

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Minutes** of a meeting of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held on **Thursday 13 January 2022** at **5.00 pm** in the **Conference Chamber, West Suffolk House**, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3YU

Present **Councillors**

**Chair** Ian Shipp  
**Vice Chair** Stephen Frost

Michael Anderson	Paul Hopfensperger
Trevor Beckwith	Margaret Marks
Tony Brown	Sarah Pugh
Mike Chester	Marion Rushbrook
Patrick Chung	Julia Wakelam
Diane Hind	

**Substitutes attending for a full member**

John Augustine

**In attendance**

Birgitte Mager, Ward Member for Moreton Hall  
John Burns, Chair of the Markets Review Working Group  
Susan Glossop, Cabinet Member for Growth

150. **Substitutes**

The following substitution was declared:

Councillor John Augustine substituting for Councillor Sarah Stamp.

151. **Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Simon Brown, Joe Mason and Sarah Stamp.

152. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2021 were confirmed as correct record and signed by the Chair.

153. **Declarations of interest**

Members' declarations of interest are recorded under the item to which the declaration relates.

154. **Announcements from the Chair regarding responses from the Cabinet to reports of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The Chair informed members the Vice-Chair attended Cabinet on 7 December 2021 and presented the Committee's report from the meeting held on 11 November 2021.

As per the minutes confirmed above, the Vice-Chair updated Cabinet on the Health Portfolio Overview presented by Councillor Sara Mildmay-White; the Air Quality and Anti-Idling update; the Suffolk County Health Scrutiny meeting held on 13 October 2021; the Cabinet Decisions Plan and Work Programme update, which were noted by Cabinet.

155. **Public participation**

There were no members of the public in attendance on this occasion.

156. **Suffolk County Council Update Provided on Councillor Call for Action Recommendations**

On 10 June 2021 Councillor Trevor Beckwith submitted a CCfA entitled "Impact of the Eastern Relief Road and A14 Junction 45 on the Moreton Hall Residential Area" for the Committee's consideration.

On 2 September 2021, the Committee heard from a variety of organisations and witnesses who have been involved in this issue. The Committee made a number of recommendations to Suffolk County Council and requested a three-month progress report for its January 2022 meeting.

The Committee on 13 January 2022 received Report number: OAS/WS/22/001, which updated members on the six recommendations, and included the responses provided by Suffolk County Council, which were set out below as follows:

**Recommendation 1:**

Installing signage along the A14 and at J45 to direct HGVs to specific Industrial Estates and Business Parks; and revisiting existing signage within the Business Parking to ensure HGVs are directed to J45, where internal roads join the Eastern Relief Road.

**SCC Response:**

The A14 is a trunk road and entirely the responsibility of National Highways (NH), not Suffolk County Council (SCC). We have passed on this request to NH, for their information and will discuss with them, as required. Should NH come up with a signing scheme for their network we would be consulted as a Local Highway Authority (LHA) and would look at ways of supporting this through changes to signing on the local road network.

However, amending the routing of HGVs would have to be considered in the round to ensure that larger vehicles are not displaced on to less suitable narrow rural roads and residential streets.

That is why SCC is carrying out a Suffolk wide HGV review and the results of this review will inform amendments to the Suffolk lorry routing map.

The current version is available to view here:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/assets/Roads-and-transport/lorry-management/Lorry-Route-Map-Amended-MAY-17.pdf>

### **Recommendation 2:**

Undertake day and night monitoring of HGV traffic flow, overnight parking on Moreton Hall in retail and industrial areas, air pollution and noise along Orttewell Road, Bury St Edmunds to provide a clear evidence base for further action.

#### **SCC Response:**

SCC conduct periodic monitoring of our network and additional survey work has been conducted as part of the Suffolk Wide HGV review.

Specific local issues should be flagged using the Highways Reporting Tool and will be investigated accordingly. See below link:

<https://highwaysreporting.suffolk.gov.uk/>

Please note that noise, air pollution and residential amenity are the responsibilities of West Suffolk Council (WSC), not SCC. However, we discuss these matters with WSC officers regularly and will engage positively with any initiatives WSC officers carry out in these areas.

### **Recommendation 3:**

To consult on a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order prohibiting HGVs using Orttewell Road, Bury St Edmunds and monitoring the impact of this.

