

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORT O&S COMMITTEE

1000 hours on 11th April 2019, Committee Room 2 – Actions

Present:

Councillor Liz Clements (Chair)

Councillors David Barrie, Zaker Choudhry, Kath Hartley, Timothy Huxtable, Josh Jones, Chaman Lal and Hendrina Quinnen.

Also Present:

Councillor Waseem Zaffar, Cabinet Member Transport & Environment

Honorary Alderman Stewart Stacey

Honorary Alderman Tony Kennedy

Mel Jones, Head of Transportation & Traffic Service

Andy Middleton, Project Manager

Alison Kennedy, Principal Transport Policy Officer

Kevin Hicks, Assistant Director, Highways and Infrastructure

David Cox, Vice-Chair, Pushbikes

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

Standing declaration from Councillors Hartley, Huxtable and Lal as members of the West Midlands Combined Authority's Transport Delivery Committee.

Cllr Lal confirmed his role as a cabinet advisor to the Cabinet Member for Transport & Environment, Cllr Waseem Zaffar.

4. SUSTAINABILITY & TRANSPORT O&S ACTION NOTES

The action notes of 14th March 2019 were agreed.

5. CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT & ENVIRONMENT: ANNUAL REPORT

(See document No.1)

Cllr Zaffar, supporting Aldermen and officers outlined some key areas from the presentation and the following points were highlighted:-

- Climate change is an incredibly important area of work and the Cabinet Members is supportive of the young people in asking the government and the Council to take action and protect the environment. A lot of work is taking place in the Cabinet Member's portfolio in this area and is already embedded in the Birmingham Connected Transport strategy. It is also being addressed through the Birmingham Transport Plan.
- It is imperative that the Council's own fleet of vehicles are compliant with the Clean Air Zone (CAZ) and this is being taken up through the Brum Breathes Executive Board that Cllr Zaffar chairs.
- £3m of funding has been secured for investment in the electric vehicle infrastructure and a procurement process is in place. As part of this 197 taxi charging points will be available. Charging points for those living in terrace housing is also being looked at as part of the challenge of meeting the zero emissions target. The Council is also looking at what it can learn from other councils in this area.
- The Clean Air strategy is currently out for consultation and has received cross-party support. There have been 300 responses so far. The aim is for it to become a city of Birmingham document that can be reviewed and updated regularly.
- Work is being undertaken with schools through the Clean Air strategy on a 'schools streets' project that is being supported by all parties on the Council. Funding is in place for a minimum of 5 schools however moving forward the aim is to help all schools form a strategy to tackle air pollution in the most appropriate way for the particular school. It is hoped that this will be funded through the income generated from the CAZ.
- The CAZ has been approved by government and it is planned for implementation on 1st January 2020. There are a number of mitigations in

place and challenges to overcome. Other local authorities have been in touch and are watching the leading work that Birmingham is doing.

- The A34 segregated cycling lane has been launched and the public response has been very positive. The opening of the A38 Bristol Road cycling lane has been delayed however it is hoped that it will be launched in the near future.
- The Draft Walking and Cycling strategy is currently in its final stages and Cllr Zaffar would like to share it with the Committee. Consultation on the strategy is planned for later this year.
- Cllr Zaffar has been asked to join the Canals and Rivers Trust Regional Board to build and strengthen the relationship with the Canals and Rivers Trust.
- The Highway Management and Maintenance contract with Amey is currently being worked on to resolve matters with all the various partners involved. The partnership with Amey is in an untenable position and the Council is working towards putting in place a replacement sub-contractor to ensure that residents receive the standard of highway they expect and that the Council receives value for money from the investment made.
- The Commonwealth Games Transport Plan is being led by Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) and will shortly be out to public consultation and the Council and other stakeholders will be contributing towards it. It is a high level plan however a more detailed plan will be launched next year once the venue and transport infrastructure have been finalised and that will address how members of the public can get to the various venues in the greenest and most efficient way.
- Buses are a very important issue. The Council carried out a survey and over 6,500 responses were received. One key message received is that as a local authority we have to help the operators to improve the reliability of buses. This includes measures to tackle congestion and allocate more road space to public transport.
- The Council is working with TfWM on a low emission bus strategy in collaboration with Tyseley Energy Park. This includes creating a refuelling facility for hydrogen buses (the Council is set to procure 22 hydrogen buses by early 2020).
- Alderman Kennedy confirmed that the Strategic Flood Risk Management Board has been bought forward to 30th April and that all outstanding reports on major flooding incidents (known as 'Section 19' reports) will be presented to the Board. A report on the progress made can be presented to this Committee in the future.

