

**Note of Informal meeting held on 17 May 2016 regarding the
Call In of Decision Reference FP/495/04/16 Proposed Traffic Regulation Order
Changes – Langston Road Retail Park, Loughton**

In attendance:

Councillor Chris Pond (Councillor responsible for calling the decision in)
Councillor John Knapman (in support of Councillor Pond as a Local Member
Councillor)
Councillor Eddie Johnson, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

Mark Youngman, Essex Highways
Vicky Presland, Essex Highways
Chloe Livingstone, Essex Highways
Jess Hayes, Cabinet Advisor
Christine Sharland, Scrutiny Officer

The informal meeting was taking place as part of the County Council's Call In procedure for the consideration of FP/495/04/16 Proposed Traffic Regulation Order Changes – Langston Road Retail Park, Loughton.

The County Council as Highways Authority has consulted on the alteration and implementation of traffic regulation orders (TROs) to facilitate major highway improvement works in the vicinity of Chigwell Lane, Loughton. The improvements are considered necessary following planning permission being granted for the redevelopment of the Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) Depot upon the south side of Langston Road to a new shopping park.

The decision was called in by Councillor Pond as a Member of the Place Services and Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee, and he was supported by Councillor Knapman who is a local County Councillor.

Councillor Pond drew attention to the three reasons he had given for calling in the decision as set out in his Notification of Call In. He drew attention to local concerns that:

- The development will result in the displacement of around 400 cars that currently park in and around the site into the surrounding area.
- Rat running could be intensified along local residential roads including Colson Road and Ibbetson Path as the result of drivers trying to avoid queuing traffic on the A1168.
- Two particular problems he used to illustrate his concerns were (a) in Colson Road the proposed box junctions would make it easier for drivers to push in and out of adjacent roads; and (b) the increase in traffic would impact upon buses turning and the potential for obstructions to arise.

In summary he believed that further traffic control measures should be considered as a result of the new Retail Park beyond the area covered by the proposals set out in the Cabinet Member's decision.

Councillor Knapman supported Councillor Pond, and put forward some suggestions to alleviate the highways problems he envisaged would arise as a result of the new development. He referred to existing rat runs and the projection of 2000 additional vehicles in Ibbetson Path that he accepted might not necessarily result in a lot of change to existing traffic flows. However, he perceived parking displacement as a major concern.

With particular reference to parking restrictions, Councillor Knapman proposed that a pay and display scheme of parking should be introduced on one side of Langston Road, which is a wide road, instead of prohibited parking on both sides of the road as envisaged in the current scheme. He shared his knowledge of the local area as he put a number of other solutions forward to address potential displaced parking including the construction of a link road from a road from the rear of the new retail park across land to a proposed new leisure facility nearby that would have parking at the site.

Councillors Pond and Knapman pointed out that the problem of displaced parking would arise sooner rather than later as it would co-incide with the start of construction rather than being delayed to the occupation and opening of the new Retail Park. This was due to fact that some 250 vehicles currently occupy an area of vacant land that was part of the construction site that would have to be vacated. Parking in the Debden area would become more difficult for residents and workers.

In response Councillor Johnson emphasised that the proposed traffic scheme now being promoted by Essex County Council is focussed upon the implementation of the measures required under Section 106 and 278 Agreements on defined areas of the highway network following the planning permission that was granted by Epping Forest District Council for the retail area. The scheme had been designed by the promoters of the development and had been checked by Essex Highways. A traffic model was used to project the impact on capacity on the highway network. It was not possible to extend the particular package of measures beyond the local area as defined within the Agreements.

Nevertheless Councillor Johnson and Highways Officers listened carefully to the concerns raised through the call in, and promised to take the following action:

- Councillor Johnson would contact the North Essex Parking Partnership to highlight the current concerns and describe the suggestions that were put forward at the meeting, including a pay and display scheme along one side of Langston Road and Oakwood Hill. Attention was also drawn to the current review of parking in the Debden area.
- Various surveys will be undertaken before the development begins such as queuing traffic lengths, and peak hour traffic counts in Westall Road and Ibbetson Path to enable a judgement to be made on the impact of the new Retail Park and traffic scheme in the future.

- In turn Councillor Johnson promised to look at any issues that might arise once the scheme has been completed in order to consider how to alleviate any identified problems that occur as a result of the proposed traffic regulation orders.
- Councillor Johnson emphasised that he was happy for traffic problems to be drawn to his attention including the opportunity to meet with him at one of his regular weekly surgeries, as well as the various channels for their consideration including the Local Highways Panels.

After taking into consideration the discussion that had taken place, Councillor Pond indicated that after discussion with Epping Forest District Council colleagues he might be minded to withdraw his call in of decision FP/495/04/16 subject to the Cabinet Member's written confirmation of promises he had made in response to some of the concerns raised on the proposed traffic measures.

Addendum:

Councillor Johnson wrote to Councillor Pond on 18 May 2016 confirming the action he had promised to take at the informal meeting, and the text from that letter is set out below:

'Dear Cllrs Pond and Knapman

Re: FP/495/04/16 Proposed Traffic Regulation Order changes – Langston Road Retail Park, Loughton

I would like to thank you for your time yesterday to discuss the concerns that you have raised in relation to the Traffic Regulations Orders that are proposed as part of the Epping Forest District Council development on Langston Road.

At the informal call-in meeting yesterday you explained your reservations about the improvement scheme, which were broadly:

1. You thought Colson Road and Ibbetson Path would potentially be vulnerable to additional rat-running, caused by diversion of drivers trying to avoid lengthened queues because of the traffic scheme.

I explained that the aim of the proposed traffic scheme was to improve traffic flow upon three A1168 junctions and, as such, Essex Highways officers did not think any additional rat-running would occur.

2. You explained that a sizeable parcel of land, presently used for car parking by approximately 250 vehicles, would have to be vacated at the start of construction (not occupation) of the retail facility. You were concerned that this would make parking in the Debden area very difficult for residents and workers.

I explained that Essex County Council's role in this scheme was only to execute the traffic measures called for by the section 106/278 agreements on defined areas of the road network following the planning permission that was granted by Epping Forest District Council for the retail area.

Nevertheless, I undertook to:

1. Ensure that traffic flows in the area are monitored and if they demonstrate increased levels of rat-running in nearby residential streets, I will consider appropriate mitigation.
2. Arrange for a queue survey in the peak time prior to works starting and for a manual count to be undertaken at key locations in the am peak to allow all parties to monitor whether the scheme does not worsen the current situation
3. Write a separate letter to the Chairman of NEPP highlighting the parking concerns that have been raised and that they consider mitigation measures, such as pay and display parking, to help with any parking overspill, specifically on Langston Road and Oakwood Hill.

I trust that these measures alleviate the concerns that were raised by you in our meeting yesterday.

Yours sincerely

signed by Councillor Johnson'

On 21 May 2016 Councillor Pond confirmed that he had withdrawn his call in on the basis of the Cabinet Member's letter and the note of the informal meeting, which would be reported to the Committee on 26 May.