#### **SCC Response:**

SCC has no current plans to carry out a Traffic Regulation Order consultation at this location. Orttewell Road is a modern road, built to a high standard without frontage development. Any restrictions on this road would have the impact of displacing HGV traffic onto less suitable roads. This would be especially the case in terms of air quality (which is a WSC matter) as many of the alternative routes have far more sensitive receptors in closer proximity to the road, than are present on Orttewell Road.

The appropriate means to assess these impacts will be through the ongoing countywide HGV routing review. The HGV route review may propose local restrictions, but only when the full impact of traffic displacement has been subject to detailed assessment.

**Recommendation 4:**

Bring the existing lorry park back into use to ensure that drivers park where facilities are provided and where they do not add to the morning congestion at Junction 44 as they leave Moreton Hall.

**SCC Response:**

It is not the responsibility of SCC to provide lorry parking facilities. However, we are continuing to work with the Department for Transport (DfT) and other partners to ensure that appropriate facilities are provided for lorry drivers on the strategic road network.

We would be very happy to work with WSC if they were prepared to investigate providing local facilities for lorry drivers. We have recently had productive discussions with other Suffolk District Councils on this matter.

**Recommendation 5:**

Explore and implement an alternative to the concrete block (roundabout) along Bedingfield Way, Bury St Edmunds to address the issue of noise as HGVs drive over it.

**SCC Response:**

The design and maintenance of this roundabout will be carried out in accordance with the Highways Maintenance Operational Plan (HMOP). Noise is only one consideration to inform this decision, the road has to be of adequate design to cope with current and projected traffic flows, and not be an ongoing maintenance liability for SCC.

We do not have any current plans to significantly change the design of this junction. As indicated in the answer to question 2 above, any specific defects should be reported on the Highways Reporting Tool.

**Recommendation 6:**

Explore long-term solutions to the rail bridge on Orttewell Road, Bury St Edmunds to address the current congestion, for example, introducing weight restrictions to relieve residents of the impact of a number of HGVs which would allow the rail bridge to be reopened to a normal two-way traffic flow.

**SCC Response:**

This is a Network Rail (NR) structure and not a SCC responsibility. SCC will engage with NR proactively, should they wish to amend or revise their structure. We have passed on this request to NR, for their information.

The current traffic signal shuttle working scheme was carried out for road safety reasons, in consultation with NR as the result of frequent bridge strikes. Traffic modelling of this area has shown the railway bridge to be a significant constraint on traffic capacity.

Removing the shuttle working signals would remove this constraint and it is likely to cause very significant projected increases in traffic flow as a result of planned housing developments and background traffic growth in this area.

SCC would not support restricting this road to HGVs in isolation, for the reasons set out previously.

The Chair of the Committee, then invited Councillor Birgitte Mager, Ward Member for Moreton Hall to address the committee.

Councillor Mager informed the committee that "she felt the concerns, worries and general wellbeing seemed to have been forgotten when SCC made their response to the Committee. People living on Moreton Hall were crying out for help to reduce the adverse impact from growing noise pollution. Whether SCC was directly or indirectly responsible for improving resident's wellbeing was irrelevant. It is very clear that Orttewell Road has become somewhat a trunk road which I do not believe it was meant to be, however modern it was designed. Between the councils a way forward must be found to lessen the noise causing mental health problems for young people and families that live around Orttewell Road. It is worrying that SCC believes that the lorry traffic that has become a major problem to residents cannot be improved because they failed to allow for alternative roads when the estate was built in the first place. If that is the case that there are only smaller roads to be used, then a weight restriction should be implemented on Orttewell Road between Barton and Bedingfield Road. Surely this should be a major priority for the councils as we are to build even more houses in the area. As a forward looking, innovative and listening council we should dismiss what seems to be an impasse of cannot do, and instead think outside the box. We must serve our residents with a problem solving and can-do attitude. I'm at a loss as to why lorries cannot easily be asked to use Junction 44 and 45 to facilitate the industrial area and urge the councils not to just pass the buck to National Highways. Please have another look at how to improve the lives of the people living around Orttewell Road. Thank you".

The Chair on behalf of the Committee thanked Councill Mager for addressing the Committee with her concerns.

Councillor Paul Hopfensperger informed the Committee that Councillor Mager had given an excellent speech, but it had been made to the wrong council. He explained that the speech should be given at SCC Full Council and the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Transport Strategy and Waste.

The Committee felt the council needed to work together with SCC to try and resolve the issues highlighted in the CCfA.

