

Name of meeting: Council

Date: 11 October 2017

Title of report: Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee – Huddersfield Town Centre Accessibility Scheme (Bus Gates) Findings Report

Purpose of report:

To inform the Council on the findings of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee's investigation into the decision making process and consultation that underpinned the introduction of bus gates in Huddersfield Town Centre.

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	No
Key Decision - Is it in the Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?)	No
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Yes
Date signed off by <u>Director</u> & name	Julie Muscroft, Service Director – Legal, Governance and Commissioning
Is it also signed off by the Service Director - Finance, IT and Transactional Services?	Not applicable
Is it also signed off by the Service Director - Legal, Governance & Commissioning?	Yes
Cabinet member portfolio	Councillor McBride

Electoral wards affected: Newsome

Ward councillors consulted: None

Public or private: Public

1. Summary

As part of a petition to Council in November 2016, a request was made for Scrutiny to look at the consultation process for the Bus Gate project proposals. In January 2017 the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee (OSMC) considered the request and agreed to do a focussed piece of work to look at the rationale for the scheme and the decision making process, including how the proposals were promoted and consulted on.

The terms of reference for the work are set out below:

1. To understand the rationale for the bus gate proposals

2. To consider how the proposals were developed including any engagement activity
3. To consider the consultation process, including the statutory requirements, promotion of the proposals and responses received
4. To examine how responses to the consultation were considered
5. To consider the proposals for the evaluation of the project against the anticipated outcomes, feedback and impacts.
6. To identify any lessons learned

2. Information required to take a decision

2.1 The findings report of the Scrutiny investigation is attached at appendix one. The timeline tracing the development of the project can be found from page 6 of the report. It indicates that initial strategy work commenced in 2004. The bus gates proposal was one part of a range of measures to support the Council's vision for an accessible town centre that could be safely navigated and people could enjoy.

2.2 In considering the evidence presented, the OSMC recognised that the project had evolved over a number of years. The majority of restrictions that were enforced by the bus gates scheme had been in place as part of access arrangements approved in 1983.

The Scrutiny Committee concluded that it was satisfied that the decision making process, including the consultation, for the bus gate elements of the Huddersfield Town Centre Accessibility Scheme, was comprehensive and robust and met all the statutory requirements.

2.3 The Committee felt there were some learning points and has made the following recommendations:

1. That for similar projects developed in the future, a comprehensive baseline of information should be gathered in order to provide an accurate position against which to measure the impact of the implementation of a scheme as part of any future evaluation. Depending on the length of the project, there may be a need to refresh and re-evaluate the data to ensure any interim changes are taken into consideration prior to implementation.

2(a) That participants at information giving events, informal or formal consultation should have a clear understanding of what will, or will not happen to their comments, both written and verbal.

(b) That for future engagement and consultation exercises, the Council considers the use of new and innovative ways of using technology to remove barriers to capturing and recording feedback received during consultation.

3. That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee have the opportunity to comment on the Bus Gates Impact Assessment Report, before it is considered by Cabinet.

3. Implications for the Council

This report is presented for information. The recommendations identify learning points which will be considered by Cabinet.

4. Consultees and their opinions

Not applicable.

5. Next steps

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee will monitor the implementation of any agreed recommendations.

6. Officer recommendations and reasons

That the Council note the findings of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee in respect of the decision making process, including the consultation, for the bus gates scheme.

7. Cabinet portfolio holder's recommendations

Not applicable.

8. Contact officer

Penny Bunker, Governance and Democratic Engagement Officer

9. Background Papers

As part of the scrutiny investigation the Scrutiny Committee considered comprehensive background information on Cabinet reports and the consultation process. A full list of documents is available on request.

10. Service Director responsible

Julie Muscroft, Service Director – Legal, Governance and Commissioning