

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION  
17 MARCH 2014  
7.30 - 9.50 PM**



**Present:**

Councillors Leake (Chairman), Angell (Vice-Chairman), Baily, Mrs Birch, Ms Brown, Gbadebo, Harrison, Heydon, McLean and Virgo

**Executive Members:**

Councillor Turrell

**Also Present:**

Councillors Mrs Hayes and Ms Wilson

**Apologies for absence were received from:**

Councillors Finnie and Mrs McCracken  
Reverend Canon Parish, Church of England (Oxford Diocese)

**In Attendance:**

Richard Beaumont, Head of Overview & Scrutiny  
Bev Hindle, Chief Officer: Planning & Transport  
Neil Mathews, Transport Development Manager

**56. Declarations of Interest and Party Whip**

Councillor McLean informed the Commission that he lived near the Shoulder of Mutton Junction and had obtained advice from the Borough Solicitor on the matter. Councillor McLean assured the Commission that this did not constitute an affected interest.

Councillor Leake informed the Commission that he had been one of the three Members who had triggered the Call-In and he had therefore decided to ask the Vice-Chairman to chair the meeting.

**COUNCILLOR ANGELL, VICE CHAIRMAN, IN THE CHAIR**

**57. Public Participation**

There were no submissions from members of the public in accordance with the Council's Public Participation Scheme for Overview and Scrutiny.

**58. Call In Of Executive Decision - Introduction of no right turn restriction - Beehive Road/B3408, London Road, Binfield (Shoulder of Mutton - Junction Improvement))**

The Commission received a report setting out the reasons for Calling In the Executive Member decision, made on 4 March 2014, to approve the introduction of a no right turn restriction at the Beehive Road/B3408 London Road (Shoulder of Mutton) junction.

Councillor Leake informed the Commission that a correction had been made to paragraphs 1 and 2.3 of the Assistant Chief Executive's report and that the word Member should be inserted after the word Executive in both paragraphs.

Councillors Harrison, Leake and McLean set out their reasons for requesting the Call-In, including what they regarded to be selective information from officers, the impact of the changes on hundreds of people, residents south of the London Road being cut off from the rest of the village, concern at the capacity of road junctions, the case for the decision not being proven, additional congestion and pollution and what they saw to be flaws in the consultation. They also felt that the congestion problem arose more from the traffic lights at the junction with John Nike Way.

The three councillors also set out the outcome that they sought to achieve including: reconsideration of the decision based on better information and the use of technical options short of closing the right turn.

Officers informed the Commission that the B3408 was a key strategic transport corridor to and from Bracknell Town Centre forming part of the Bracknell northern distributor route. The recommendation had been made following extensive professional observations of the traffic movement along London Road between the Popeswood Roundabout Junction and the Coppid Beech Roundabout Junction combined with a series of exercises using Department of Transport approved methodology for modelling a variety of traffic scenarios between now and 2026 when the regeneration of Bracknell Town Centre and the proposed Amen Corner developments (amongst others) were expected to be completed. Modelling work had demonstrated that traffic flow along the London Road would be significantly improved if the right hand turn out of Beehive Lane was no longer possible, and this was the only option which would meet the current and anticipated demands on the junction which was currently 'saturated' at peak times. Carrying out the junction work would also enable the Council to replace the existing traffic signal infrastructure along the length of the road, which had reached the end of its design life, with modern technology that would enable a more efficient and 'managed' corridor. Overall, the capacity improvement would maximise the throughput of vehicles across the series of junctions along the B3408 corridor enabling a smoother flow of traffic and improved air quality.

Officers informed the Commission that the John Nike Way junction had spare capacity and was not adding to the congestion problem at the Shoulder of Mutton junction, but that the current uncoordinated approach sometimes created conflict. Modelling work had ascertained that the road networks that drivers would be diverted on to, if they were unable to turn right out of Beehive Lane, would be able to cope with the additional traffic as the junctions had sufficient capacity. Equally, no safety concerns were identified. The improvements to the Shoulder of Mutton junction had been approved as part of the Council's 2013/14 Integrated Transport Capital Programme.

In July 2013, Binfield Parish Council and ward members were consulted informally on the proposals and in October 2013 a formal consultation process was carried out. During the formal consultation letters outlining the proposals were hand delivered to approximately 640 properties in the Amen Corner Estate and approximately 40 properties in close proximity to the junction. Public notices were also displayed in the area for the required statutory notice period. In response, 62 individual written objections and a petition (with 43 unique signatures) were received. The Council had provided additional information requested by Binfield Parish Council during the

informal consultation stages however no objection had been received from the Parish Council during the formal consultation.