Mel Jones added the following points:

- An 'anti-idling' for cars outside schools campaign will be launched on Clean Air Day on 20th June.
- The West Midlands Road Safety strategy was launched this year and compliments the Birmingham Road Safety strategy.

- Volunteers are being supported by local neighbourhood policing teams as part of the Community Speed Watch scheme that has been launched this year to allow communities to take action on speeding within their own areas.
- Average Speed Cameras are in place in 6 locations within Birmingham and are being reviewed with West Midlands Police and the West Midlands Combined Authority.
- Collecting data from traffic monitoring of the network for example in the city centre, from buses and car parks in real time allows appropriate action and mitigation measures to be in put place. This is especially the case as currently there is a lot of work happening on the road network. This also helps to identify areas with long term issues and the ability to feed into policy and strategies to manage flows of traffic in the future and give priority to public transport to help with delays faced by passengers.
- The West Midlands is at the forefront of research and work on autonomous vehicles.

During discussion with Members the following points and responses were made:-

- Kevin Hicks confirmed that approximately two years into the contract Amey's re-interpretation of the contract meant a lack of investment in the network resulting in a poor standard of work as per the examples shown to Members. In terms of the future settlement negotiations are currently taking place and money withheld from Amey cannot be spent as it was part of the dispute. This will however be resolved as part of the resettlement negotiations. Once a settlement position has been agreed the Council will move forward in looking at a replacement for Amey.
- It was confirmed that the West Midlands Rail Executive through the West Midlands Park & Ride strategy are looking at park and ride options including the opening/re-opening of stations to help more people access the city centre without having to use their cars and encourage modal shift.
- There is also a need to look at walking and cycling options to encourage people to use alternatives to their car and encourage behaviour change including giving priority to buses.
- It was noted that 9 out of the 10 most polluting roads were outside of or on the periphery of the proposed CAZ however as modal shift takes place and an increase in compliant vehicles on the road there should be a change in the levels of air pollution. The Clean Air strategy will cover the whole of the city will set out how the city will tackle air pollution.
- The impact on taxi drivers with the introduction of the CAZ was noted and it was confirmed that a package of mitigation measures is in place to support drivers including both private hire and hackney carriage vehicles to ensure that they are compliant. This includes the options to lease new compliant hackney carriage vehicles from the Council. Drivers will have the option to retro fit their vehicles. There are also opportunities to purchase electric vehicles. A fund is available as part of the award from government where the majority of drivers will be able to get some support towards making their vehicles compliant.

- In respect to hydrogen buses the Council is speaking to operators about a new scheme.
- There is a need to explore the possibility of a supplementary planning policy that ensures that all new build properties in the city (both commercial and residential) are zero carbon. This will help the Council in its aim to tackle climate change and ensure that we are future proofing for future generations.
- Climate change is a key issue and one that needs a strategic lead within the Council with the right levels of resources and attention given to the challenge. Cllr Zaffar will be writing to all Councillors on this issue to ensure that it is an agenda item at their ward forums. He added that there is support available in the community and there are people willing to support other areas and local Councillors where needed.

RESOLVED:-

1. The Draft Walking and Cycling strategy is to be shared with the Committee before it goes out to public consultation later this year.
2. Cllr Zaffar to seek clarification from the Canal and River Trust with regards to the issues raised by Cllr Huxtable with reference to the bridge on School Road in Yardley Wood.
3. Cllr Huxtable to receive a response from officers in Transportation and Growth directorate on Baldwins Lane, near Chilcote School.
4. Regular updates are received by Cllr Zaffar in reference to Iron Lane and he will ensure that the next update is circulated to the Committee and includes details of costs and progress made to date as requested by Cllr Hartley.
5. Further details on community speed watches and 20mph in Ladywood. In addition further details on Holloway Head will be provided to Members at the next Ladywood Forum meeting.
6. Cllr Zaffar agreed to send Members details of the support being given to taxi drivers to assist with their vehicles becoming compliant with the CAZ.
7. Cllr Zaffar to report back to the Committee with an update on issues relating to the maintenance of City Council owned highways land.
8. Honorary Alderman Stewart Stacey agreed to circulate the West Midlands Rail Executive document – ‘Driving a Revolution in Rail Services for West Midlands: A 30 year Rail Investment Strategy’ to Members as it covers many of the issues raised at the meeting.
9. With regards to climate change & sustainability issues Honorary Alderman Tony Kennedy agreed to circulate the Environment Agency’s National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy including the strategic environmental assessment to the Committee.

