

Rayleigh Traffic Study Sub-Committee – 25 April 2003

Minutes of the meeting of the **Rayleigh Traffic Study Sub-Committee** held on **25 April 2003** when there were present:

Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn
Cllr J E Grey
Cllr A J Humphries
Cllr C A Hungate
Cllr T Livings

Cllr C R Morgan
Cllr R A Oatham
Cllr P K Savill
Cllr Mrs M J Webster

OFFICERS PRESENT

S Scrutton Head of Planning Services
M Martin Committee Administrator

COUNTY OFFICERS PRESENT

N McCullagh District Manager, Transportation & Operational Services
K Bristow Area Manager, Transportation & Operational Services

REPRESENTING MOUCHEL

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1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

Cllr Mrs M J Webster was appointed Chairman of the Sub-Committee.

2 TERMS OF REFERENCE

Members noted the Terms of Reference as follows:-

To consider options for improvement in traffic flow within Rayleigh Town Centre and to report to Council in July 2003 with its recommendations.

3 RAYLEIGH TRAFFIC STUDY

The Sub-Committee welcomed the representative from Mouchel, who had been commissioned by the County Council to consider options for improvement in traffic flow within Rayleigh town centre and which could also minimise queuing on the approach to the town centre.

Members of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee had received this presentation in the form of a full traffic analysis study at their meeting held on 18 March 2003 and subsequently resolved that a Sub-Committee be formed.

Members noted that:-

- the aim of the study had been to find ways of controlling and quickly dissipating queues on internal links, so as to improve the general traffic environment in Rayleigh town centre.
- the objectives of the study had been to:-
 - assess the extent of the congestion and delay problems
 - test whether replacing three existing mini roundabouts with signals would improve operating conditions in Rayleigh town centre by reducing congestion and delays
 - test the effect of fully signalling Church Street junction only on the operation of the whole network
 - test the effect of signalling all key junctions, with one-way flow on Webster's Way.
 - assess if benefits arising from signalisation would be justified economically.

The traffic study had considered eight potential options, as follows:-

- (1) the existing situation
- (2) full signalisation of Church Street Junction only
- (3) signals with no pedestrian stage; maintain pelican crossing on High Street between Crown Hill and Eastwood Road
- (4) signals with pedestrian stage; no pelican crossings
- (5) signals with pedestrian stage; no pelican crossings; add short turning lanes.
- (6) signals with parallel pedestrian stage, plus turning lanes and pelican crossing on High Street between Crown Hill and Eastwood Road.
- (7) signals with separate pedestrian stage; additional turning lanes; no pelican crossing; full signals at Church Street. The study had concluded that this was the preferred option.
- (8) as in option 6, but with one way flow on Webster's Way.

The benefits of change were considered to be as follows:-

- some reduction in delays
- generally reduced queue lengths
- slightly reduced degree of saturation
- ability to control/minimise/optimize delays and queues on selected approaches to the junction
- ability to keep queues on external links thus keeping the town centre free of congestion
- pedestrians able to cross at junctions
- better operating conditions overall
- the improvements come at a cost of around £420,000 for signal installation only. This would not include the cost of widening or of service diversion.

Members noted that it had been felt that replacing mini roundabouts with traffic signals would result in better movement of traffic, with the important additional benefit of being able to dissipate queues via signal settings.

4 THE WAY FORWARD/WORK PROGRAMME

Responding to Member questions, it was noted that-

- The County as the Highway Authority could bid for support from central Government.
- The scheme cost was only generic and actual costs could be in the region of £500,000, which would be a one-off cost.
- Expenditure on such a scheme should not come from money set aside for enhancement works within town centres.
- Cost savings were only notional, and would not actually be re-couped.
- For the purposes of the study, peak hours were considered as 7.30 – 8.30 am and 5 – 6 pm.
- The study had looked at turning movements at all junctions, especially at the junction of Websters Way and Eastwood Road and observations as to the direction in which traffic continued, in the absence of origin and destination data.
- At each junction the study had included monitoring the approaching traffic.
- Extra traffic coming from new movements was indicative of a re-distribution of the traffic, rather than additional traffic.
- There had been no evidence of any road traffic accidents occurring at the times of the studies.
- The study had concluded that it would not be possible to solve all the issues of congestion at junctions, only to improve the situation, with a view to providing a more even share of traffic across the network.
- The District's anticipated move towards decriminalisation of parking had not been taken into account and could have some influence, particular at peak times.
- Whilst the centre of Rayleigh is used as a route to other areas, such as Rochford and Shoebury, the main focus of any scheme ought to be to improve the situation for those who work, shop, carry out business or attend events within the town centre.

Members were in agreement that:-

- wider issues and alternative options would need to be taken into account, in order to assess whether the expenditure would be worthwhile
- it was important that full consultation of interested parties be undertaken and to this end it was agreed that a further presentation be provided in May to the various organisations with an interest in the town
- the press be invited to publish an article about the traffic study and to ask for any comments to be passed to the Chairman of the Sub-Committee
- more detailed costings were required.

The Sub-Committee agreed the following as a list of particular areas of concern/alternative options which ought to be considered in more detail at its next meeting.

- one-way traffic in Websters Way, including the possibility of continuing with one-way traffic around to Crown Hill
- the junction of Bull Lane with Websters Way
- two-way traffic within the High Street
- the introduction of two lanes at the top end of the High Street
- pedestrian crossings at the top of Crown Hill and close to junction of Websters Way and Eastwood Road.
- encourage greater use of Church Street
- the use of rat runs
- better signage in car parks/encourage queuing for spaces to take place within the car parks
- better signage generally and particularly at the top of Church Street.
- better information required relating to destination of traffic
- look at all scenarios with a view to narrowing down to the most feasible options
- the right turn facility at the top of Crown Hill
- investigate whether the timing of the introduction of decriminalised parking could be brought forward
- maintain the status quo.

5 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Sub-Committee be held on Friday 30 May commencing at 10 am in the Civic Suite, Rayleigh.

The meeting commenced at 10 am and closed at 12.15 pm

Chairman

Date