The Chair then invited, Councillor Trevor Beckwith, Ward Member for Moreton Hall and a member of the Committee to speak on this item, who responded in turn to each of the recommendations as follows:

### **Recommendation 1:**

SCC state that amending the HGV routing must ensure they were not displaced to less suitable narrow, rural roads and residential streets. How was requiring HGVs to exit the A14 at Junction 45 and not 44 cause displacement? How could signs within the Suffolk Park directing HGVs cause any displacement? SCC were aware that I had previously contacted National Highways who would consider A14 signage improvements if funding was secured. In September 2021, developers of Suffolk Park implied they could possibly contribute towards the funding, which somehow needs to be co-ordinated.

### **Recommendation 2:**

SCC stated in their response that additional monitoring was conducted as part of the Suffolk wide HGV review but fails to state whether this included Orttewell Road or, if it did, what the results were. If noise, air pollution and residential amenity were the responsibility of West Suffolk Council, I proposed the Overview and Scrutiny Committee requests action from the West Suffolk Cabinet.

### **Recommendation 3:**

SCC stated they had no plans to consult on temporary TRO to prohibit HGVs from Orttewell Road, which was why the Committee made this recommendation. SCC claim that Orttewell Road had not frontage development. My formal complaint against SCC detailed some of the locations where adverse impact was being felt. The following was a comprehensive list; Codling Road; Cardinal Close, Leabrook Close; Winsford Road; Heldhaw Road; Pondgrove Close; Markant Close; Fiske Close; Poppy Close; Cranesbill Drive and Coltsfood Crescent. At the September 2021 meeting, the Committee heard from witnesses who highlighted the distress caused by the impact of HGVs. It was also explained at then and in my complaint that a pub garden; children's equipped play area; green gym; sports field and footpaths leading to a primary school; surgery; pharmacy; convenience store etc. were all bordering onto Orttewell Road. SCC claim "many of the alternative routes had far more sensitive receptors in close proximity to the road than were present on Orttewell Road" but had failed to tell the Committee where. My proposal at the September 2021 meeting was to ensure HGVs remained on the A14 or A143 where there were none of the claimed receptors.

### **Recommendation 4:**

SCC claim to be working with the Department for Transport and other partners and would work with West Suffolk Council to investigate. There was already a lorry park at Rougham Hill so why was it not being fully utilised?

### **Recommendation 5:**

SCC state they have no plans to change the design of this junction. Councillor Beckwith felt it was worth noting that the roundabout was installed as an afterthought and consisted of a raised surface, offset so that large

vehicles travelling towards Bury St Edmunds drove straight over it. The resulting noise, day and night was unacceptable and also avoidable. This was another SCC quick fix, which had failed.

### **Recommendation 6:**

The single way working was introduced by SCC because of bridge strikes by large vehicles and had created an unwanted pinch point. SCC now claimed that it would restrict "very significant projected increases in traffic flow as a result of planned housing developments and background traffic growth in this area". Councillor Beckwith assumed that SCC was referring to the 1,400 proposed dwellings on the A143 adjacent to the rail bridge. AS this was a Vision 2031 core development site, designated North East Bury, did SCC Highways, as a consultee to the local plan, require restricted single-way working at the bridge to control the resulting traffic volume?

Councillor Beckwith summed up by stating his disappointment in the responses provided by SCC, and felt it was disrespectful to the Committee and most importantly, the residents who depend on councils to ensure a decent quality of life. The Committee in September 2021 heard from witnesses speaking on behalf of many residents, but they had been dismissed by SCC who did not accept the consequences of past mistakes.

Councillor Beckwith then made the following proposals for the Committee's consideration:

1. Request SCC and/or West Suffolk Council Cabinet to establish if National Highways were still agreeable to new A14 signage and if developers of Suffolk Park were open to funding.
2. Ask SCC if Orttewell Road had been monitored as part of the County HGV review, and if so, what the results were.
3. West Suffolk County Cabinet be requested to instigate investigation into noise, air pollution and residential amenity in the Orttewell Road area.
4. Request SCC to define "no frontage development" any numerous dwellings, play area, sports field etc. adjacent to Orttewell Road were not considered vulnerable.
5. Request West Suffolk Council Cabinet hasten the return of the Rougham Hill lorry park to operation.
6. Ask SCC what is "the very significant project increase in traffic flow as a result of planned housing developments", preventing opening-up the rail bridge to two-way traffic flow? Whether they advised the LPA of the need to restrict traffic at the bridge during the Vision 2031 process?

