

**Scrutiny: Call-In Sub-committee**  
**11<sup>th</sup> January 2005**

**Statement by Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport**

**Re: PHD 068/04 Petts Hill Bridge – Scheme Design and Consultation Results**

1. This is a joint scheme with Ealing for which Harrow are taking the lead. Proceeding with the current 3-lane option was agreed by Cabinet in June 2003 and has subsequently been agreed by Transport for London and Ealing, although in the latter case their recent decision on agreeing the design, like Harrow's, has been called-in.
2. It was identified at an early stage that an alternative 4-lane option, involving a new bridge, had advantages. However, it was also clear that it was significantly more expensive and that TfL were not prepared to fund the 4-lane new bridge option.
3. The current 3-lane scheme has been designed such that it can be easily upgraded to the 4-lane new bridge option at a future date, with the minimum of abortive expense. The fact that TfL have agreed to this design, which is more expensive than a 'basic' 3-lane option, highlights that they may be willing to fund the upgrade to the 4-lane new bridge option at a later date.

**Grounds for Call-in**

*Inadequate consultation*

4. The purpose of the consultation was to inform the local community of the proposals and give them an opportunity to comment on the scheme and highlight any issues they wish to be taken into account. This was achieved. A number of issues were raised in the consultation feedback, including that of the security of the tunnels. This was reported to the Panel along with additional background information to inform the Panel's decision. This is covered in para 2.3 and Appendix C of the report to the Panel.
5. In summary, the consultation succeeded in identifying this issue, which was subsequently considered by the Panel and myself.

*Lack of evidence*

*22.5(b) – Minutes for the TARSAP meeting on 1st December 2004 when this matter was last raised (following a request from the Conservative Nominated Member) have not yet been made public. Indeed Nominated Members have not yet seen draft minutes (as was requested at that meeting following a*

*serious omission from minutes of the September 2004 meeting.) However, the Portfolio Holder's decision purports to be based on the Panel's minutes!*

6. The minutes of the Traffic and Road Safety Advisory Panel meeting on 1st December 2004 have been available to the public since 16th December, when they were published on the internet. The minutes were also circulated to the Borough libraries on the same date.
7. The responsibility for the accuracy of the draft minutes lies with the Director of Legal Services. Statutory provision is that a Committee will receive the minutes of its previous meeting for confirmation (and/or amendment) at its next meeting.
8. The minutes were part of the documentation sent to me to inform my decision. All of that documentation, including the Traffic and Road Safety Advisory Panel minutes, was published to the internet prior to the decision being taken.

*At the 1<sup>st</sup> December meeting TARSAP Members were glibly told that neither TfL nor Network Rail were willing to make further funds available for bridge replacement that would have enabled four traffic lanes and normal pedestrian facilities to be provided. This was the first time for two years the Panel had been formally told of the funding situation, although some Members had been informed privately during the intervening period by the Acting Director of Environmental Services that modifications were being made to the walls of the pedestrian tunnels to enable eventual bridge replacement to take place.*

9. The scheme that was being progressed was the one that was agreed by Cabinet in June 2003. The decision to progress this scheme was made in the knowledge that funding was not available for the 4-lane new bridge option. Nothing has changed. The funding and scheme design review did not take place until the autumn and was covered in the 1<sup>st</sup> December Panel report (see para 10 below for further details of the review).

*The Panel was not provided with details of what negotiations (if any) had taken place between LBs of Harrow/Ealing and TfL/NetworkRail/Mayor of London, although it has subsequently come to light that a meeting of sorts took place sometime during November 2004 following a visit to the site by Ken Livingstone.*

10. The Mayor of London initiated a review of the scheme, including reconsideration of funding the 4-lane new bridge option, following his visit to the site on 23<sup>rd</sup> September to meet an objector to the scheme from Ealing. As part of the review this Council provided information, including updated business cases for both options. It was also made clear that of the two options this Council would prefer to build the 4-lane new bridge option.
11. At the time of the Panel meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> December, the outcome of the review was not formally known. An update of the position was given in

para 2.2 of the Panel report. It was subsequently confirmed that the Mayor once again rejected the 4-lane new bridge option in favour of the previously agreed 3-lane option. I assume that the meeting referred to is TfL's internal meeting of their Risk, Investment and Strategy Committee which met on 5 November to consider the scheme and funding review referred to above.

*The Conservative Nominated Member wrote to the Portfolio Holder on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2004 urging that an "eleventh hour" attempt be made at Member level to persuade the funding authorities to enable bridge replacement to take place (instead of the adaptations at present intended) but has yet to receive a response.*

12. A response has recently been sent advising that as a full review has just been completed by the Mayor of London it is not appropriate to seek a further review.
13. In summary, the consultation did identify the pedestrian security concern and this was considered along with all other information from the consultation feedback. A detailed review of the scheme and its funding has very recently been completed by the Mayor of London. Whilst discussions with Network Rail can continue, it must be recognised that they have no short term plans to invest in bridge replacement here and protracted discussions would prejudice the current approved programme and several million pounds of TfL funding.