this does not need to be 18 months. It could be six months for 10:30-11:30 hour restriction Monday to Friday on a relatively short stretch of road. The Council claims that this one-hour parking restriction removes the presence of vehicles left long term on the road but ignores the inconvenience that applies to the residents living there. It may allow residents to dominant use

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- of this space outside of the control period but does not offer parking options during this one-hour specific period.
8. Bus stops: we understand the general point about distances between stops, but this obviously not fixed and as can be seen on any bus route, is subject to a flexible approach. In this case Farm Road does not generally experience high footfall, so the main customers in Farm Road would be expected to be residents of the road, but many have said(as reported) that they neither need or want bus stops in the road, but particular not at the proposed locations. Other objectives state it is not safe to place bus stops in Farm Road in the absence of crossing facilities. The footways are narrow and people waiting to board buses would obstruct the pathway for residents and hinder accessibility. The tone and some of the content of appendix C (discussion of objections and representations) is faintly dismissive and patronising of some of the representations. (see paras 5,10, 11, 18, 28 & 36).
 9. It is wrong to use Parking controls as a tool to dissuade car use as is openly admitted in para. 26 of the main report. Parking controls are intended to regulate the use of road space.
 10. The calculation of bus hours in Farm Road contained in the report is erroneous because the proposed bus service is not a 24 hour one. Issues of vibration have already been raised by residents and TfL directed the responsibility to the council. Buses are also mounting on the pavement. How can the council conclude that residents are not suffering? This council insists that residents universally oppose any bus stops near their houses and has chosen to ignore the overwhelming opposing views submitted. Communications from the Council have been deficit the council were aware of reservations on the suitability of the proposed route but did not engage properly with TfL to connect key locations together. The council is asked to reconsider and look again at the options put forward.

The Chair thanked Cllr Alexandrou and asked the Cabinet Member for Environment and Sustainability Cllr Guney Dogan to respond.

11. The 456 is the first new bus route in Enfield for 20 years the route links Crew Hill to North Middlesex hospital serving several areas lacking in a bus service on the way. The alignment of the new route was proposed and consulted on by TfL in 2019. In Winchmore Hill area a route via Farm road emerged as the preferred option as this filled an existing gap in service provision in a cost-effective way.
12. TfL considered a number of different route options avoiding Farm Road including those promoted by residents, but concluded that none offered the same benefits.
13. The new route started on the 13 March with temporary stops in place in Farm Road. The Call in relates specifically to the introduction of two fixed bus stops in Farm Road, some localised lengths of double yellow lines to create passing spaces to facilitate the passage of buses and other vehicles and a section of a single yellow line to be installed on an experimental basis intent to benefit residents by deterring commuter parking.

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14. As part of the statutory traffic order making process residents in Farm Road were consulted on an initial set of proposals. Appendix A of the report shows that in light of comments received there were a number of changes to scheme proposed. There are two key changes. The original double yellow line covered the frontage of 27 homes in Farm Road including 7 or the 9 that the survey showed lack off street parking. Looking specifically at Farm road the revised double yellow lines now covers the frontage of 7 homes all of which have off street parking. The second change is an experimental single yellow line restriction is proposed adjacent to the rear boundary of Highfield Primary school, this will operate between 10:30-11:30am intended to deter commuter parking and create more parking opportunities for local residents.
15. It is acknowledged that the scheme still removes kerbside parking across 7 homes on Farm Road. However, this needs to be viewed in the context of the overall parking provision for the streets. It is estimated that the 34 homes benefit from a total of 50 off street spaces on the north side of Farm Road when accounting for frontage parking and garages. This is in addition to the 26 potential kerbside spaces including dropped kerbs. The 16 homes on the south side of Farm Road have higher level of parking capacity
16. The views of local residents are always important however the Council has to balance the competing need for limited road spaces against more strategic benefits. In Farm Road sought to limit the loss of parking and in the Cabinet Members view have struck a reasonable balance between the interests of existing Farm Road residents and the benefits to the wider community now and in the future arising from the introduction of a new bus service.

