

Rayleigh Traffic Study Sub-Committee – 30 July 2003

Minutes of the meeting of the **Rayleigh Traffic Study Sub-Committee** held on **30 July 2003** when there were present:-

Cllr Mrs M J Webster (Chairman)

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

Cllr R A Oatham
Cllr J M Pullen
Cllr D A Weir

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr C A Hungate.

OFFICERS PRESENT

S Scrutton	Head of Planning Services
D Timson	Property Maintenance & Highways Manager
M Martin	Committee Administrator

REPRESENTING ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

Cllr R Bass	Cabinet Member for Highways & Transportation
N McCullagh	Area Manager, Highways & Transportation
K Bristow	District Manager, Highways & Transportation

13 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2003 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to Members noting that under Minute 11, 'London Road' should have read 'London Hill'.

14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs T Livings, R A Oatham and J M Pullen each declared a personal interest in the item on Rayleigh Town Council by virtue of being Rayleigh Town Councillors.

15 REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE

Members noted the following revised terms of reference agreed by the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 17 July 2003:

"To consider options for improvement in traffic flow within Rayleigh Town Centre and to report to the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee in December 2003".

16 COUNTY COUNCILLOR R BASS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORTATION

The Chairman welcomed the County Councillor to the meeting. Cllr Bass expressed his appreciation of this opportunity to meet with Members of the Sub-Committee. Members noted that prior to the meeting he had taken the opportunity to visit the town centre with the Chairman of the Sub-Committee and the Head of Planning Services.

Whilst he offered support with regard to the issues currently under discussion around a further traffic study, he confirmed that:-

- no easy solution would exist; rather that Members would need to balance the interests of a number of different users against the potential environmental effects of any decisions for change.
- as a County Councillor, he had to view Rayleigh in terms of the broader regional picture which in turn imposes yet another set of objectives.
- it would be necessary to ensure that the Sub-Committee's objectives would broadly accord with those of the County Council.

Cllr Bass confirmed that the priority should be to get the traffic flowing more freely without creating any extra rat runs.

Members were in agreement that a more pleasing pedestrian facility currently existed within the town centre and it was important to ensure that this was not jeopardised by any changes to try and improve the traffic flow.

Members confirmed that the priority areas in terms of identifying potential improvements were as follows:

- two lanes exiting from Church Road into the High Street
- possible re-siting of the pedestrian crossing at the top of Crown Hill, whilst retaining the right turn facility.
- consider reverting to one way traffic in Websters Way.

Members expressed concern that the original traffic study by Mouchel had indicated that reverting to one way traffic in Websters Way would exacerbate the situation at Crown Hill.

The County Officer confirmed that as any change would be controversial, it would be important to ensure that careful decisions were made, particularly as varying perceptions existed as to what are the main causes of the congestion.

Concerning the Crown Hill/High Road junctions, some Members were in favour of a suggestion mooted by Cllr Bass that consideration could be given to removing the pedestrian crossing from the top of Crown Hill, thereby encouraging pedestrians to cross over via the High Street instead. He was also of the view that placing traffic lights at this junction would not have any significant impact.

Others were of the view that for people with walking difficulties or pushing wheelchairs/pushchairs this would be a distinct disadvantage.

The County Councillor identified that Members should first determine whether or not traffic light control at the top of Crown Hill would reduce congestion at that junction and secondly to consider separately the removal or moving of the pedestrian crossing.

In response to further Member questions, the County officers confirmed that:-

- whilst an experiment would be possible, it would be hard to justify on the basis of cost.
- a study could be conducted within the Websters Way car park of the origin and destination of motorists.

17 CONSULTANT COSTS

A quotation for a further Study Brief requested by Members of the Sub-Committee was circulated for Members' appraisal.

Members noted that the focus in the first instance would be on the Church Street/High Street/Hockley Road/Websters Way junction. It was noted that any reference to London Road should have read London Hill. The study would involve limited discussion on the effects on the whole town centre. In particular, Members noted that this would include the following considerations:-

- relocation of the existing traffic signals
- changed timings of the traffic signals
- reduced footway area in place of existing build out
- dedicated right turn to Websters Way.

The County officer confirmed that:-

- this could include an origin/destination survey of traffic passing through the junction and would attract an additional cost.
- as this would include a 1 in 100 driver survey, it was important to identify whether it added any real value.
- limited funds were available to undertake this additional study, which would take 6 to 8 weeks to complete and could be reported to the next meeting of the Sub-Committee.
- if Members chose not to have an origin and destination survey of the Church Road junction, the funds for this could be used for the car park research.

Resolved

- (1) That a traffic study be carried out by Mouchel around the Church Street/High Street/Hockley Road/Websters Way junction

- (2) That an origin/destination survey should not be carried out at this junction.
- (3) That an origin/destination survey of motorists be carried out within the Websters Way Car Park. (HPS/County Highways)

18 RAYLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

Members were invited to consider whether a representative from the Rayleigh Town Council be invited to attend forthcoming meetings of this Sub-Committee.

On a motion moved by Cllr J E Grey and seconded by Cllr A J Humphries it was:-

Resolved

that the Town Council were already sufficiently well represented by the three Members of this Sub-Committee, who were also Rayleigh Town Councillors.

19 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Sub-Committee would be held on Friday 17 October 2003, commencing at 10 am in Room 4, Civic Suite, Rayleigh.

The meeting commenced at 10 am and finished at 12.10 pm.

Chairman

Date