

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORT O&S COMMITTEE

1000 hours on 16th October 2019, Committee Room 6 – Actions

Present:

Councillor Liz Clements (Chair)

Councillors Muhammad Afzal, Olly Armstrong, Zaker Choudhry, Eddie Freeman, Josh Jones and Timothy Huxtable.

Also Present:

Andy Everest, Infrastructure Delivery, BCC

Councillor Jon Hunt

Honorary Alderman Tony Kennedy

Kerry Whitehouse, Project Leader – Drainage, BCC

Kevin Hicks, Assistant Director, Highways & Infrastructure, BCC

Mel Jones, Head of Transport Planning and Network Strategy, BCC

Peter Parker, Head of Infrastructure Delivery, BCC

Peter Sargent, Head of Rail Development, West Midlands Rail Executive

Phil Edwards, Assistant Director, Transport & Connectivity, BCC

Baseema Begum, Scrutiny Officer

Rose Kiely, Overview & Scrutiny Manager

1. NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST

The Chair advised those present that the meeting would be webcast for live and subsequent broadcast via the Council's Internet site and that members of the press/public may record and take photographs except where there are confidential or exempt items.

2. APOLOGIES

None.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

4. SUSTAINABILITY & TRANSPORT O&S COMMITTEE ACTION NOTES

The action notes of the meeting held on the 24th July were agreed.

5. CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT & ENVIRONMENT – PRIORITIES AND UPCOMING WORK AREAS

(See document No.1)

The Chair, Cllr Clements noted the apologies of the Cabinet Member, Cllr Waseem Zaffar due to a family bereavement and explained that officers would be talking through the presentation circulated to the Committee.

During discussion with Members the following points and questions were raised:

- In response to whether the Birmingham Transport Plan (BTP) advocates the stopping of traffic through the city centre and a proposal for closure of the A38 tunnels it was confirmed that in the mid to long term some work would need to be done. However, for such an infrastructure change there would be a requirement to ensure that significant modal shift was in place together with appropriate investment to support any changes. The key point was that the network would need to remain operational whilst any changes were being made.
- There was concern about the additional pressure on the ring road increasing congestion and traffic with the introduction of the Clean Air Zone (CAZ) and the impact on residents in adjacent neighbourhoods and if adequate supporting measures would be put in place. It was added that with other schemes such as proposed Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) and on-street parking charges plus the proposed Workplace Parking Levy (WPL) then these could come at a significant cost to residents and those working in those areas.
- It was confirmed that ideally people living in these neighbourhoods would change their mode of travel to sustainable forms of transport. However, if this does not happen then further work will need to be done to identify what and where the issues are. There is a proposal to use CAZ monies to address and fund any measure(s) required. However, the CAZ will be monitored not just at the ring road boundary but also the impacts of it at rail stations to understand what can be done in mitigation.
- In terms of the work on the WPL a report requesting permission to investigate how it could work in Birmingham was presented to Cabinet yesterday. Permission is being sought to engage in some investigatory work that includes consultation and engagement with businesses to see how it might be taken forward.

- A Park & Ride strategy including funding options is being developed in conjunction with Transport for West Midlands (TfWM).
- In terms of proposals for Metro as part of the Smithfield Development – provision is being made to allow for this. Accelerating this through to Digbeth has been considered with TfWM. However, the city is currently undertaking an unprecedented amount of work so these are longer term ambitions.
- The SPRINT network has been set out and design work has been done with West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA). The WMCA are responsible for identifying funding for the next stage.
- The Cabinet Member for Transport & Environment is very keen on bus priority measures and will be looking at further work in support of bus lanes.
- In terms of the CAZ a staff travel plan is being developed in conjunction with HR. A session will also be held for Directors to challenge how Council service areas will comply and put in appropriate measures.
- A number of local rail projects involving TfWM, WMCA and the West Midlands Rail Executive are being taken forward. This includes work on the Camp Hill line that is progressing well and will soon be at the planning process stage. A key point in the next stage of design and development of train stations on that line is clarifying how the train service will be supplied to these stations and work is underway with Network Rail on ensuring that there is no negative impact on other services. Work is also progressing well at key projects at Perry Barr and University stations.
- In respect of the cross-city service it was confirmed that all West Midlands Trains services running on the cross-city line will be formed of 6 carriages from May 2021 as all of the rolling stock is being replaced.
- It was confirmed that the Environment Agency (EA) is working with the community surrounding the River Cole area and a Flood Action Group (FLAG) has been set up. The EA are reviewing scheme options in terms of cost/benefit for the area.
- In respect of the causes of flooding it was clarified that drain clearance, car parking and street cleansing have a minimal impact. Further information can be provided to members on reporting blocked gullies.
- Kevin Hicks stated that informal briefings would be available to Members on the Highways PFI report before it is presented to Cabinet on 26th November.
- It was confirmed that where there is an opportunity to put a cycle route down as part of highway works, then the PFI contractor would be notified to ensure that this happens at the same time as other work whenever possible.
- Where trees are removed from the highway then these are replaced on a 2:1 basis. Trees are then put back in the same or in the most appropriate place and several factors are taken into consideration with this.
- In response to plans for a 20mph default across the city it will require some further work with the Department for Transport (DfT) and looking at work

already undertaken by the 20mph national lobby campaign to see how the process could work. The draft Birmingham Transport Plan will be the mandate for further work in this area.

