

Minutes

**Petition Hearing - Cabinet Member for Planning,
Transportation and Recycling
Wednesday, 16 January 2019
Meeting held at Committee Room 3 - Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge**



	<p>Cabinet Member Present: Councillors Keith Burrows (Chairman)</p> <p>Ward Councillors Present: Councillors Philip Corthorne MCIPD (Agenda Item 5), Allan Kauffman (Agenda Item 4), Ali Milani (Agenda Item 6), Peter Money BSC (Hons) MSc (Res) PhD (Agenda Item 6), June Nelson (Agenda Item 6), Devi Radia (Agenda Item 5) and Steve Tuckwell (Agenda Item 4).</p> <p>Officers Present: Steve Austin (Traffic, Parking, Road Safety and School Travel Team Manager - Agenda Items 4 and 5), Mark Billings (Homelessness Housing Manager - Agenda Item 6), Ray Haslam (Private Sector Housing Manager - Agenda Item 6), James Rodger (Head of Planning, Transportation and Regeneration - Agenda Item 6) and Nikki O'Halloran (Democratic Services Manager).</p>
1.	<p>TO CONFIRM THAT THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING WILL TAKE PLACE IN PUBLIC. (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That all items of business be considered in public.</p>
2.	<p>LONG DRIVE, SOUTH RUISLIP - PETITION REQUESTING TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>Councillors Allan Kauffman and Steve Tuckwell attended the meeting and spoke as Ward Councillors in support of the petition.</p> <p><i>Concerns and suggestions raised at the meeting included the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>The volume and speed of traffic using Long Drive had increased significantly and the area was heavily used by pedestrians;</i>• <i>Long Drive appeared to be used as a cut through by vehicles heading for the A40 or the new shopping complex on Victoria Road;</i>• <i>In June 2018, the petition organiser had witnessed an incident outside his home where a mother had been driving at about 20mph with small children in the car when she had had to swerve violently to avoid an oncoming speeding motorbike. She had then had to pacify the children who were clearly traumatised by the incident;</i>• <i>Petitioners were aware that the speed restriction measures in place in Queens Walk had been effective in slowing the traffic down and that there were also measures in place further along Long Drive between Queens Walk and Field End Road;</i>• <i>The petition had been started with the support of the Residents' Association</i>

and, of the 50 properties that the petition organiser had visited, only three residents had expressed any concern about the implementation of traffic calming measures;

- It was clear that residents did not want speed bumps and would instead prefer speed tables;*
- Although a previous traffic survey had found the 85th percentile to be 31mph, petitioners were concerned about the remaining 15%;*
- It had been suggested that the requests made in the petition be coordinated with similar suggestions made in relation to The Fairway and Queens Walk;*
- A range of well attended venues were in the vicinity of Long Drive including three schools, two churches, a young people's centre, a Tube station, parks and allotments. Approximately 1.7m people used the station each year and, as a large number of parents and children needed to cross the road, measures to slow the traffic would improve their safety;*
- Traffic calming measures would help to improve air quality, which was a concern in the area, by reducing excessive braking and engine revving; and*
- It was noted that previous petitions had been submitted as a result of the impact of the increasing volume of traffic in the area. At peak times, vehicles could be held up in traffic jams for significant periods, particularly on Victoria Road and Long Drive.*

Councillor Burrows listened to the concerns of the petitioners and responded to the points raised. He suggested that Councillor Kauffman raise the need for an additional speed table in Field End Road as a Members' Enquiry.

The Cabinet Member noted that the demographics of the area had changed significantly and recognised that there had been an increase in the volume of traffic. As such, he asked officers to undertake a traffic survey at locations agreed with the petition organiser and Ward Councillors. The survey would be undertaken by an independent company that would collect data in relation to the volume, speed, direction and type of vehicle using Long Drive. Data regarding any specific issues could also be passed to the Police. Subject to the results of this survey, consideration would be given to including Long Drive in a package of measures that included The Fairway and Queens Walk.

