

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORT O&S COMMITTEE

1400 hours on 15th March, Committee Room 6, Council House

Present:

Councillor Chaman Lal (Chair)

Councillors, David Barker, Martin Brooks, Colin Green and Timothy Huxtable

Also Present:

Councillor Liz Clements

Philip Edwards, Assistant Director, Transport & Connectivity

Kevin Hicks, Assistant Director, Highways & Infrastructure

Domenic De Bechi, PFI Contract Manager

Mel Jones, Head of Transport Planning & Network Strategy (online)

Hannah Hogan, Flood Risk Manager

Amelia Wiltshire, Overview & Scrutiny Manager

Baseema Begum, Scrutiny Officer (online)

The meeting started at 14:03 hours

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 Youtube site and that Members of the press/public may record and take photographs except where there are confidential or exempt items.

2. APOLOGIES

Councillors Saima Ahmed, Alex Aitken and Richard Parkin.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

4. SUSTAINABILITY & TRANSPORT O&S COMMITTEE ACTION NOTES

The action notes of the meeting held on 15th February were approved and the action tracker noted. The action notes from the meeting held on 18th January were previously agreed.

Cllr Huxtable raised the issue of the Waste Disposal Procurement report to be presented to Cabinet in the near future and requested if the Cabinet Member, Cllr Mahmood could be invited to discuss this at the April meeting.

The Chair re-arranged the order of the agenda to bring forward Item 9 - Councillor Call for Action (CCFA). A request for a CCFA was submitted by Cllr Huxtable however further to information received by Cllr Huxtable prior to the meeting the request was formally withdrawn.

5. CABINET MEMBER ANNUAL REPORT

(See Item No.5)

Cllr Clements spoke to the presentation circulated and during a discussion with Members the following were amongst the points made: -

- The recent announcement of the Trailblazer Devolution Deal was welcomed. There was much for the city and wider region to consider as part of the implications for transport growth including securing the future of the metro extension to Brierly Hill.
- It was acknowledged that reconfiguration work needs to take place at Kings Norton station as part of the work on the Camp Hill rail line and Midlands Rail Hub. Due to its strategic importance to the region, it is a priority for the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and the Department for Transport who are progressing this.
- The work of West Midlands Trains as part of the Community Rail Partnership scheme is highly commendable as it involves the local community in making enhancements to the local area and rail stations. The City Council should take the opportunity to work with the Partnership to deliver its priorities relating to transport, sustainability, and environmental issues.
- Due consideration is given to preserving green areas and trees in the area that will cover the route along the Alcester Road South that the Cross City Bus will take.
- There is a funding package for the SPRINT bus priority corridor along the A34 South. Careful consideration needs to be given to the reallocation of road space along the route as well as the need for some significant investment in those areas with narrower space.
- Any increase in the installation of further average speed enforcement cameras in the city would need funding for the operation and ongoing maintenance costs. Previous agreements for average speed enforcement in the region have now ended as in the case of Birmingham and Solihull. It is worth noting that cameras are placed by the Police in those hotspots where they are more likely

to be activated. Further dialogue is ongoing with the Police on future proposals and the Council has made provision for capital investment as part of any future scheme(s) to tackle moving traffic contraventions within its capital funding programme.

- The Committee will be receiving a briefing on the proposed refresh to the Road Safety Strategy in April. This would be a good opportunity to pick up issues relating to parking, 20mph zones and Controlled Parking Zones where further detail can be discussed.
- The annual Highways PFI programme of works begins in July however the new Highways PFI contract starting later in the year will not be affected by this. Ongoing investment in the public highway continues and all works started will be finished and there will be no impact to residents on the changeover of contractor.
- There are currently a high number of schemes being delivered to improve the public highway. Unfortunately, communication does at times fall down where residents receive leaflets before the local ward councillors are aware of the works.
- Any petitions received by the Highways service for local investment are considered as part of the quarterly revenue programme. Where other funding schemes are available these scheme requests are considered to undertake any additional work wherever possible.
- Although the current E-Scooter pilot contract ended in February it is anticipated that there will be future provision available in the city. The WMCA are responsible for the procurement of any future contract.
- A bid has been submitted for Active Travel 4 funding as the city has a high level of ambition to increase opportunities for walking and cycling. There is a need to secure longer term investments to allow for planning and the Council is working with the West Midlands Cycling and Walking Commissioner to deliver this.
- Dangerous and illegal parking especially around high streets is a serious concern however where vehicles are parking for a short period such as 5-10 minutes it becomes quite difficult to take enforcement action (through issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice) as Enforcement Officers must be present and record the incident. It should be noted that acting on short term parking offences with the current resources and powers is very difficult and can only be carried out by Enforcement officers at the time.
- The Council does however work with the Police on specific campaigns where there are problem areas in relation to illegal parking. The Police have more powers in relation to this than the local authority. The matter is different for roads with Red Routes as camera cars record any stoppages, and the offence is recorded instantly. There are also specific enforcement powers to ensure that no stopping takes place.
- Concerns were raised about the delay in the procurement of SPRINT vehicles, as bus priority on the A45 is due to be extended. It was highlighted that Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) are responsible for the procurement of the buses however there are complexities within the procurement process and