The Committee considered the report in detail and in particular the comments and proposals made by Councillor Trevor Beckwith and Councillor Birgitte Mager comments, and in doing so, shared their disappointment.

Councillor Diane Hind informed the Committee that during the September 2021 meeting, SCC officers at the time seemed to be receptive to action and developers funding some of the signage, and seconded the proposals put forward by Councillor Beckwith.

In response to a question raised as to whether the SCC Member for Moreton Hall (Councillor Peter Thompson) was supportive of the proposals, Councillor Beckwith advised there had been some discussions, but he was not aware of the outcome.

In summing up the discussions, the Chair also expressed his frustration in the responses received from SCC and welcomed Councillor Beckwith's proposals.

It was then formally proposed by Councillor Trevor Beckwith, seconded by Councillor Diane Hind, and with the vote being unanimous it was:

**Recommended:**

**That West Suffolk Council Cabinet be asked to write to Suffolk County Council to:**

- 1) Find out whether Orttewell Road has been monitored as part of the county HGV review and if so, what are the results.
- 2) Request Suffolk County Council to define "no frontage development" and why numerous dwellings, play area, sports field etc. adjacent to Orttewell Road are not considered vulnerable.
- 3) Find out what is "the very significant projected increase in traffic flow as a result of planned housing developments" preventing opening-up the rail bridge to two-way traffic flow? and whether SCC advised the LPA of the need to restrict traffic flow at the bridge during the Vision 2031 process?
- 4) Request Suffolk County Council and/or West Suffolk Council Cabinet to establish if National Highways are still agreeable to new A14 signage and if developers of Suffolk Park are open to funding.

**That West Suffolk Council Cabinet be asked to:**

- 1) Instigate investigation into noise, air pollution and residential amenity in the Orttewell road area.
- 2) Hasten the return of the Rougham Hill lorry park to operation.

**157. Markets Review Working Group Update**

The Committee received Report number OAS/WS/22/002, presented by the Chair of the Working Group, Councillor John Burns, which updated Members on the progress of the Markets Review Working Group to date.



The purpose behind the review is to look at the strategic role West Suffolk Council, aligning the operation of the markets to the council's strategic vision and supporting their development to meet the corporate priorities.

To date the Group has met three times online. The Group had received baseline information about the markets in each of the towns, discussed the visions for the markets and confirmed the expectations of the review, received a presentation on case studies of best practice at markets elsewhere and agreed proposals for the engagement plan.

A comprehensive market survey was created towards the end of last year to capture feedback from visitors, stall holders and traders, local businesses/stakeholders, town and parish councils, members and young people.

At the Review Groups next meeting scheduled for 7 February 2022, it will question some invited "expert witnesses", such as from BIDS; Market Traders Federation and others.

The Review Group would then work up its recommendations, which would be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in June 2022 and once agreed, recommended to Cabinet in July 2022.

The Committee considered the update report and asked questions to which responses were provided. In particular discussions were held on the responses received from the survey; parking on the markets and whether the Review Group would be looking at the management and layout of the markets.

In response to a question raised by Councillor Paul Hopfensperger, relating to the Bury St Edmunds market, and whether a particular fruit and veg trader had been involved/responded to the survey. Councillor John Burns advised he was not aware of specific responses from individuals due to data protection and agreed to look into this further and would respond back to Councillor Hopfensperger accordingly.

There being no decision required at this point in the review, the Committee therefore **noted** the update from the Markets Review Working Group.

#### 158. **Work programme update 2022**

The Committee received report number: OAS/WS/22/003, which updated members on the current status of its rolling work programme of items for scrutiny during 2022 (Appendix 1).

In reviewing the Committees work programme Councillor Tony Brown raised the topic of Planning Enforcement in relation to enforcement outcomes and levels of performance and Councillor Julia Wakelam raised Barley Homes relating to sustainable standards and whether someone could come to a future meeting of the Committee to discuss the process.

In response to Planning Enforcement, the Chair advised that he was happy to discuss this further with Councillor Tony Brown following the meeting.

In response to the Barley Homes suggestion, the Chair informed the Committee that he and Councillors Diane Hind and Mike Chester sat on the Barley Homes Shareholders Advisory Group as nominated observers and was happy to discuss this further following the meeting with Councillor Wakelam.

The Chair advised that with any topic suggestions, members were reminded to complete the work programme suggestion form following discussions taking place with the relevant Portfolio Holder before submitting to the Committee for its consideration.

There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the update.

The meeting concluded at 5.48 pm

**Signed by:**

**Chair**

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