

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORT O&S COMMITTEE

1000 hours on 26th February 2020, Committee Room 6 – Actions

Present:

Councillor Liz Clements (Chair)

Councillors Muhammad Afzal, Olly Armstrong, Zaker Choudhry, Eddie Freeman,
Timothy Huxtable and Julie Johnson

Also Present:

Councillor Marje Bridle

Councillor Majid Mahmood

Councillor Lisa Trickett

Councillor John O'Shea

Darren Share, Assistant Direct, Street Scene

Kevin Hicks, Assistant Director, Highways & Infrastructure

Mel Jones, Head of Transport Planning and Network Strategy

Naomi Coleman, Principal Transportation Officer

Baseema Begum, Scrutiny Officer

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 meetings held on the 15th January were agreed.

Cllr Huxtable requested further information in relation to the decision to be made in reference to the proposed bus priority scheme on Moseley Road and Alcester Road.

5. DRAFT BIRMINGHAM TRANSPORT PLAN (DBTP) CONSULTATION

(See document No.1)

Mel Jones, Head of Transport Planning and Network Strategy outlined the key points in the consultation from the presentation circulated explaining the future vision for transport in the city, centred around four key themes: -

- Reallocating road space
- Transforming the city centre
- Prioritising active travel in local neighbourhoods
- Managing demand through parking measures

A short video with the key messages from the DBTP was also shown (available at <http://bit.ly/3ctVzYX>).

It was emphasised that the DBTP is focussed on the new challenges set for the city in the last few years (following on from Birmingham Connected, 2014) such as the Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency and the government legislation for local authorities to improve air quality. In addition, there is a need for the Council to improve its transport infrastructure in response to the investment in the city centre and beyond coupled with the forecasted population growth meaning that more people and more jobs will create a greater demand for an improved public transport offer and other methods of travel in order to connect people to opportunities.

Members then had a discussion and the following queries and points were raised: -

- Concern about the alignment between the transport and highways capital programme and the vision in the DBTP?
- Can a citywide by-law be put in place for 'idling' cars?
- In terms of the proposed Workplace Parking Levy (WPL) what happens if major companies decide to reconsider location and move out of the city centre?
- Encouraging more people to walk and cycle in local neighbourhoods such as when they use local high streets and shops. However, this is not always feasible for purchasing larger items and that encouraging residents to have larger and a bigger shop delivered where they are not able to use a car. This has an impact on getting more people to shop locally and climate change if people choose to have goods delivered under the new proposals.
- Alignment of updated residential planning guidelines for example with larger developments and the issue about limiting the amount of parking and the

concern that drivers will park elsewhere and the impact on neighbourhood parking.

- Need to be mindful of people with limited mobility and that not all disabilities are visually apparent.
- How is the plan linked in with other Council service areas? How can Members support this?
- Challenge new builds/development and those allocating more road space to cars that are taking away pavement space.
- Park and Ride – how are people challenged to make journeys to train stations that are short and can be made using other methods instead of car?

In response Mel Jones confirmed that: -

- The Transport and Highways capital programme and alignment with the DBTP is not quite in sync as it is not yet policy. In future years the changes will be reflected in line with the policy.
- A by-law can be put in place to tackle idling motorists however enforcement is key. There is a need to educate drivers that will see a change in their behaviour and for this to be interpreted to a wider culture change.
- There will be a full consultation on the WPL. As part of the investigatory work all issues will be explored. In addition, Birmingham is a world city and currently there is a lot of investment happening that will attract and retain businesses and generate jobs.
- The regeneration of local centres has been looked at as part of the Urban Centres Framework consultation. Local centres will still be accessible by car with the emphasis is on getting more people to walk and cycle whenever possible and only using the car when needed.
- Blue badge parking will always be available. There will always be some people with very specific needs that will be catered for.
- A consultative group for mobility issues is being accessed to support the work of the DBTP and will continue in the future.
- Joined-up working is taking place within service areas in respect of previous policy decisions and how these are resolved in light of new policy decisions such as the Climate Emergency declaration.

RESOLVED: -

1. The Chair requested that a link to the DBTP online video is added to CMIS.

6. PARKING SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD) CONSULTATION

(See document No.2)

Naomi Coleman, Principal Transportation Officer ran through the key points from the consultation and stated that: -

- The document serves two key purposes: -
 - To replace the 2012 Car Parking Standards (based on outdated planning guidance) and support replacement of the 2010 Birmingham Parking Policy; and
 - Sets out a Parking Strategy followed by revised Parking Standards for new development.
- The SPD is linked in with other key policy documents and supports the proposals included in the DBTP, Climate Emergency Declaration, Clean Air Strategy and the Birmingham Development Plan.
- Parking standards are not just about car parking they also supporting other initiatives for disabled drivers, electric vehicle charging, car clubs and quality cycle parking and motorcycle storage.
- The key aspects are managing parking demands in different areas of the city with specific controls in place with an emphasis on limiting the amount of city centre parking however there will still be provision for those with disabilities and mobility issues.
- Also, neighbourhoods with controlled parking zones are a priority where pressure from the city centre may overflow to and in urban centres with efficient parking being proposed so that available parking can be used for a variety of purposes.
- There are different parking standards for different zones across the city based on public transport availability and support.

Members then made the following points: -

- Protection of parking for those with disabilities through adequate disabled parking bays in the city centre is key as there was concern that some changes would be made.
- How will the Council enforce parking permits for those living in Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) in controlled parking zones when it is not always known if the property is a HMO?

In response it was clarified that: -

- The existing level of disabled parking in the city will be protected.
- HMOs should be registered and there is a comprehensive database of which houses that are HMOs, and this identifies how many permits will need to be allocated. However, in some locations there isn't a limit on the number of permits that dwellings can have unless the Council set the limits through location and a CPZ.