RESOLVED: Meeting with the petitioners, the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transportation and Recycling:

- 1. listened to their request for traffic calming measures in Long Drive, South Ruislip.**
- 2. noted the petitions which have been submitted and heard requesting traffic calming on The Fairway and Queens Walk in South Ruislip, details of which were set out in the body of the report.**
- 3. noted the traffic calming scheme which had already been provided on the section of Long Drive between Queens Walk and Field End Road.**
- 4. asked officers to undertake further traffic surveys, at locations agreed by the lead petitioner and Ward Councillors present, and to then report back to the Cabinet Member.**

5. subject to the outcome of the surveys, instructed officers to include the study of potential traffic calming on Long Drive as part of the considerations to be undertaken on The Fairway and Queens Walk, to produce a package of measures to report back.

Reasons for recommendations

The Petition Hearing will provide a valuable opportunity to hear directly from the petitioners of their concerns and suggestions.

Alternative options considered / risk management

None at this stage.

3. PETITION ASKING FOR MEASURES TO ADDRESS PARKING AND TRAFFIC CONCERNS IN WHITEHEATH AVENUE, RUISLIP (Agenda Item 5)

Councillors Phillip Corthorne and Devi Radia attended the meeting and spoke as Ward Councillors in support of the petition.

Concerns and suggestions raised at the meeting included the following:

- *Petitioners had raised a number of concerns regarding the safety of pupils and parents at Whiteheath Junior School which had increased in size over the years;*
- *Traffic congestion had worsened outside the school and in the surrounding roads as it became more 'normal' for parents to drive their children to school in increasingly large vehicles;*
- *It was noted that there were a number of teachers that refused to park in the school's own car park and instead parked in the adjoining residential roads. This added to the congestion on the surrounding roads and made it more difficult for parents to drop their children off;*
- *The school had 22 parking spaces and 40 members of staff, most of whom were part time. As such, parking availability was such that the level of overspill into the surrounding roads need not be at the level currently experienced. This issue had been raised with the Head Teacher and Chair of Governors who were contractually unable to dictate where staff parked;*
- *Children would often have to cross the road to get to school;*
- *Although it had been addressed to some extent, there were still a large number of parents turning their vehicles in the road after they had dropped their children off. This also added to the congestion around the school and had resulted in a number of near-misses where vehicles had mounted the pavement and almost hit children;*
- *Petitioners were aware that the majority of schools within the Borough were in 20mph zones but that the speed limit outside of Whiteheath Junior School was 30mph. The speed of some vehicles travelling in the area had been frightening;*
- *As there were no traffic calming measures in the area, petitioners requested that action be taken to slow the traffic down. Suggestions had included reducing the speed limit to 20mph, the installation of speed tables, stopping*

vehicles from turning in the road, the introduction of a one way system for school traffic and school staff using the school car park;

- It was suggested that double yellow lines be installed outside the school by the barriers to ensure that the school entrance was kept clear for emergency vehicle access, should the need arise;*
- A number of parents would turn up about an hour before the end of school and sit in their vehicles with their engines running;*
- A 2.30pm to 4.30pm parking restriction was in place outside of the school. Residents were unable to see the other side of the road for cars at 4.30pm when parents came to pick their children up from after school clubs;*
- Residents had considered requesting parking permits but were keen to ensure that parents were still able to stop for 5-10 minutes so that they could pick their children up from school; and*
- One of the Ward Councillors had met with officials at Whiteheath Junior School who had confirmed that they would do anything in their power to help the situation. Whilst it was acknowledged that the school was unable to contractually enforce staff parking in the school car park, there was the possibility that residents could ask for parking permits which would force the issue. The school had advised that it was introducing a Parent Parking Pledge which, it was hoped, would improve the situation.*

Councillor Burrows listened to the concerns of the petitioners and responded to the points raised. He noted that issues were faced by most residents in the Borough living in the vicinity of a school and that it was important to balance school life with the needs of the local community so that an amicable solution was reached.

Although there had been recent construction works undertaken at Whiteheath Junior School, pupil numbers had remained largely unchanged over the last twenty years. However, this might change in the future.

Whilst a voluntary one way system for school traffic could be introduced, there would still be parents who would not comply and could not be forced to as, by its very nature, it would be voluntary. Consideration could be given to a permanent one way system around the school but this would be incumbent on all road users, including the local residents.