In recommending closure of the right turn, it had been recognised that this would add a maximum of one mile to some residents' vehicular journeys to Binfield village (on outbound journeys only), and this distance decreased to nil detriment at the junction of Tippetts Mead. This was not considered a substantial impact on community cohesion.

Officers informed the Commission that industry standard methodology had been used to measure and forecast traffic flows, such that the data in the Executive report was sound.

Officers explained that the environmental impact of stationary and slow moving traffic was greater than the environmental impact of some residents having a longer vehicular journey arising from the right turning being stopped.

Officers described how the Executive member decision had been consistent with the Council's Local Transport Plan policies and objectives and supportive of the Council's Medium Term Objective MTO1.

In response to Members' questions and comments the following points were made:

- Replacing the junction with either a roundabout or a cross roads junction would be both costly and impractical in terms of the land footprint required which would necessitate the removal of a number of dwellings and the Travel Lodge Hotel. In addition neither alternative would be a practical solution in the long term with the predicted increase in east-west traffic flow
- Removal of the bus gate at the southern end of Beehive Road would create a direct through route to and from the neighbouring industrial estates. Moving the bus gate to the northern end of Beehive Road would have a disproportionate impact on all residents in the road restricting any turning into London Road whilst not delivering any greater improvements in capacity
- Phasing of 'inter-green' stages of the traffic lights was calculated in accordance with strict Department of Transport guidelines to ensure sufficient time between phases such that the possibility of collisions between opposing traffic flows was negligible. Opportunities to create further efficiency were not available
- It would not be possible to improve the capacity of the junction simply by changing the phasing of the lights, or applying greater technology, whilst the junction remained in its current form
- Observations of the traffic flow along the B3408 have found that the majority of queuing took place at the Shoulder of Mutton Junction
- The right turn out of Beehive Road was currently controlled by demand led traffic lights
- The current traffic flows had been measured accurately. The error rate in forecasts of traffic demand was negligible, less than 1%. Forecasts to 2026 were derived from the Borough Strategic Transport Model which was validated in accordance with Department of Transport guidance. It was possible that further improvement plans might need to be made after that date
- A time limited no right turn would be complex/prohibitive at a signal controlled junction and not recommended on safety grounds
- The Council's consultation methodology had been used. People had been engaged and account taken of their views. The vast majority of those consulted had not responded. It was unusual for positive responses to be

received to statutory Traffic Order Regulation consultations where the public were invited to raise objections to proposals. As such, no responses of support had been received

- Other prospective options, such as making London Road one-way, would have a disproportionate impact. Officers had sought to avoid local impact as far as possible

It was acknowledged by the Executive Member for Planning and Transport that the decision was not one that had been taken lightly and that during the decision making process a large number of questions had been asked of officers. Councillor Turrell said the decision had been consistent with the Local Transport plan and the need to develop the local economy. There was already a problem with congestion at the junction, which was set to get worse.

**RESOLVED** that the Overview and Scrutiny Commission has the following concerns with the decision of the Executive Member for Planning and Transport, concerning the introduction of no right turn restriction - Beehive Road/B3408, London Road, Binfield (Shoulder of Mutton - Junction Improvement), and refers the decision to Council. The concerns are:

- i. There has been no adequate, relevant and realistic rationale given for the proposal.
- ii. The consultation that has been carried out has been inadequate on the basis that whatever the alleged rationale is for the proposal, there has been no adequate public consultation on the relevance of the rationale in respect of the reasons for the proposal.
- iii. The proposal is destructive and divisive to the life of the village and prevents residents using village amenities.
- iv. The proposal deals only with the alleged peak hour problems which in themselves are caused by factors not related to the junction.
- v. The data is flawed.
- vi. Proper and adequate consideration has not been given to the views of the Parish Council or residents.
- vii. The proposal will increase local environmental pollution and local traffic movements and is therefore contrary to the Council's own environmental policies.

The Overview and Scrutiny Commission asks Council to recommend to the Executive Member that he should reverse the decision, and make a fresh decision, following a 12 month trial period, based on a more careful study of the junction, after putting in a 'yellow box' on the junction, and restoring the original time phasing on the traffic lights at the junction together with sensor led detectors controlling the Beehive Road and St Marks Road exit points onto the junction.'

**CHAIRMAN**