

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORT O&S COMMITTEE

1400 hours on 12th July, Committee Room 6, Council House

Present:

Councillor Lee Marsham (Chair)

Councillors Saima Ahmed, David Barker, Colin Green, Timothy Huxtable, Richard Parkin and Waseem Zaffar

Also Present:

Mel Jones, Head of Transport Planning

Fiona Bottrill, Senior Overview & Scrutiny Manager

Baseema Begum, Scrutiny Officer

The meeting started at 14:00 hours

1. NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST

The Chair advised those present that the meeting would be webcast for live and subsequent broadcast 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

Cllr Huxtable outlined that he was the Lead Member for Rail, Metro, SPRINT and Active Travel - Transport Delivery Committee, West Midlands Combined Authority

Cllr Brooks stated that he represents the Council as a guardian of the Birmingham Gun Barrel Proof House which has interests in the area of HS2.

4. MINUTES

(See Item No.4)

The minutes of the meeting held on 14th June 2023 were approved.

5. SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ACTION TRACKER

(See Item No. 5)

Noted.

6. WORK PROGRAMME

(See Item No. 6)

The Chair outlined the priorities of the Committee as discussed at the last meeting. As part of this Members were notified that an informal session on the Highways PFI procurement contract had been set for 2nd August and invitations had been circulated.

Cllr Marsham also informed the Committee that he was holding regular dialogue in relation to upcoming cabinet decisions with the respective Cabinet Members for Transport and Environment. He welcomed Members input on this and confirmed that he would be receiving a briefing on 21st July on the report due to go to Cabinet on Public Sector Carbonisation. Feedback from this will be provided at a future meeting.

As discussed at the Committee's last meeting Councillor Marsham explained that two of the key work priorities identified were 'Active Travel' and 'Road Safety'. It was agreed that Task and Finish Groups would be set up to look at the issues in more depth.

Membership of the Active Travel Task & Finish Group was agreed and will comprise of Cllrs Marsham (Chair), Brooks, Green and Huxtable. A Terms of Reference (TOR) has been shared for consideration and Members may wish to refine and shape this further. It was noted that evidence gathering will include site visits, informal sessions and a public committee meeting in September that will include council officers, external partners, and stakeholders.

A discussion on the TOR was then held and the following were amongst the points made: -

- Ensure that learning is taken from other local authorities. Hackney and Waltham Forrest were raised as good examples of where active travel schemes have been implemented quite quickly. There are examples of good practice internationally that can be looked at too.
- How integrated transport is a key feature of active travel. The Council needs to share its work with others and learn from others including those who help put active travel measures in place.

- In relation to design of schemes it is imperative that capacity is considered, and examples of similar schemes undertaken by other councils looked at.
- Funding is an issue especially in the maintenance of any schemes especially with the Council's Highways Management and Maintenance PFI in place. Therefore, it is imperative that maintenance costs are set out from conception in terms of when and how much will be delivered especially if it will be resourced from the Council's own funds.
- There is a need to look at communities that have large health inequalities and understand what the health data says. This should include looking at where there are examples of active travel in those areas.
- Engagement and consultation need to be done as early as possible and there is a need to be radical to deliver on Council priorities relating to environment and sustainability
- The key lines of enquiry should include how the Birmingham Cycle Revolution (BCR) work has evolved.
- Options for a site visit could include Perry Barr as a good example of integrated travel options and the blue route on the A38 Bristol Road to reflect on good practice, challenges, and lessons to learn.
- Invitations to the Walking and Cycling Commissioner (Adam Tranter) and Chris Boardman, Active Travel England should be made for the public session along with other stakeholders and interested parties. Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) should be invited as the holder of key funding.

Mel Jones, Head of Transport Planning welcomed the input from Members and made the following points: -

- The scale and pace of delivery of active travel schemes needs to change. This will be best achieved by working with partners to deliver on challenging agendas.
- There are many aspects to consider as part of the inquiry using case studies to look at scheme delivery in general as part of the delivery plan of the Birmingham Transport Plan which is focussed on a corridor and neighbourhoods' approach with the pooling of resources in each area to deliver on set outcomes.
- Members will have the opportunity to look at the challenges involved as well as the competing demands both from the road network and residents/business needs as part of the consideration of case studies.
- It was highlighted that finding the right balance in terms of resource, timescale, and demand was a challenge. Furthermore, where suggested schemes have failed to reach a consensus or there is no preferred option there is a challenge on how to move forward and any recommendations that the committee makes during this inquiry to help deliver schemes will be welcomed.

The Chair then outlined the next steps for the Task and Finish Group. This included meeting informally during August and carrying out site visits. A public session with stakeholders will be held in September. Further details will be finalised and shared with Members in due course.

Cllr Marsham stated that the work undertaken as part of the Active Travel Inquiry will have some crossover with the proposed Road Safety Inquiry that will commence following the completion of the Active Travel Inquiry.

A Task & Finish Group for the Road Safety Inquiry with 4 Members was then agreed. Cllrs Barker (Chair), Zaffar, Parkin were approved as part of the group. Cllr Green requested that he consult with his party members for a representative to join the group and will advise accordingly.

It was agreed that this Task & Finish Group will meet initially in August to outline a Terms of Reference that will be finalised and presented to Committee for agreement in September.

A discussion was then held, and the following points were made: -

- The current Road Safety strategy is being updated with a draft expected ready for consultation later in the year. It would be helpful for the Task & Finish Group to see some an early draft and provide constructive feedback. This can also be used as a basis for forming their Terms of Reference. There will also be the opportunity for the Task & Finish Group to provide further comments as part of the formal consultation process.
- It was acknowledged that there would be a cross-over with the Active Travel Inquiry.
- Suggestions for who to invite as part of the evidence gathering included the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Cllr Marsham then highlighted that consideration should be given to other key issues listed on the work programme for the Committee to consider in particular on the sustainability agenda and the Council's commitment on 'Route to Net Zero Carbon'. This includes issues relating to recycling, waste reduction and zero-emission bus schemes. It is anticipated that this could be programmed later in the municipal year.

In addition, the Cllr Marsham stated that the Committee has been assigned work on Customer Services relating to Highways issues initially considered by the Co-ordinating O&S Committee. It will be up to the Committee to give due consideration on how this is followed up in the future.

Members also raised other issues for consideration including parking enforcement, the local bus network, bus priority corridors and patronage and an update on the progress made with hydrogen buses and where these may be located in the city.

Issues relating to 'Car Free School Streets' and 20mph zones would best be covered as part of the work of the two Task and Finish Groups as appropriate.

The Chair added that the Committee receives an Annual Flood Risk Management Report in March and issues relating to customer services and responses can be picked up as part of this.

RESOLVED: -

1. The Active Travel Task & Finish Group membership and an approach for meetings was agreed. The TOR was agreed in principle further to any other comments.

2. The Road Safety Task & Finish Group membership was agreed. Cllr Green will advise of his party's representative to join the group.

7. DATES OF NEXT MEETING

Future meetings were outlined by the Chair.

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

None.

9. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

None.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Noted.

11. AUTHORITY TO CHAIR 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 14:47 hours.