

REPORT FOR: CABINET

Date of Meeting: 21 November 2013

Subject: Accessible Transport - Scrutiny Review Group Report and Recommendations

Key Decision: No

Responsible Officer: Caroline Bruce, Corporate Director of Environment and Enterprise

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Susan Hall, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Environment

Exempt: No

Decision subject to Call-in: Yes

Enclosures: Appendix A: Accessible Transport – Report from Scrutiny Review Group
Appendix B: Response to Scrutiny Review Group Recommendations

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out the recommended actions to be taken by the Council in response to the Scrutiny Review Group (SRG) recommendations about Accessible Transport as outlined in their September 2013 report and attached at Appendix A.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to approve the actions recommended by officers in response to the recommendations made in the Accessible Transport Scrutiny Review Group report.

Reason: (For recommendation)

To improve accessibility on the borough transport network.

Section 2 – Report

Introduction

- 2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee commissioned a Scrutiny Review Group to seek and identify barriers to accessible transport in the Borough. It was acknowledged that despite much of the work done by the Council and its partners, significant barriers to accessible transport still exist currently.
- 2.2 The SRG presented its findings in a report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September 2013 and the recommendations were agreed and subsequently referred to Cabinet in October 2013 for consideration.
- 2.3 This report responds to the findings and recommendations made and the details can be seen in. Appendix B.

Options considered

- 2.4 For each recommendation made a review of the underlying issue and current practice within the traffic service was undertaken to establish what improvements could practicably be made and what actions would be undertaken. These are set out in Appendix B.

Accessible Transport Review

Summary of findings

- 2.5 The report outlined the research that had been carried out to inform the SRG about practical issues faced by public transport users and in particular, users with mobility impairments. It identified the issues arising from using public transport on the life

opportunities of people with mobility impairments, and the interventions that the council could facilitate to enhance life experiences of this group of people as well as the general public. It also aimed to serve as a document for third party lobbying for improved services.

- 2.6 The SRG report highlights a number of areas for improvement and further work by the council. These are summarised below with a full breakdown provided at Appendix B.
- Encourage greater public transport operator / driver awareness of disabilities including learning disabilities together with practical measures that could be taken to assist with independent travel.
 - Provide and lobby for enhanced and advance public information on public transport disruption and diversion as well as diversions associated with road works.
 - Create safer and more considerately designed pedestrian routes avoiding hazards and minimising confusion for visually impaired persons
 - Lobby for more consistent provision of ramps and hand rails at railway stations as well as staff assistance
 - Lobby for and seek out private funding to improve accessibility at stations
 - Encourage the roll out of more audible information to assist with independent travel for those with visual impairments.
 - Include a member from Harrow Association of Disabled People or similar organisation on the council's Traffic And Road Safety Advisory Panel.

Some of the key issues are discussed here.

Design standards

- 2.7 The design recommendations in the report are around street signs and tactile paving. The council adopts standards contained in the Traffic Signs Manual published by the Department for Transport.
- 2.8 Chapter 1 of the Traffic Signs Manual provides mounting heights for street signs in pedestrian areas. The minimum height for the lower part of a sign is 2100mm with a preferred height of 2300mm. The council ensures that its contractors adhere to this regulation and maintain the minimum clearance. The SRG report refers to a visually impaired resident having an issue with low signs and hence it is recommended that signs are wall mounted or above head height. It's likely that the sign or signs in question have either been displaced or are not official street signs. Officers will work with the resident to identify the signs and rectify the problem. Officers will be reminded to ensure new signs are installed correctly and at the minimum height to allow pedestrian clearance.
- 2.9 The SRG recommends that street works are signed well in advance and suitable alternatives are provided for pedestrians with mobility impairments. Chapter 8 of the Traffic Signs Manual as well as the easy read guide Safety At Street Works and Road Works – A Code of Practice published by The Stationary Office, is the guidance used to plan diversions and advance signs warning people of street works and road works. A revised version of the Code of Practice comes into force in 2014 which provides added emphasis on considerations for mobility impaired persons. Council officers will continue to follow guidance and ensure that diversion routes seriously consider mobility impaired pedestrians and regularly check to ensure that the diversions remain appropriate and safe.
- 2.10 Guidance on the use of tactile paving surfaces, DETR, 1998 is the document used to design tactile paving. It is accepted that some locations do not have adequate tactile

paving and this will be addressed though the annual programme of highway improvements across the borough.