Councillor Burrows advised that he would ask officers to commission an independent traffic survey during term time to identify the volume, type, time and speed of vehicles using the road. The locations for the 24/7 survey were agreed with the petition organiser and those Ward Councillors present. The data collected by the survey would build a more comprehensive picture of the situation and, where appropriate, could be passed to the Police.

It was noted by officers that the relationship and level of communication between the Council and the school had improved significantly since the submission of this petition. This provided benefits to the school, pupils and parents, the Council and the local residents.

Those present were advised that the Council was in the process taking action in relation to idling engines which might alleviate air quality issues.

The Cabinet Member advised that Council officers would be meeting with the school at the end of the week to review the information that had been gathered at this Petition Hearing. Ward Councillors would be kept updated on the results of the survey and the outcome of the meeting with the school.

RESOLVED: Meeting with the petitioners, the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transportation and Recycling:

1. **listened to their concerns over parking and traffic in Whiteheath Avenue, Ruislip;**
2. **asked officers to investigate possible options to mitigate the concerns raised by petitioners and then to report back to the Cabinet Member;**
3. **instructed officers to commission independent 24/7 traffic speed and volume surveys at locations agreed with the petitioners and Ward Members; and**
4. **instructed officers from the Council's Road Safety and School Travel Team to follow up on initial dialogue with Whiteheath Junior School to explore measures they could put in place with the school to alleviate local residents' concerns.**

Reasons for recommendations

To allow the Cabinet Member to discuss with petitioners their concerns and, if appropriate, add their request to the parking scheme and road safety programme.

Alternative options considered / risk management

These were discussed with petitioners.

4. PETITION REQUESTING AN ARTICLE 4 DIRECTION AND TO REGISTER ALL HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION IN HEATHROW VILLAGES (Agenda Item 6)

Councillors Ali Milani, Peter Money and June Nelson attended the meeting and spoke as Ward Councillors in support of the petition.

Concerns and suggestions raised at the meeting included the following:

- *Residents were asking for action to help safeguard their community in Heathrow Villages Ward by dealing with the unlicensed / unregistered HMOs in the area;*
- *The petition organiser had circulated additional information about the issues faced by petitioners which had been forwarded to the Cabinet Member in advance of the meeting;*
- *It was noted that the transient nature of many of those who lived in Heathrow Villages Ward had not helped with community cohesion / identity and families had been forced out of the area;*
- *It was recognised that an Article 4 Direction had been introduced in Brunel Ward to alleviate the impact of HMOs on the local community. It was*

suggested that the transient workers in Heathrow Villages created a similar situation to that created by the 13,500 students at Brunel and the impact that the introduction of an Article 4 Directive might have on neighbouring wards was not a good enough reason to reject the option. It was thought that the impact of transient workers was two to three times greater on the lives, safety and cleanliness of the local community in Heathrow Villages than the 'studentification' in Brunel had been. As such, the introduction of an Article 4 Directive would have an even more profoundly positive effect on the lives of residents in the local area;

- It was suggested that the introduction of the following would help: a private property licence scheme; an emergency Article 4 Directive to withdraw permitted development rights; and all outbuildings be restricted to no more than 6ft with no water supply;*
- Heathrow airport, along with numerous hotels and businesses in the area and good transport links, provided significant employment opportunities (approximately 76,000 employees) which resulted in a higher than average number of rental properties in the area (some of which were rented to private hire vehicle drivers);*
- Concern was expressed that landlords profited from the lack of restrictions that were in place and that the true number of HMOs was unknown and therefore went unmonitored. The volume of HMOs in Heathrow Villages had led to an increase in the amount of littering, use of public bins for domestic waste, vermin, parking and congestion and a decline in housing conditions;*
- Wards Councillors had been reporting HMOs for a number of years and been told by Council officers that these properties were under investigation;*
- The high number of short term tenancies had translated into an increase in fly-tipping (instances of which had been reported through Members' Enquiries) and had resulted in permanent residents being surrounded by strangers;*
- Concern was expressed that Harmondsworth Village was in a conservation area but that it was being run down; and*
- It was noted that similar measures were being taken in the area surrounding Gatwick airport.*

Councillor Burrows listened to the concerns of the petitioners and responded to the points raised. He noted that the introduction of an Article 4 Directive would not prevent the creation of HMOs and each application would need to be considered on its merits. In addition, the Directive would not apply to those properties that had already been designated as HMOs before its introduction and the Council would not be able to control who owned the properties.

