

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**LOCAL COMMITTEE (EPSOM & EWELL)**

DATE: 22 June 2015
LEAD OFFICER: Steve Howard
 Project Manager, Transport Policy
SUBJECT: Epsom Plan E highway improvements -
 Public Engagement Analysis Report
DIVISION: Epsom Town and Downs

**SUMMARY OF ISSUES:**

This paper is to update the Local Committee on the feedback and the high level analysis of the results of the public engagement event for the Epsom Plan E highway improvements scheme in Epsom town centre.

- The Local Committee (Epsom & Ewell) agreed on the 8 December 2014 that officers undertake a public engagement event for a minimum of six weeks on the Epsom Plan E Highway Improvements Scheme to:
 - inform and update the public on the scheme
 - provide an opportunity for the public to give their views on some aspects of the scheme
 - provide an opportunity to engage further with businesses, particularly those on South Street, to understand how we can refine the proposals whilst still supporting business needs.
- Feedback obtained from the responses will be used to inform detailed design as the scheme develops.
- The business case was resubmitted on the 15 February 2015 and received funding approval of £2.7million from the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership (C2C LEP) Local Growth Fund; on the 25 March 2015. With the required £0.675m from local contributions, the total funding available has risen to £3.375million.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Local Committee (Epsom & Ewell) is asked to:

- (i) Note the results of the high level analysis of the public engagement event on the Plan E Highway Improvement proposals and note that further

consideration of the 2,500 detailed comments and suggestions received will be taken forward to detailed design to progress the scheme.

- (ii) Note the additional £0.675million in (C2C LEP) Local Growth Fund to increase the overall funding to £3.375million.
- (iii) Note that the Member Task Group will be kept informed of the detail design process and any other issues.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

To ensure that the Local Committee is kept informed of the scheme development, the Local Committee is asked to note the results of the analysis of the public engagement event on the Plan E Highway Improvement proposals included in Annex 1 Public Engagement Analysis Report and supporting information of Annex 2 the exhibition panels and Annex 3 the questionnaire.

The public engagement event was carried out for a six week period between 18 March and 30 April 2015 to raise awareness of the Plan E Highway Improvement proposals and allow the public to give us their views to inform the final detailed design. The event was well attended with over 500 visitors and 245 questionnaires were returned. The County Council's webpage displaying the exhibition panels and link to the questionnaire received over 1,047 'hits' during the 6 week consultation period. Over 2,500 separate comments or suggestions have been received.

Over 2,500 detailed comments and suggestions received during the engagement event have been collated and will be considered during the detailed design stage as part of the scheme development with the Major Schemes Member Task Group.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 The Epsom Plan E highway improvements scheme comprises part of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's 'Plan E' Area Action Plan (AAP), adopted by the Borough Council in April 2011. The principles behind the highway improvements have been consulted on before, during the extensive consultation carried out for the Area Action Plan.
- 1.2 Previous consultation on the scheme took place as part of the extensive public consultation event in 2008/09, held for the Borough Council's Area Action Plan of the same name. At the time, the public were asked to comment on three options available to improve the highway environment and congestion in Epsom town centre. From this consultation, 'Option 2' was taken forward, which favoured making South Street two-way. This forms the basis for the Plan E highways improvement scheme.
- 1.3 The Local Committee received a report at their meeting on the 17 July 2013 which provided a briefing on the development of major schemes within the borough, including Epsom Plan E highway improvements scheme.
- 1.4 The Government and the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership (C2C LEP) announced funding allocations in July 2014, and Epsom Plan E highway

improvements were included as a prioritised scheme subject to Business Case (Value for Money) approval.

- 1.5 Along with the notes and information provided to the Member Task Group held 6 October 2014, the 8 December 2014 Committee Report updated the Local Committee on the traffic modelling analysis and progress on the scheme development, which had achieved a positive Benefit to Cost ratio (BCR) higher than 3:1, indicating a high value for money return. The business case was submitted to the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership Local Transport Board in December 2014.
- 1.6 The Local Committee (Epsom & Ewell) agreed on the 8 December 2014 that officers undertake a public engagement event for a minimum of six weeks on the Epsom Plan E Highway Improvements Scheme to raise awareness of the proposals and allow the public to give us their views to inform the final detailed design. This report summarises the engagement process and high level analysis of the public engagement event.