RESOLVED: -

1. Cllr Johnson requested clarity on how many disabled parking bays are currently in the city centre and how many are earmarked for removal and those scheduled to move to another location.

7. PARKING ON GRASS VERGES – UPDATE

(See document No.3)

The Chair outlined the purpose of the agenda item and welcomed Councillors Marje Bridle and Majid Mahmood as elected Members with a specific interest in this issue.

Kevin Hicks, Assistant Director Highways & Infrastructure talked Members through the presentation circulated and outlined the key points in respect of how the Council can regulate, prevent and enforce against parking on the pavement and grass verges. Examples were also shared of where vehicles can park on specially treated grass verges and the resource implication. It was stated that sites would need to be assessed and prioritised in respect of this as there are differing needs across the city.

Following this Councillor Marje Bridle gave an appraisal of the scheme that is in operation on Brownfield Road in her former ward of Shard End and that she was involved in setting up.

The Committee then heard from Councillor Majid Mahmood who gave examples of damage done to grass verges and noted that planning guidance could be looked at to include a responsibility for developers and others carrying out works to ensure that grass verges are not damaged during works and to make right where any damage is done.

It was further noted that the city had in place a city-wide Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) and the issue of putting in place a signage scheme (similar to one in operation in London) that covered all routes into the city centre notifying motorists of the penalty of parking on grass verges. The key issue was raised here was ensuring that the authority has the legal powers to do this and identifying a funding source.

During discussion with Members the following issues were raised and responded to: -

- Further sites have been activated and developed to deal with pavement parking since the Brownfield site during the last 4 years.
- The key issue was identifying revenue funding to enforce any future schemes. It was noted that wards have a set amount allocated per ward to spend on local schemes.
- The role of parking enforcement was clarified, and it was stated that regular patrols are undertaken as part of traffic management on key routes. Enforcement officers also undertake patrols in areas where complaints have been received and where nuisance parking has been reported.

RESOLVED: -

1. The Chair requested that a briefing note is produced for discussion at a future meeting covering: -
 - a. The powers available to the Council in erecting signage on all routes into the city centre including the ability to penalise those who then park on grass verges;
 - b. Examples of good practice in other local authority areas;
 - c. The cost of signage that would cover routes into the city centre; and

d. The role of parking enforcement and the role of the contractor NSL.

8. SUSTAINABILITY & TRANSPORT O&S COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

(See document No. 2)

The Committee noted the work programme and items for future discussion.

9. DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Noted.

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

None.

11. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

Cllr Clements outlined that she had been made aware that since the last meeting of the Committee the re-tendering of the waste disposal contract had begun through the process of 'officer delegation' and she thought that inline with the remit and work that the Committee has done previously on reducing plastic waste and the Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency that the proposals are looked at with this policy change in mind. This was also an opportunity for Members to be made aware of the process and for consideration to be given as to whether this is the best option for dealing with the city's waste in the future.

Councillors John O'Shea, Cabinet Member for Street Scene and Parks and Lisa Trickett were invited to join the discussion. Darren Share, Assistant Director, Street Scene also attended and provided the Committee with a briefing note with further details on the options for waste disposal. This included the proposal to change from one supplier to a number of packages so that the amount and type of waste being recycled is increased. This would mean that there would be less waste going to incineration and landfill. There was scope to look at what the future may look like as the market develops alternatives to energy recovery.

As part of the discussions with the Committee the current contract with the Tyseley Energy Recovery Facility (ERF) was discussed in reference to the Council declaring a Climate Emergency in 2019 with a commitment to reach zero carbon emissions by 2030 and the work of the R20 Taskforce. Members were concerned that the current level of recycling across the city was too low and more needed to be done to increase this so that less waste is sent to incineration and landfill in the first place.

There was also concern that the ERF was inefficient, highly polluting and at a significant cost to the Council and if further down the line the amount of waste being recycled is increased this would mean less would need to be incinerated. This raised the issue that it would not provide value for money.

It was suggested that an alternative plant could be built next to the Tyseley Energy Park using the Council's assets within the timeframe (by the end of the contract period of 2024) that would provide a better return for the decarbonisation of the heat being produced and would tackle climate change much more effectively. It was added that capacity is available in the region to incinerate waste if an alternative was not built by 2024 and would come at a cheaper cost than is currently being paid by the Council.

Members also raised that changes to legislation were expected with local authorities being expected to introduce glass return schemes and recycle food waste. As such this was an opportune time to put a facility in place that meets the requirements of the city, citizens and the planet and there was consensus from the Committee that the current procurement proposal was not delivering this.

In response to the points raised by Members the Cabinet Member stated that: -

- The tender notice was specifically aimed at the end product – i.e. where nothing further can be recycled from the waste collected and there is no alternative on the market but to incinerate or landfill.
- The current timeframe allows for options to be explored before the current contract finishes. Credible alternatives will be considered. However, it was emphasised that an alternative would need to be in place by 2024 that can deal with the volume of waste being produced in the city and provides a reliable service.
- It is crucial that current recycling levels need to be increased and the amount being incinerated reduced in line with the Council's commitment to climate change.
- Cllr O'Shea will be meeting with Professor Martin Freer, University of Birmingham to explore alternative options.

RESOLVED: -

1. The Chair will write to the Cabinet Member for Street Scene and Parks raising the points discussed and the concern of the Committee in respect of the advert to re- tender for the waste disposal contract in its current form.
2. Cllr Huxtable mentioned the option of utilising the Councillor Call for Action (CCfA) mechanism to deal in with this matter to ensure that a formal response was received. Committee agreed to initiate the process.

12. 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 12:48 hours.