

Medway Council
Meeting of Regeneration, Culture and Environment
Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 18 October 2023

6.30pm to 8.08pm

Record of the meeting

Subject to approval as an accurate record at the next meeting of this committee

Present: Councillors: Paterson (Chairperson), Field (Vice-Chairperson), Bowen, Etheridge, Filmer, Hubbard, Hyne, Nestorov, Peake and Sands

Substitutes: Councillors:
Barrett
Jones
Myton
Perfect

In Attendance: Councillor Gary Hackwell
Alex Constantinides, Strategic Lead Front Line Services
Nicola Couchman, Democratic Services Officer
Ruth Du-Lieu, Deputy Director of Place
Chris Harrison, Regional Director, Project Centre Ltd
Nicholas Ruxton-Boyle, Director of Environment, Marston Technology

310 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cook, Doe, Fearn and Hamilton.

311 Record of Meeting

The record of the meeting held on 17 August 2023 was agreed and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record.

312 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances

There were none.

313 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Other Significant Interests and Whipping

Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

Other significant interests (OSIs)

There were none.

Other interests/Declarations of whipping

There were none.

314 Call-In: Safer, Healthier Streets Programme - Red Routes and Moving Traffic Enforcement

Discussion:

The Committee were informed that the decision had been called in by nine Members of the Conservative Group due to the outcome of the engagement with the residents of Rainham which indicated that they did not welcome red routes in Rainham. A Member clarified that it was not intended to call in all red routes, just the proposed red route in Rainham and in general the group supported Safer, Healthier Streets and particularly School Streets.

The following speakers were then invited to address the Committee.

Councillor Hackwell addressed the Committee as Ward Representative representing all three wards that the proposed Rainham red route would pass through and raised the following concerns:

- Over 60% of the consultation responses from within 1km of the red route were against the proposal.
- The route was already subject to double yellow lines and the installation of red routes and cameras for enforcement would generate income for the Council.
- The traffic in Rainham had increased over time and was exacerbated by poor traffic management and roadworks or road closures.
- The junction of Miers Court Road and the A2 caused hold ups of traffic and Members had been asking for improvements to this junction for some time. This needed improving before any other traffic management schemes were implemented.
- There were many businesses on the proposed red route that would be impacted by the implementation of a red route.

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Mr Alan Stockey addressed the Committee as a local resident representative and raised the following concerns:

- The cost of £805k to implement all proposed red routes.
- The lack of specific detail on traffic flow rates, modelling to show improvements to air quality, the impact on active travel and technical consultation with the Environmental Protection Team.
- Rainham residents had made it clear that they did not want a red route in Rainham.
- Mr Stockey had undertaken a survey, and this was tabled at the meeting. It indicated that residents felt that the closure of the Lower Rainham Road, junction closure on the A249/M2 and roadworks had the greatest impact on congestion in Rainham High Street at peak times rather than parking/stopping on the proposed red route.

Officers responded to the concerns raised and explained that the main reasons for red routes and moving traffic enforcement were to improve the highway network, reduce congestion, improve safety, reduce indiscriminate parking and improve air quality and traffic flow, particularly for public transport.

The Committee were informed that approval had been given to go ahead with statutory consultation and that would be the next stage rather than implementation. Officers had listened to the views of residents and businesses expressed so far in the engagement phase and had amended designs for Rainham accordingly.

Officers also explained that enforcement by camera was more effective than enforcement by civil enforcement officers and that red routes met the key strategic priorities in the Council Plan, Local Transport Plan and Air Quality Plan.

Members raised concerns about why a red route was needed in an area that already had double yellow lines and enforcement and why the consultation exercise was not wider. Queries were also raised regarding whether a red route would impact on air quality and how long it would take to re-coup the costs of the scheme.

The views of some Rainham businesses were shared with the Committee and concerns were raised about access to the church for funeral processions, difficulties with deliveries, customer access and parking and access for window cleaning. There was also a query regarding whether discretion would be applied for blue badge holders who may need longer to enter/exit a vehicle.

Officers responded to the concerns raised and stated that the low number of Penalty Charge Notices for contraventions of the existing yellow lines were low as they were reliant on the presence of a Civil Enforcement Officer. Officers explained that red routes will improve traffic flows and produces less pollution and that the programme was not about re-couping costs, however, any income would be monitored and reinvested into the highways.

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With regards to the consultation process officers explained that the breakdown of the full consultation exercise was available in the Cabinet report at Appendix A. Officers added that although consultation meetings did not take place with Ward Members, they were all written to and informed of the programme. Following feedback from businesses as part of the engagement process, additional loading bays had now been added to the Rainham design.

In response to concerns regarding funeral processions and blue badge holders, officers confirmed that a fine would never be issued for a funeral or blue badge holder that needed more time to enter/exit a vehicle. All potential contraventions would be checked by an officer to allow for discretion prior to fines being issued and there was also an appeals process. Officers stressed the need to make this work for residents and businesses, but also meet the aim of reducing congestion, particularly for public transport.

With regards to the Miers Court Road Junction, officers confirmed that this remained an ongoing project. Detailed designs had been produced and test bore holes completed and S106 funding from developers was in place for this project.

Decision:

The Committee agreed to accept the Cabinet decision and therefore take no further action.

Chairperson

Date:

Nicola Couchman, Democratic Services Officer

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