- The positive work of Car Free Schools Streets was praised, and Members expressed an interest in the scheme being rolling out to further areas of the city. It was confirmed that lessons from the pilot that began in September have been learnt and the scheme will be rolled out further next September. Early engagement with parents and residents was highlighted as key however it was pointed out that the scheme would not suit every school but there is something that can be done at each school that suits the school. The Safer Routes to School programme will be the funding source for this.

RESOLVED: -

1. Honorary Alderman Tony Kennedy to send a link for dissemination to Members where they can report highways flooding and drainage issues such as blocked gully's.
2. Details of the appointed contractor for electric vehicle charging to be shared when contract is formally agreed.
3. Clarification to be provided on the ownership of streetlights (housing or highways stock) and those that are not on the PFI programme to be replaced.
4. Councillor Huxtable requested information on the status of lighting upgrades associated with the list of footpaths in his ward.

6. QUARTERLY UPDATE ON THE A34 PERRY BARR HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE CONSULTATION

(See document No. 2)

Officers updated the Committee on the latest position in relation to the consultation on the works to the A34 Perry Barr Highway.

During discussion with Members the following points were made: -

- The Full Business Case (FBC) was discussed at Cabinet yesterday and is due to be discussed at City Council in November. The consultation ran from 3rd June to 2nd August. The full report is appended to the FBC and available on the Council's website for meeting papers (CMIS).
- Three elements of the scheme were consulted on. Various consultation and engagement activity took place in and around the area. Over 1500 individual written responses were received with a further 13 key stakeholder businesses responding.
- Several petitions to the planned work on the Perry Barr flyover were received with 11,770 signatures opposing the removal of the flyover. More responses were received for this scheme in comparison to other similar sized schemes.
- In terms of feedback from the consultation it was confirmed that 81% of respondents were not supportive of the changes at the A34 Walsall Road and A453 Aldridge Road junction with many feeling that removal of the flyover

would see an increase in congestion and poorer levels of air quality. 61% do not support the proposed changes at Birchfield island due to a perception of an increase in congestion with the introduction of traffic lights at this junction. 46% do not support the A34 cycle route extension as they felt that it would be a waste of money as it was not currently being used. In response to a question about those in favour of the 3 areas consulted on it was confirmed that 17% were in support of the A34/A453 junction works, 32% were supportive of the Birchfield island changes and 39% were in favour of the cycle route extension.

- As a result of the public consultation particular aspects of the designs have been reviewed. The next stage is working on the detailed design for the scheme.
- It was expressed that there were a large number of residents, businesses and other stakeholders opposed to the demolition of the flyover. Additionally, it was highlighted that there were many issues and risks relating to the demolition including managing congestion especially in light of the sheer amount of work going on in the area. In response it was confirmed that traffic modelling showed that public transport journeys will be faster as part of the scheme. There will be some very small increases in the time taken for motorists (e.g. 1- or 2-minute increases). It was also emphasised that traffic modelling is the best tool available to predict likely scenarios and the information & techniques used are the best available to try and get as much of an accurate picture as possible.
- There was concern that no information on councillor responses at ward forum was included in the Cabinet report.
- The risks raised have been noted with separate contractor advice sought. The Council however is confident that it can deliver the programme ahead of the Commonwealth Games.
- In terms of the impact on buses extensive traffic modelling has been done to indicate average journey times including the impact on the X51 route that has been raised as an issue. However, bus priority traffic signalling and bus lanes are being used to separate them from other traffic so it is not anticipated that buses will be impacted by congestion.
- It was also stated that the traffic modelling shared was based on vehicle behaviour – there is inevitably a variability in journeys therefore this equates to a range of travel times. The traffic model uses this information and works out an average.
- The issue of displacement of traffic from the Perry Barr area onto neighbouring wards creating an increase in pollution for residents in those areas was raised. It was also felt that these residents would be disproportionately affected due to the increase in traffic. Therefore, what mitigation measures will be put in place in these areas?
- It was confirmed that modelling had been done on a regional basis showing no significant impact on the A38 expressway and M6 junction. This information can be shared.

- Cllr Hunt highlighted that more information is available in the full report in particular claims on the improvement of air quality and where those benefits are and the same can be said about improvements in journey times. There is a constitutional/legal issue, and these issues will be discussed as part of a request for call-in that is currently being prepared.

RESOLVED: -

1. Cllr Jones to be provided with further information relating to the impact of displacement of traffic on his ward pertaining to works on the A34 corridor.

7. SUSTAINABILITY & TRANSPORT O&S COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

(See document No. 3)

The Chair noted that the Committee's role in responding to the motion agreed at City Council on 11th June 2019 on declaring a Climate Emergency would be responded to and the meeting postponed from September will be re-arranged.

8. DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Noted.

9. REQUEST(S) FOR CALL IN/COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION/PETITIONS (IF ANY)

None.

10. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

None.

11. AUTHORITY TO CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS

Agreed.

RESOLVED: -

That in an urgent situation between meetings the Chair, jointly with the relevant Chief Officer, has authority to act on behalf of the Committee.

The meeting ended at 12:22 hours.