further information can be shared with the Committee separately due to commercial sensitivity.

- The Council's target for reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2030 was raised as an area that needs further investigation by the Committee. It was acknowledged that several Council service areas need to make progress in this area since the target was set in 2019. Full Council receives an annual report on efforts to reach this target. It was added that waste procurement is a key area that is within the Council's control and contributes heavily to meeting this target.
- The WMCA is looking to undertake some work to ensure that there is more joint-up working between key areas such as bus, rail and cycling where these are being delivered on key projects. It was noted that the Council's contribution to funding towards the redevelopment of University station was to ensure that it was delivered however it was acknowledged that more cycling provision is needed than is currently available. This was a particular concern as more commuters are being encouraged to use active ways to travel and this priority is highlighted within the Council's Birmingham Transport Plan.
- It was recognised that any delays to the delivery of HS2 would have a knock-on effect on the development of local rail provision especially those lines affected by the HS2 corridor. Furthermore, the impact would also be felt more widely in the region's economic growth and on priorities with the Council's Transport Plan.

RESOLVED: -

1. The report was noted.
2. A list to be provided giving the latest information on the number of Air Quality Monitors in each ward.
3. Cllr Green to be provided with further details pertaining to the A45 Segregated Cycle Route in relation to its length and the timescale involved.
4. Further information was requested on the Council's target to lower emissions from cars by achieving a 95% reduction in vehicle mileage specifically which type of vehicles were mapped as part of this exercise.
5. Phil Edwards to request a briefing note from TfWM in relation to the procurement of SPRINT vehicles.

6. ANNUAL FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE REPORT

(See Item No. 6)

Hannah Hogan shared a presentation and outlined the key points. During discussion with Members the following points were made: -

- The River Rea has benefitted from major investment through the Environment Agency (EA) for schemes in Selly Park North and Selly Park South and this investment has been based on the high number of properties at risk of flooding. The EA looks at flood risk from main rivers or water courses as part of its assessment.

- Properties in Sparkhill are also at risk of flooding from the River Cole but the main risk lies in surface water in this area as past small rainstorm events have shown. A bid was put in last year to the EA for property flood risk resilience for the terraced properties at risk as people in the area do not have the financial means to be more resilient.
- A sum of £35,000 has been secured for the 2023-24 financial year for feasibility works to assess how much a property flood resilience scheme would cost in the worse affected areas in Sparkhill. Plans by the EA for a flood alleviation scheme for the River Cole is anticipated to take place in 2027 due to its complexity.
- Trapping water to alleviate flooding from the River Cole by using Council land or in agreement by using land of neighbouring authorities could be a solution if there is sufficient land to accommodate the amount of water along the course. Discernible benefits would need to be demonstrated however it has been noted that this is a complex scheme.
- There are planned works on the Hockey Brook to restabilise brickwork and to help secure the access ladders.
- Cllr Lal offered his thanks to Kevin Hicks for his support and work on the Committee due to his imminent departure.

RESOLVED: -

1. The report was noted.
2. Hannah Hogan to share her presentation.

7. WORK PROGRAMME

(See Item No. 7)

The items for the next meeting were outlined and the request for an update on the Waste Disposal Procurement process and report to Cabinet was noted as part of this.

RESOLVED: -

1. The report was noted.
2. The Cabinet Member for Environment's office to be contacted to request an update on the Waste Disposal Procurement (and report to Cabinet) to be scheduled prior to the report being presented to Cabinet.

8. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Noted.

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

A CCFA was submitted by Cllr Huxtable and further to receiving additional information Cllr Huxtable confirmed that the CCFA had been withdrawn. He would be taking matters up with officers following the update received from Kevin Hicks.

RESOLVED: -

1. Formal withdrawal of the CCFA was noted.

10. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

None.

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 15:59 hours.