Lobbying

- 2.11 A number of recommendations involve the council lobbying third parties to improve services. This includes better, consistent and audible travel information as well as physical improvements to accessibility. The council will use all available opportunities to continue to lobby transport providers for improvement as detailed in Appendix B.

Harrow funded initiatives

- 2.12 The council has already submitted to Transport for London (TfL) its three year bid for Local Implementation Plan (LIP) funding to improve the highway network. This is an outline programme of spend for 2014/15 to 2016/17, approved by the council's Portfolio Holder at the time of submission and currently awaiting approval by TfL. The programme includes bids under a number of categories including the following which specifically help to improve accessibility:

- Accessibility improvements
- Bus stop accessibility
- Shopmobility
- Travel training
- Cycling & Greenways
- Accident reduction

- 2.13 In addition to the LIP funding, major residential and commercial developments within the borough will be contributing to the overall accessibility improvement of the highways including some of the recommendations in the SRG report.

Summary of key actions

- 2.14 A full breakdown of the recommendations together with the council's response and actions to be taken is set out in Appendix B.

Legal implications

- 2.15 Where the recommendations involve introducing traffic restrictions and changes to traffic signing, road markings and engineering works there may be a need for traffic regulation orders to be made.
- 2.16 There are minimum requirements for statutory consultation before making a traffic regulation order, which are set out in the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and in Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996. A public notice stating the intention to introduce road humps (entry treatments) is also required under the Highways Act (Road Hump Regulations) inviting public consultation on proposals.

Financial Implications

- 2.17 Most of the recommendations in the Scrutiny Review Group report involve reviewing design considerations and undertaking third party lobbying with external partners. As a

consequence there are no additional financial implications as these requirements will be facilitated using existing staff resource.

- 2.18 Recommendations that involve public highway infrastructure changes will be considered for inclusion within current and future programmes of work in the Transport Local Implementation Plan (LIP) that facilitates the improvements highlighted in the SRG report. All approved programmes of work within LIP are funded from TfL.
- 2.19 Significant investment from external sources will be required for step free access at stations. Potential funding sources are being investigated.

Performance Issues

- 2.20 The council measures the change in the number of DDA compliant bus stops on an annual basis. This is currently at 87% and as a response to the SRG report additional funding will be sought to increase this to 90% by 2016..
- 2.21 Officers currently keep a log of all reports of inadequate advanced signage and diversion routes at street works. As an action from the SRG recommendations, these logs will be reviewed to monitor time taken for contractors to resolve incidents of inadequate signage and diversion routes which should normally be resolved within 2 to 4 hours.
- 2.22 A database of complaints is maintained by the council which will be monitored with the expectation that fewer complaints regarding transport accessibility will be received over time. The council will also use the SRG recommendations to focus its lobbying as Community Leaders with third party transport providers.
- 2.23 Accident data is regularly obtained and reviewed by the council and also used to prioritise interventions on the public highway. Accident data at the location of Stanmore Hill, Church Road and The Broadway will be reviewed following any improvements to the pedestrian crossing facility at this location.

Environmental Impact

- 2.24 There are no significant environmental impacts identified.

Risk Management Implications

- 2.25 Risk included on Directorate risk register? No. Is there a separate risk register in place? No.
- 2.26 There are no significant risks associated with the recommendations in the report.

Equalities implications

- 2.27 The SRG report provides recommendations to improve accessibility to the transport network in Harrow. It is not considered that the proposed actions will have any adverse effect upon persons sharing any of the protected characteristics. The recommended actions will potentially have a range of positive impacts for, in particular, the disabled and elderly in the community.

Corporate Priorities

- 2.28 The recommendations in the SRG report will support the corporate priorities of a safer and fairer Harrow.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Jessie Man	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 11/11/2013		
Name: Matthew Adams	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 25/10/2013		

Section 4 – Performance Officer Clearance

Name: Alex Dewsnap	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Divisional Director Strategic Commissioning
Date: 28/10/2013		

Section 5 – Environmental Impact Officer Clearance

Name: Andrew Baker	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Corporate Director Environment and Enterprise
Date: 24/10/2013		

Section 6 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact:

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Background Papers:

Overview & Scrutiny report – September 2013 – Accessible Transport (as per the enclosure at Appendix A)

**Call-In Waived by the
Chairman of Overview and
Scrutiny Committee**

NOT APPLICABLE

[Call-in applies]