

Minutes



Listening Learning Leading

OF A MEETING OF THE

General Licensing Committee

HELD ON THURSDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2017 AT 6.00 PM

MEETING ROOM 1, 135 EASTERN AVENUE, MILTON PARK, MILTON,
ABINGDON OX14 4SB

Present:

David Dodds (Chairman)

Joan Bland, Nigel Champken-Woods, Stefan Gawrysiak, Paul Harrison, Lorraine Hillier, Bill Service and Ian White

Apologies:

Pat Dawe and Anthony Nash tendered apologies.

Officers:

Paul Holland, Ian Matten, Ian Price and Ron Schrieber

Also present:

Councillors Anna Badcock, Elizabeth Gillespie, Elaine Hornsby and Tony Harbour. Jason Sherwood, Oxfordshire County Council, Claire Spendley, East Herts District Council, David Chong-Ping, MEL Research and Guy Hitchcock, Ricardo-AEA

11 Minutes

RESOLVED: to adopt as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 31 May 2017 and agree that the chairman signs them as such.

12 Declarations of interest

None.

13 Urgent business and chairman's announcements

None.

14 Public participation

The list showing members of the public who had registered to speak was tabled at the meeting.

15 Low emission strategy

The committee considered a report by the head of waste, parks, leisure and environmental health, regarding a draft low emission strategy (LES) for South Oxfordshire. The report stated that the Environment Act 1995 placed a statutory duty on local authorities to review and assess local air quality and included a requirement to prepare and implement an air quality action plan (AQAP) where air quality objectives were not being met.

The committee adopted its AQAP in February 2015. Actions within the plan included the development of a LES and three low emission zone feasibility studies.

The committee had delegated authority to deal with air quality issues. However, Council on 20 July 2017 considered a petition objecting to one of the proposals in the draft LES, the restriction of traffic to buses only over Wallingford Bridge during peak travel times, and resolved that recommendations from the committee should come back to full Council for further debate and ratification.

Attached, as appendices to the report, were the draft LES and summaries of the public consultation exercises which had been undertaken, together with the text of the relevant minute from the 20 July Council meeting.

Guy Hitchcock, Ricardo-AEA and David Chong-Ping, MEL Research made presentations to the committee on the draft LES and the consultation exercises, respectively.

The report identified two proposals in the draft LES which had attracted a lot of comment. The first was to investigate the restriction of traffic to buses only over Wallingford Bridge during peak travel times; the second was to trial the removal of on-street parking in areas of Watlington. The committee heard registered speakers as part of its consideration of each key issue.

Wallingford

Len Pannett, Diane Wyatt, lead petitioner, Adrian Lloyd and Lee Upcraft, Wallingford Town Councillors and Andrew Wyatt addressed the committee. Their points included:

- Restricting traffic across Wallingford Bridge would simply divert traffic elsewhere and would not improve air quality significantly;
- Other parts of Wallingford were also polluted so additional measures were required
- It was not clear how the effects of the proposal would be monitored; and
- Further traffic modelling and analysis were required before any measures were trialled.

Lynda Atkins, County Councillor for Wallingford, addressed the committee. Her points included:

- The 2016 public consultation exercise appeared to be biased as residents in some of the affected Wallingford streets and Crowmarsh residents were not surveyed; and
- The number of people supporting the proposal to restrict traffic across Wallingford Bridge were greatly outnumbered by the 1806 signatories to the petition objecting to this proposal.

Sue Roberts, representing Sustainable Wallingford, addressed the committee. Her points included:

- The Council's efforts to improve air quality should be applauded; and
- Planning permission had been granted for additional housing in Wallingford with further developments proposed. These would generate additional traffic and would require further measures to reduce pollution.

In response to these comments, councillors, officers and consultants:

- Acknowledged that any restriction of vehicular access to the bridge would divert traffic elsewhere;
- Agreed that, if the draft low emission strategy were to be adopted, measures such as those proposed in Wallingford would not be trialled until extensive traffic modelling had been undertaken, in order to analyse their possible effects; and
- Outlined the public consultation methodology.

Dr Peter Wood asked the following question:

“What assumptions have been made in the modelling in the Ricardo Reports which shows a reduction of only 0.9 – 1.3% in concentrations of NOX if Wallingford Bridge is closed to all traffic except buses?”

In response, Guy Hitchcock reported that the assumptions behind the calculation of the 9-13% reduction in emissions could be summarised as follows:

- Traffic flow data was taken from Oxfordshire County Council and Department for Transport data;
- Vehicle fleet composition data was obtained directly from the bus company for the bus fleet and used national averages for the other vehicle categories;
- The emissions calculations were performed using the standard DEFRA emissions factor toolkit;
- The emissions were calculated covering the main roads in the Wallingford AQMA; and
- The bus only crossing scenario was simply modelled by removing non-bus traffic from the relevant road links and comparing it with the situation where this was not done.

Maureen Norton had submitted the following question which was read out in her absence:

“As a new resident from Crowmarsh Gifford and a previous resident from Reading Road Wallingford, I would like to ask Committee where extra traffic will go if the Wallingford Bridge were to close?”

My take on the situation is that traffic would divert to the nearest route – Reading Road to feed into Wallingford. How will Committee propose to deal with the extra traffic and subsequent pollution in Reading Road / St.Martins Street? There is always back log from Wallingford Hospital site going into the junction of St Johns Road.

There will be increased traffic should the bridge close, extra traffic from 85 homes on Reading Road and a proposal for 550 homes on site E. This will all increase traffic into Wallingford an overall strategy needs to be thought through not just moving a problem from one place to another.”

In response, members acknowledged that any restriction of vehicular access to the bridge would divert traffic elsewhere and noted that, if the draft low emission strategy were to be adopted, measures such as those proposed in Wallingford would not be trialled prior to extensive traffic modelling being undertaken, in order to analyse their possible effects.

Watlington

Anna Badcock, district ward councillor for Watlington and Ian Hill, Watlington Town Councillor addressed the committee. Their points included:

- Local residents were concerned that the proposed removal of on-street parking would lead to increased traffic speed and more accidents;
- How would parking restrictions and the 7.5 tonne weight limit be enforced? and
- Where will the cars that currently park on street go?

In response to these comments, councillors and officers reiterated that measures such as those proposed in Watlington would not be trialled until extensive traffic modelling had been undertaken, in order to analyse their possible effects.

During further consideration of the draft LES, members noted that adoption of the strategy would result in the exploration of the feasibility of the various options rather than their implementation at this time. Members expressed the view that it was necessary to adopt the draft strategy so that the viability of measures to improve air quality could be investigated.

The committee also noted that, in addition to the proposals specific to Wallingford and Watlington, the draft LES and the previously adopted AQAP proposed many actions to improve air quality across South Oxfordshire.

RECOMMENDED: to Council

- (a) That Council gives final approval to the Low Emission Strategy that includes the viability of trials for the proposed transport measures identified in Wallingford and Watlington.
- (b) That the head of service with responsibility for environmental health be given delegated powers to make any minor amendments to the strategy in consultation with the Cabinet Member for environmental health and the Chairman of the General Licensing Committee.

The meeting closed at 7.50 pm

Chairman

Date