

CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT

RECORD OF DECISIONS of the meeting of the Cabinet Member for Transport held on Friday, 18 August 2023 at 10.00 am at the Guildhall, Portsmouth

Present

Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson CBE (in the Chair)
Councillors Simon Boshier
Graham Heaney

19. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Brian Madgwick.

20. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Simon Boshier made a non-prejudicial declaration of interest in regard to agenda item 4, stating he was a regular user of the trains to London.

The Chair altered the order in which items would be considered with agenda item 4, Council Responses to SW Railway Ticket Office Proposals & Southern Railway Timetable Proposals, being considered first. For ease of reference the minutes will remain in the original agenda order.

21. TRO 39/2023: Lake Road (Waiting Restrictions and Bus Lane) - postponed from 10 August Decision Meeting

Aneta Scurtu, Senior Highways Engineer, presented the report, the purpose of which was to consider representations received during the consultation for the proposed Waiting Restrictions and Bus Lane on Lake Road, Portsmouth.

Deputations

Deputations were made by:

- Ian Saunders, Portsmouth Cycle Forum
- John Worley, Portsmouth Tree Wardens.
- Tricia Bell, Portsmouth Tree Wardens.
- A written deputation from South Hampshire Bus Operators Association was read out by Martin Lavers.

Deputations are not minuted but can be viewed here: [Cabinet Member for Transport, 18 August 2023 on Livestream](#)

The Chair noted that the scheme would help improve bus times in the city. He had discussed with bus operators regarding shared bus/cycle lanes going in both directions and confirmed the bus operator's preference was to have a one way bus lane that was not shared with other road users.

The Chair further noted the scheme would produce a safer cycling route into the city centre as part of the city plans along with two new pedestrian

crossings where previously there were none near Commercial Road and the south end of Church Street. Although the scheme removed some pay and display parking there was still ample parking in the area. Discussions had been held with the Salvation Army and the Tree Preservation Society with some positive outcomes.

The Chair advised of three further recommendations to be added for the scheme:

1. That a two-metre fence be offered to the residents of Norsk House to aid privacy in their gardens as on the opposite side of the road.
2. That the western three trees T1, T2 & T3 that are threatened with removal are saved and an examination is made about whether reducing the width of the bus lane and the vehicle carriageway by around a foot to keep them further away from the roots of the trees is possible to help protect those trees.
3. That in future tree wardens are treated as a statutory consultee in all construction projects where trees are at risk and their comments noted in all reports.

Members' questions

In response to Members' questions, officers clarified:

- The potential new TRO for Blue Badge parking on Lake Road, would be progressed and would go to the Cabinet Member for Transport for a decision when it was ready. The process of formal consultation would be carried out. Members hoped this would run in parallel with the scheme so the work could be carried out all at the same time.
- The ward councillors had been consulted on the scheme, with Councillor Cal Corkery attending a recent site meeting and walking the site.

Members' comments

Members considered a ¼ hour adjournment so the new recommendations could be printed and circulated. The decision was to continue without doing so. However, Members were concerned about the principle of new recommendations being moved verbally which did not allow them time to consider them and understand the scope. The Chair confirmed that, should this occur in the future, the new recommendations would be printed and circulated.

Members noted that bus lanes are a legal width and so could not be reduced below that minimum. This was confirmed by officers. Officers noted the suggestion from the deputees regarding flexibility of the cycle lane and stated this could be considered as an alternative to reduction of the bus lane/carriageway.

There was a discussion centring on the new recommendation that tree wardens are treated as statutory consultees in all construction projects where trees are at risk and their comments noted in all reports. Members considered that this could only apply to transport projects and could not be applied to any other projects in the council without agreement by the full Cabinet that they are statutory consultees. The Chair advised he understood

this and would discuss this further with his Cabinet colleagues for consideration in other projects for the city.

In relation to new recommendation number 2, the Chair confirmed that he would not be expecting a paper to come back to a decision meeting and that the scheme could be progressed whilst the investigation was being carried out.

Members were happy with the general principles of the scheme.

Decision

The Cabinet Member for Transport made the following decisions

- 1. Approved the Lake Road scheme and the implementation of the TRO 39/2023 for the introduction of Waiting Restrictions and Bus Lane on Lake Road, Portsmouth as advertised, following the formal consultation.**
 - 2. That a 2 metre fence be offered to the residents of Norsk House to aid privacy in their gardens as on the opposite side of the road;**
 - 3. That the western three trees T1, T2 & T3 threatened with removal are saved and an examination is made of the bus lanes and vehicle carriageway to see if they can be reduced to help protect the trees;**
 - 4. That the Tree Wardens will be treated as statutory consultees in all construction projects where trees are at risk and their comments noted in all reports.**
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- 22. Council Responses to South Western Railway Ticket Office Proposals & Southern Railway Timetable Consultation**
- Simon Bell, Principal Public Transport Officer, presented the information only report the purpose of which was to provide Cabinet with details of Council's response to the recent consultations by Southwestern Railway on changes to ticket office closures and Southern Railway Coastway West timetable change.

The report was considered in two parts - South Western Railway changes and Southern Railway changes.

South Western Railway

The Chair noted the changes to be a retrograde step which would disadvantage those residents with no bank accounts who had no option but to pay with cash. There was concern about some fares only being available online and that the steps being taken would not be conducive to ensuring all sectors of the population felt welcome and comfortable using the train services.

Members noted, at 6.1 of the report, the comments regarding 'full transition to digital retail'. Officers understood, from the SW Railway report, that there would be a member of staff in the ticket hall 24 hours a day. However, they suspected that in the long term, it could lead to the removal of ticket machines as well.

Members expressed astonishment that SW Rail are not aware of how people buy their tickets at the station and considered this a retrograde step for the service.

Southern Railway

Members questioned the assertion that a car journey to Gatwick from Portsmouth would only take 88 minutes and considered it would take longer especially when factoring in parking and getting into the terminal.

Members also noted staff at a local station detailing the issues Southern Rail have had in the recruitment of drivers which may explain why services are being cancelled and reliability being affected.

The Chair noted concerns that journey times from Portsmouth to Southampton, Gatwick and London would be longer at a time when the city council was trying to increase the number of people using public transport as a viable alternative to the car.

Decision

The Cabinet Member for Transport noted the report.

23. SOUTHERN RAILWAY WEST COASTWAY TIMETABLE CONSULTATION (ITEM WITHDRAWN FROM AGENDA)

The meeting concluded at 11.08 am.

Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson CBE
Chair