6. UPDATE ON BIRMINGHAM CYCLE REVOLUTION (BCR)

(See document No. 2)

Cllr Zaffar confirmed that the Council is working with the cycling community in the city to co-design projects going forward. Designing the launch on the A34 and A38 cycling routes will be led by the cycling community and the Council wants to work with cyclists to ensure that they drive the agenda.

Andy Middleton updated the Committee on the background to the BCR and the walking and cycling strategy. The following key points in the presentation were highlighted:-

- The BCR started in 2013 against a background of significant capacity issues on the highway network. The Birmingham Development Plan (BDP) includes the need to prioritise sustainable forms of transport. The BDP recognises that by 2031 there will be 150,000 more people in the city, 100,000 more jobs that will equate to 80,000 more cars on the city's roads and 200,000 more trips per day by car. There are currently 250,000 daily car journeys of a mile or less in the city. The BDP encourages people to transfer to more sustainable forms of transport to address some of the issues raised around congestion and air pollution.
- The BCR improvements started in 2013 as part of a 20 year ambitious plan and as part of the Birmingham Connected wider transport strategy to make cycling a main form of transport. Challenging targets were set to increase cycling journeys from 2% in 2013 to 5% by 2023 and 10% by 2033. Therefore there was a need to put infrastructure in place to enable the modal shift. In 2014 a successful number of funding streams amounted to £57m to develop the programme between 2013 and 2020. 90% of that fund has currently been spent. The remainder will be spent on the final schemes in the next couple of years.
- Revenue funding is needed alongside funding received for capital projects to enable engagement and communication work to happen alongside the built infrastructure. The Council is looking at funding options for this including the 'Transforming Cities' fund, Highways England and others. Also working with developers as part of section 106 planning regulations to ensure that plans are in place to promote and educate on sustainable forms of transport for new developments such as Langley and Peddimore in Sutton Coldfield.
- It is anticipated that the Draft Walking and Cycling strategy will be ready to go out to consultation this summer. A wider strategy is being updated for both walking and cycling about supporting measures. A delivery plan for local cycling & walking infrastructure is also being looked at. The West Midlands Combined Authority are leading on a West Midlands local cycling and walking infrastructure plan and there are some regional priority routes in Birmingham that are being funded through the 'Transforming Cities' fund that will come forward in the next couple of years.

During discussion with Members the following points were made:-

- A key challenge is to engage hard to reach communities where there are health inequalities and who would benefit most from cycling. More publicity and marketing is needed to encourage local people to take up the initiative and this requires funding.

- It was confirmed that engagement with local people takes place through the Bike Birmingham Bikes initiative, the Active Wellbeing Society, community cycling groups in Perry Barr and some major communications and engagement work will take place with the community in the next few weeks.
- There is a need to protect cyclists from other traffic for safety reasons. However cyclists need to ensure that they themselves are considerate to other road users.
- David Cox highlighted the amount of good work the Council (both Councillors and Officers) has been involved in in promoting cycling and getting more people to cycle. The Changing Gear report by a previous Scrutiny Committee was a catalyst for change. He added that the consultation work carried out has been very positive.
- Andy Middleton agreed that engaging with developers and other interested parties to make sure that integrated strategies are in place to shape future developments in infrastructure.

RESOLVED:-

1. Andy Middleton agreed to share with the Committee the Communications and Engagement Strategy for cycling.
2. An annual update on the BCR and infrastructure plans to be added to the Committee's future work programme.

7. SUSTAINABILITY & TRANSPORT O&S COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee's work programme was noted and the Chair suggested that the Committee could meet in May subject to Member agreement to receive a quarterly update on the A34 Perry Barr Highway infrastructure consultation proposals as agreed at the Committee's February meeting. Scrutiny officers will follow up with Members on availability for Thursday 16th May at 10am.

8. DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

It was agreed that details of the May meeting would be circulated once confirmed with Members.

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 12:18 hours.