Before an application for an Article 4 Directive could be submitted, the Council would need to investigate all other options available to it. Following consideration by Cabinet and Council (and a 12 month consultation exercise), an Article 4 Directive would then ultimately be decided by the Secretary of State who would be likely to consider an application for Heathrow Villages in great detail, given its proximity to the airport. As such, the evidence base to support the application for an Article 4 Directive in Heathrow Villages would need to be comprehensive. Furthermore, as the process would take a minimum of 18 months (as was the case for Brunel), there would be nothing to stop landlords from applying for their properties to become HMOs before the end of the consultation period to avoid the associated additional restrictions.

Whilst it was appreciated that some of the transient workers that had moved to the area were living with unrelated others in HMOs, there were still some who brought their whole families which would then not constitute an HMO. Officers faced the challenge of differentiating between genuine temporary family homes and those that were HMOs. Furthermore, not all landlords in Heathrow Villages were bad and it was important to not penalise those good landlords that provided families with a valuable service. It was important to ensure that an effective enforcement regime was in place.

Although there were not a large number of planning enforcement cases currently ongoing, it was noted that there had been a lot of planning history in relation to the property at 66 Hatch Lane. Mr Haslam, the Council's Private Sector Housing Manager, advised that there were currently 32 licensed HMOs in Heathrow Villages and that officers were investigating a large number of unlicensed premises in the area. He noted that a hefty financial penalty had recently been levied on an HMO landlord in Heathrow Villages.

Mr Rodger, the Council's Head of Planning, Transportation and Regeneration, advised that there was a live planning application for a 10+ bed HMO at Manor Lodge. The application sought to convert the building to a smaller number of larger units. Officers had not yet made recommendations in relation to the application but it was noted that, if approved, it would change the character of the property. Petitioners were advised that the application would be considered by Members on the Major Applications Planning Committee in due course.

Officers would need to undertake further targeted outreach work to identify unlicensed HMOs in the Heathrow Villages area. The officer team had recently been restructured and there had been an exponential increase in the volume of work undertaken over the last six months. A number of areas and specific properties had already been identified for inspection and this would be undertaken in the near future.

The Cabinet Member asked officers to prepare an evidence base to support an Article 4 Directive application for him to consider. In addition, he asked officers to ensure that they utilised all other options available to them to tackle unlicensed HMOs. Councillor Burrows would continue discussions with officers about the matter and Ward Councillors would be kept updated on any progress. He noted that, once the evidence had been collected, an informed decision would need to be made as to whether it was sufficient to take forward. The Cabinet Member reiterated that his decision did not give residents an Article 4 Directive but that the Council would continue to use all of the powers available to it to stop unlicensed HMOs.

Those present were advised that the Brunel Liaison Group had been set up prior to the agreement of the Brunel Article 4 Directive. The application had been helped by the fact that Brunel University had been a major stakeholder and had been supportive of the Directive. It was thought that Heathrow airport might be less supportive of similar measures in Heathrow Villages.

RESOLVED: Meeting with the petitioners, the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transportation and Recycling:

1. **listened to the concerns outlined and reasons put forward by residents for an Article 4 Direction and registration of HMO properties.**
2. **considered the wider implications of imposing an Article 4 Direction on Heathrow Villages Ward and surrounding wards.**
3. **noted that the evidential base likely to be required to ensure the Secretary of State agrees an Article 4 Direction in Heathrow Villages would need to be fully established before Cabinet or Full Council could proceed to agree such a direction or to notify the Secretary of State.**
4. **noted that, on 1 October 2018, the Council adopted the power under the Housing and Planning Act to impose financial penalties on landlords who are required to license HMOs and fail to do so.**
5. **instructed officers to prepare the evidence base for creation of an Article 4 Direction for him to consider further and instructed officers to pursue any other actions available to the Council to address the petitioners concerns regarding HMOs.**

Reasons for recommendations

The Petition Hearing will provide a valuable opportunity to hear directly from the petitioners of their concerns and suggestions.

Alternative options considered / risk management

None at this stage.

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Nikki O'Halloran on 01895 250472. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.