2. ANALYSIS:

Epsom Plan E highway improvements – Public Engagement Event Report

- 2.1 A public engagement event ran for a six week period between 18 March and 30 April 2015. A public exhibition was held at the Ebbisham Centre on Wednesday 18 March, Thursday 19 March and Saturday 21 March 2015. Details of the proposals, exhibition panels and questionnaire were also available via SCC's webpage for the six week period.
- 2.2 A report summarising the engagement process and high level analysis of the responses for each of the main questions is contained in **Annex 1 Public Engagement Analysis Report**. A summary of the main findings is set out below.
- 2.3 More than **500** people visited the exhibition over the 3 days with over **200** visitors on the Saturday. **245** questionnaires were completed either at the exhibition or received on-line. The county council webpage hosting the exhibition panels and on-line questionnaire received over **1,047** 'hits' during the 6 week consultation period.
- 2.4 Most respondents (over 80%) agreed with the demands and challenges facing the town centre of traffic congestion and traffic dominance and barriers to movement, pedestrian safety, town centre appearance and declining economic performance, and that something needs to be done to address these issues particularly around the **town centre appearance**.
- 2.5 Over **120** comments were received regarding the South Street proposals, a quarter (25%) were concerned with how deliveries would be managed.
- 2.6 In total over **2,500** separate comments have been returned regarding the proposals set out in the exhibition panels.
- 2.7 To aid analysis the responses have been categorised into the following key themes:
 - (i) Provision for cycling;

- (ii) Taxis
- (iii) Pedestrian facilities, including crossings and footway widths
- (iv) Traffic signals, including through traffic, signage and congestion
- (v) Deliveries (incl. Waiting restrictions) on South St
- (vi) Public realm
- (vii) Public transport
- (viii) Way finding for pedestrians and cyclists.

3. OPTIONS:

3.1 Previous consultation on the scheme took place as part of the extensive public consultation event in 2008/09, held for the Borough Council's Area Action Plan of the same name. At the time, the public were asked to comment on three options available to improve the highway environment and congestion in Epsom town centre including:

- (Option 1) Re-route the A24 around Station Approach, away from the High Street;
- (Option 2) Revert South Street to two-way; and
- (Option 3) Revert Ashley Avenue and Ashley Road to two-way.

3.2 Due to pinch points on the carriageway on Station Approach preventing the route from accommodating existing flows on the A24, Option 1 was not progressed. Similarly, Option 3 was not progressed due to the need for expensive property purchase to overcome pinch points in the carriageway.

3.3 **Option 2** – South Street two-way option has been developed as the only feasible highway layout improvement for Plan E highway improvement schemes and was the main focus of the public engagement event and the high level analysis of the responses received is contained in this report.

4. CONSULTATIONS:

4.1 Following Local Area Committee on the 8th December 2014, a public engagement exercise took place for a six week period from Wednesday 18 March to Thursday 30 April 2015 which included a manned public exhibition held at the Spa Lounge, Ebbisham Centre at the following dates and times:

- Wednesday 18 March 12:00 – 19:30
- Thursday 19 March 10:00 – 19:30
- Saturday 21 March 10:00 – 16:00

4.2 Officers from both the borough and county councils' were on hand to answer any questions regarding the proposals on display.

4.3 A public webpage was created to give details of the exhibition, and to link users to a questionnaire to give their feedback on the scheme. Information panels displayed at the exhibition were also published on the website. Following the exhibition, the display panels were moved to the Town Hall as an unmanned exhibition for the rest of the engagement period.

- 4.4 Notification of the public engagement event was sent to various interest groups including business forums, resident association groups, cycle groups, the civic society and borough and county members and was similar to SCC's Local Transport Plan consultee list used during last year's Local Transport Strategy and Forward Programme consultation.
- 4.5 Both the Epsom and Ewell Borough Council webpage and the Epsom and Ewell Local Area web pages promoted the exhibition at provided links to the main webpage, described above.
- 4.6 The event was advertised via social media channels, including a press release, advertising banners on both the borough and county councils websites, Twitter and Facebook. Posters were displayed at town centre bus stops and **500 leaflets** were distributed in the High Street to attract visitors. *What's On In Epsom* visited and tweeted to further advertise exhibition on Wednesday 18 March. *Get Surrey* reported on the exhibition on the 21 March.

Wider Engagement Activity

- 4.7 A business event was held in January 2014 to engage with local businesses in the area to help understand their needs. Local businesses located on South Street in particular were approached so that we could understand their loading and delivery arrangements. This will be particularly important as the scheme is progressed to detailed design.
- 4.8 Relatively little feedback was obtained from the business event, however the public exhibition raised the profile of the scheme again and further engagement with the local businesses was undertaken as some requested further information.

5. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 The detailed business case for the scheme was originally submitted in December 2014. The previous reported estimated cost for the scheme was £2.7 million.
- 5.2 Following the availability of additional funding from the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership (C2C LEP) Local Growth Fund. The business case was resubmitted on the 15 February 2015 and received funding approval of £2.7m from the (C2C LEP) Local Growth Fund; on the 25 March 2015. Taking account of the required additional 20% match funding of £0.675m from local authority contributions the total scheme funding now stands at £3.375million.

6. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:

- 6.1 It is the objective of Surrey Highways to treat all users of the public highway equally and with understanding. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA's) will be carried out for each Major scheme as part of the detailed design process.

7. LOCALISM:

7.1 The headline benefits of the Epsom Plan E highway improvements major scheme to the local area are as follows:

- Boosting economic growth by;
- Tackling congestion
- Improving journey time reliability
- Reducing journey times
- Improving pedestrian connectivity from Epsom station to the town centre
- Improve appearance of the public realm

8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Crime and Disorder	No significant implications arising from this report
Sustainability (including Climate Change and Carbon Emissions)	Set out below
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	No significant implications arising from this report
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	No significant implications arising from this report
Public Health	Set out below.

8.1 Sustainability and Public Health implications

Increased walking and cycling, where it replaces motorised forms of transport such as the car, will improve air quality and reduce carbon emission levels, which is a key objective of the Surrey LTP. Passenger transport and modal shift from the car to buses/rail are a further key objective of the Surrey LTP.

Increased walking and cycling has a positive impact on the health of a person.

It is also expected that increased levels of walking and cycling to and around the town centre will have a positive effect on Epsom’s retail economy with recent studies suggesting that pedestrians and cyclists actually spend more on a trip into a town than a motorist.

9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

9.1 The Local Committee on the 8 December 2014 agreed for officers to undertake public engagement event for a minimum period of 6 weeks in 2015 and report the feedback to the Major Schemes Member Task Group in April 2015. The public engagement event was undertaken and the approach

and high level analysis of the responses received is set out in this report alongside the submitted annexes. Given the recent election in May 2015 and changes taking place the feedback has been reported back to the Local Committee, in this instance.

- 9.2 More than **500** people visited the exhibition over the 3 days with over 200 visitors on the Saturday. **245** questionnaires were completed either at the exhibition or received on-line. The county council webpage hosting the exhibition panels and on-line questionnaire received over **1,047** 'hits' during the 6 week consultation period.
- 9.3 Most respondents (over 80%) agreed with the demands and challenges facing the town centre of traffic congestion and traffic dominance and barriers to movement, pedestrian safety, town centre appearance and declining economic performance, and that something needs to be done to address these issues particularly around the town centre appearance.
- 9.4 Over **2,500** detailed comments and suggestions received during the engagement event have been collated and will be considered during the detailed design stage as part of the scheme development. The Major Schemes Member Task Group will be kept informed during this process.

10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

- 10.1 Officers will continue to consider the 2,500 separate responses and the relative merits of all the comments and suggestions received in terms of those which need to be considered further to aid the detailed design with the Major Schemes Member Task Group.
- 10.2 The next steps for the scheme is for the County Council to finalise the detail design taking account any relevant comments or suggestions received during the public engagement event with the Major Scheme Member Task Group and to then consider the most appropriate delivery method and timescales to implement the scheme. This will include further dialogue with businesses along South Street.
- 10.3 All comments relating to the street scene aspects (town centre appearance etc.) within the remit of the Plan E highways improvement scheme will be shared and discussed with Epsom and Ewell Borough Council. The design of any Public Realm elements under borough council control around the Market Place or other street furniture will be actively discussed with the borough council planning officers and the Major Schemes Member Task Group before implementation.

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Consulted:
 Surrey County Council officers:
 Epsom & Ewell Borough Council officer(s):
 Epsom & Ewell Local Area Committee Members (8th December 2014)

Annexes:

Annex 1: Plan E highway improvements – Public Engagement Analysis

Annex 2: Plan E highway improvements – Exhibition Panels

Annex 3: Plan E highway improvements – Questionnaire

Sources/background papers:

C2C LTB Major schemes submissions (July 2013)

C2C Expressions of Interest (March 2014)

Notes of Member Task Group (October 2014)

Epsom & Ewell Local Area Committee Report 8 December 2014