

**SPELTHORNE BOROUGH COUNCIL AND  
SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**



**SPELTHORNE JOINT COMMITTEE**

**DATE: 16 DECEMBER 2019**

**LEAD OFFICER: KEITH MCGROARY  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MANAGER  
SPELTHORNE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**SUBJECT: IMPROVEMENT TO SHOPPING PARADES**

**AREA(S) AFFECTED: ALL**

**SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

This document has been produced at the request of the Joint Committee in relation to improvements to four shopping parades situated in the borough. Each of the parades are situated in different towns and include Clare Road, Stanwell, Edinburgh Drive Staines-upon-Thames, Woodlands Parade, Ashford and Groveley Road, Sunbury on Thames.

The Joint Committee requested that an update was provided so it was briefed in relation to how the funding that was provided by Surrey County Council and Spelthorne Borough Council was spent and feedback from the retailers affected.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**The Spelthorne Joint Committee is asked to agree that / to note that.**

- (i) In any future similar projects that a broad outline is obtained in respect of the implications to businesses situated in an area where improvement are being considered, and that they are made aware of the potential impact on trade whilst work is being carried out.
  - (ii) That the views of the retailers will inform the decision making process when deciding whether to carry out improvements that are likely to impact on local trade.
- 1.
- (iii) That with similar types of projects in the future, SCC should where possible, provide a single point of contact to help facilitate communications and the effective and timely delivery of the contract.

## **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Despite the obvious improvements and enhancements to the parades, the results of this project have been tainted by the negative and unexpected experience some of the retailers experienced during the course of the works. Although, retailers were made aware the work was taking place in advance, many did not appreciate the potential impact on their business whilst work was taking place.

Consideration to the views of the retailers should influence the final decision on whether or not to go-ahead with work which may cause a disproportionate amount of disruption, thereby potentially threatening the viability of businesses potentially adversely affected by requirements such as road closures.

Communications took place with various officers in different departments across SCC; working with a single point of contact would have helped with communications as they would have been able to understand the collective issues and problems and be best placed to help resolve them with colleagues.

## **1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:**

- 1.1 In 2016 SBC was successful in a bid for funding from the Town Centre Revitalisation Fund launched by Surrey County Council which offered match funding to help improve our out-of-town shopping centres / parades. £101k was awarded to Spelthorne in order to carry out improvements to four shopping parades; Clare Road, Stanwell; Woodlands Parade Ashford; Edinburgh Drive, Staines-upon-Thames and Groveley Road, Sunbury-on-Thames.
- 1.2 Each of the four sites was visited and retailers were asked about what they would like to see in terms of improvements; this feedback helped inform the contracts that were subsequently tendered in relation of the requirements of the work to be carried out.
- 1.3 In order to start the works, there was a need to apply for a S278 from SCC to give approval for work to commence; communications to obtain licences began in October 2016. The first of these licences was issued in March 2018 and the last licence issued in July 2018, this meant there was an 18 month delay before work could start, one of the consequences was that the contractor added an extra 6% on top of the original tender as the economy and prices had changed since the contract was first awarded. Part of the delay in the S278 was a belief at SCC that there was a need for substantial deposits to be made to SCC by SBC before work could start on the S278 licences; this was later realised to be a wrongly held belief, but this added to the delay in the issuing of the licences.
- 1.4 There was also a delay in agreeing the details submitted regarding the highways design to SCC as well as the need for a Road Safety Audit and Noise Audit in relation to some of the parades. The last of the parades was completed in June 2019.

## **2. ANALYSIS:**

- 2.1 Since the improvements have taken place a survey has taken place with retailers situated at all four sites. Each shop was visited and a survey was left together with a stamped addressed envelope.
- 2.2 The headline details in relation to the feedback are provided below, each parade is summarised by location. Each retailer was asked to score (from 1 – 10 as to satisfaction, with 1 = very unhappy and 10 = very happy) how satisfied with the layout of the parade before the improvements took place and after work was completed. The survey concluded on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2019.
- 2.3 **Clare Road:** Before 53; After 60. There were 7 respondents. A key theme from the respondents was the frustration over the length of time it took to carry out the work and the road closure; there was also concern about the apparent lack of activity at the site by workmen. Most said the work negatively impacted on their business.
- 2.4 **Groveley Road:** Before 17; After 17. There were 2 respondents. Feedback when asked if there could be anything else done to improve the parade included 'I think all that has been done'.
- 2.5 **Woodlands Parade:** Before 36; After 29. There were 5 replies. All replies complained that the green area should be improved. Also complaints that the length of time it took to carry out the work took too long (2 weeks longer than the 4 weeks planned), this also had a detrimental impact on their business.
- 2.6 **Edinburgh Drive:** Before 20; After 41. There were 6 respondents. Comments included that before 'it was dull, dirty, un-kept' then 'still a lot of room for improvement'. Another stated 'it looked cleaner'; there was a call for the introduction of better lighting and CCTV.
- 2.7 Collectively the before score tally was 126, and the after was 147 in terms of satisfaction rates, so overall, despite the frustrations brought about that affected trade, the retailers are 18% more happier with their parades than when they were before work started.

## **3. OPTIONS:**

- 3.1 No other options to consider.

## **4. CONSULTATIONS:**

- 4.1 As described in the report.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

- 5.1 The total cost of the improvements for the four parades came to £228,000. Surrey County Council contributed £101,000 towards the improvements and Spelthorne Council paid the remaining amount.

## **6. WIDER IMPLICATIONS:**

6.1 As described below.

<b>Area assessed:</b>	<b>Direct Implications:</b>
Crime and Disorder	No significant implications
Equality and Diversity	No significant implications
Localism (including community involvement and impact)	No significant implications
Sustainability (including Climate Change and Carbon Emissions)	No significant implications
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	No significant implications
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	No significant implications
Public Health	No significant implications

## **7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 7.1 From the photographs, it is clear that there have been some very good improvements to the parades, some of which, long overdue. However, the impact of road and path-works on businesses that depend upon accessibility for their customers to do business cannot be underestimated. Even though the Parades had physical improvements, the period whilst work was being carried out had a negative impact on takings for the duration of the works and this probably was a key factor taken into account when completing the questionnaire.
- 7.2 Consultation did take place in advance, but that was to establish needs and preferences from the retailers, but did not cover the potential impact on trade that the work could have. Should a similar exercise take place again, it is recommended that before consideration to improvements is approved, that retailers and others affected are informed about the likely consequences and duration of any work to be carried out. That way, there would not be surprises, and the businesses would be better informed, know what to expect and less frustrated with the process. Work at Edinburgh Drive and Groveley Road was delivered in the time scheduled; at Woodland Parade it was decided not to close the road so as not to cause too much disruption for the shopkeepers, but this added almost 2 weeks to the timetable; Clare Road took 1 week longer, but this work was affected by weather conditions at the time.
- 7.3 Wherever possible a single point of contact is appointed at SCC in order to help with communications and issues as and when they arise.

## **8. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:**

8.1 This project is completed.

**Contact Officer:** Keith McGroary, Spelthorne Borough Council

**Consulted:** as described

**Annexes:** Photographs to be displayed at Committee meeting.

**Background papers:** None

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