The Chair asked Members for any questions and comments, relevant to the call-in reasons:

17. Following a query, it was confirmed that frequency of the buses is 2 buses per hour in each direction and that the bus stops are on either side of the road with just pair in Farm Road.
18. There are 2 local schools in close proximity what degree has parking by parents been taken into account? The report does cover the concerns raised regarding the local schools and school run traffic under section 25 of the report.
19. Alleviating the pressure on parking that has been ruled out through using a CPZ or Ford's Grove- could some sort of system for residents without paying be introduced. The Cabinet Member confirmed that in terms of parking and the fairness of removing parking from Farm Road. Yellow lines only cover the front of 7 homes all of which have off street parking. The 50 homes in Farm road are relatively well served in terms of parking space either at their homes or in the same street. The proposed single yellow line is likely to have the effect of adding to the local parking spaces for residents.
20. Regarding the alternative routes that had been considered but did not offer the benefits of Farm Road, please expand on the benefits over the alternatives such as Ford's Grove and Barrowell Green? Members were

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advised that the decision on the route was made by TfL, the report explains why officers found TfL's rationale for the route to be persuasive and the best of the options available.

21. Was a risk assessment undertaken over the use of the narrow bridge in Farm Road? It was confirmed that the decision on the route was made by TfL. The route was tested using slightly larger bus than the one now in service to check its general suitability and was found on multiple occasions to pass this pinch point within the kerb lines. Surveys from October 2020 reveal a baseline level of 65 larger vehicles, buses or trucks using Farm Road per day. The layout has previously accommodated larger vehicles without attracting collisions or generating complaints. A number of route tests were carried out at different times of the day that demonstrated that the bus can make that turn safely, collision figures at the junction were also reviewed this did not indicate any concerns.
22. Councillor Alexandrou was asked are the other ward councillors concerned at proposals? Yes, she has been liaising with Councillor Barry on this, they have both received many emails and phone calls objecting to this.
23. An observation was made on part of the report (section 28) the council reputation and tone was unhelpful and was suggested that this should be looked at carefully on draft reports in future.
24. Was hail and stop considered for bus stops? TfL and the Council are committed to providing services that are fully accessible to all members of the community. Part of this strategy is using fixed bus stops. This allows fixed stops to be designed to allow the bus to pull in parallel to the kerb, can deploy a ramp if needed and ensure that someone using the service has a guarantee that they can get on and off the bus at accessible stops. Currently in the process of converting all hail and ride stops to fixed stops for this reason.
25. Was a risk assessment undertaken on the risk to children given the close proximity of schools? It was confirmed that a separate assessment specifically looking at the schools has not been undertaken, but the scheme has been assessed in the context of where it sits including knowing the schools are there.
26. The timeline for trial period is within 18 months and a minimum of 6 months. When would it become clear whether the trial is of little or no benefit? Could this be reviewed earlier? Officers confirmed that with experimental traffic orders that there must be a six-month period to allow comments and representations to be received before this could become permanent. If the view is that the scheme is unsuccessful, and residents have given their views earlier it could be removed earlier than the six months.
27. How are residents' views collated and at what point is there a response? It was confirmed that as part of the process the council writes to residents to advising that the trial is about to start and the scheme could be made permanent subject to the results of the consultation during the initial 6 month period. If at the start residents wrote in advising it is not helpful and is causing other problems, the process would be to take the comments to the Cabinet Member to decide whether to modify or remove the scheme.
28. Is it practical to change the route given the length of time taken to get new route? Officers confirmed the TfL undertook a consultation ending with a

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report in April 2020 to establish the route. It is not within the Council's control to change the bus route.

29. Following a query, it was confirmed that the bus will be single deck diesel models. It was tested with a longer electric bus to future proof for when this model comes into general service.

The Chair then called upon Councillor Maria Alexandrou to sum up the reasons for Call-in:

30. This new bus route and Farm Road yellow lines proposal seems to be facilitating the bus instead of supporting residents and fails to acknowledge that Farm road is not just used by commuters but by visitors using facilities in the high street. By removing parking with the added yellow lines this will have a negative impact not only on residents but also on the local economy. This is short sighted. Overall residents' objections as well as sensible suggestions have put aside to force this bus route and yellow lines through no matter of the impact on local residents. It is possible to achieve a more suitable bus route without Farm Road or Firs Lane, but alternative proposals were never warranted the appropriate attention. It is unclear how the yellow lines benefit those that reside in Farm Road. The whole process has been flawed which has led to the growing dissatisfaction.

Following comments on the issue of no risk assessments primarily for children, members attention was drawn to the reasons for the call in. These are the reasons to be considered at this meeting, anything outside of the call-in reasons is not part of the decision to be taken.

Overview & Scrutiny considered the reasons for the call-in and the responses provided.

Councillors Anolue, Boztas, Demirel, Greer and Yusuf voted in favour of the above decision. Councillor Achilleas Georgiou abstained. Councillors David-Sanders and Smith voted against. The original Portfolio decision was therefore agreed.

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DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The date of the next meeting was noted.

Members were asked to respond by tomorrow morning which of the dates suggested they are available for the new Call in.