

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORT O&S COMMITTEE

1400 hours on 14th June, Committee Room 2, Council House

Present:

Councillor Lee Marsham (Chair)

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

Also Present:

Philip Edwards, Assistant Director, Transport & Connectivity

Mark Shelswell, Assistant Director, Highways & Infrastructure

Ellie Horwitch-Smith, Assistant Director, Route to Zero Carbon

Paul Clarke, Assistant Director, Programmes, Performance and Improvement Division (PPI), Strategy, Equality and Partnerships Directorate

Richard Smith, Head of Insight, Policy & Strategy, Strategy, Equality and Partnerships Directorate

Tracey Murray, Improvement and Change Partner, Programmes, Performance and Improvement Division (PPI), Strategy, Equality and Partnerships Directorate

Amelia Wiltshire, Overview & Scrutiny Manager

Baseema Begum, Scrutiny Officer

The meeting started at 14:01 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

Councillor Martin Brooks.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Cllr Huxtable outlined his interests as follows: -

- Member of the Transport Delivery Committee, West Midlands Combined Authority
- Lead Member for Rail and Metro - Transport Delivery Committee, West Midlands Combined Authority
- Substitute Member (for Andy Street, West Midland Mayor) on the West Midlands Bus Alliance
- Shadow Cabinet Member for Transport, Birmingham City Council

Cllr Zaffar declared that he was involved in some work professionally on Air Quality.

The Chair stated that these declarations would be noted as standing for the year and asked Members where relevant in the future for good practice to re-iterate any relevant interests.

4. MEMBERSHIP OF SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(See Item No. 4)

This was noted and the Chair thanked Councillors Lal and Aitken for their contributions during the last municipal year and noted the number of experienced Members on the Committee.

5. ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIR

Cllr Barker was nominated and agreed as Deputy Chair.

6. SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORT O&S COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

(See Item No.6)

Noted.

7. MINUTES

(See Item No.7)

The minutes of the meetings held on 19th April and 18th May 2023 were approved.

8. SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ACTION TRACKER

(See Item No. 8)

Noted.

The Chair agreed that issues for further discussion would be taken under the work programme item.

9. DELIVERING EFFECTIVE AND FLEXIBLE SCRUTINY

(See Item No. 9)

The Chair set out the purpose of this item as outlined in the report circulated with the agenda and clarified that Members were being tasked with holding the Council to account by undertaking their role in the best way to achieve positive outcomes. This included conducting their scrutiny role in a variety of ways that best suited the need. Members endorsed this approach.

RESOLVED: -

1. The report was noted and agreed.

10. DEVELOPING THE SUSTAINABILITY & TRANSPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24

(See Item No.10)

The Chair outlined the purpose of the item and noted the need to balance the work of the Committee so that issues relating to the environment and sustainability were also given some focus alongside the keen interest that relates to matters involving transport and highways.

Cllr Marsham then invited Members with support from the officers present to set out their priorities and during discussion a number of issues were raised: -

- **Active Travel** – Alongside walking and cycling it should be noted that buses are a key aspect of encouraging more people to travel in an active way with less impact on the environment resulting in less air pollution and reducing congestion on the city's roads. A debate has been held at City Council and further work is needed with all partners including bus operators and the West Midlands Bus Alliance to understand how the design of cross city bus services could help mitigate these issues.
The amount of time taken to design and deliver active travel schemes in comparison to neighbouring Councils was highlighted. It was suggested that Members could benefit from undertaking some case studies where there would be the opportunity to understand the complex process involved in developing, designing and procuring schemes. The Committee may also wish to invite the West Midlands Combined Authority to explain the governance process in more detail.
- **Refresh of the Road Safety Strategy** – A motion was passed at City Council and a key priority for the Council is to improve road safety for all road users. A refresh of the Strategy is currently being drafted and there will be an

opportunity for input from the Committee in the near future. It is anticipated that the Strategy will be completed by the end of the calendar year.

- **Route to Zero Carbon** – the focus on sustainability issues is very important and a request was made for an update on the action plan agreed at City Council to deliver on the climate emergency previously declared. The Committee should also aim to focus its sights on transport related issues. As part of this work the Council’s role should be explored in respect of leading the city in engaging with different sectors (i.e., businesses, young people and faith groups), and how this is being done.
- **The re-procurement of the Highways PFI contract** - as the arrangements of a new delivery partner is being procured it was noted that due to contractual discussions Members may need to receive commercially sensitive information in a private setting (over the summer period) however there should also be a public session. An invitation to the responsible Cabinet Member to attend these meetings should also be arranged as it was crucial that as much information should be available to support the Council’s aim for openness and transparency.
- **Sustainability issues relating to Waste** – specifically what is being done to tackle poor levels of recycling in the city

It was noted that data and information from the City Observatory and Programmes, Performance and Improvement Division could be used to support the Committee’s work.

The Chair concluded that following discussion there were 4 key priorities identified by the Committee and that officers would now work to develop these further with Members having the opportunity to comment further at July’s meeting.

It was anticipated that these initial discussions would frame the Committee’s work programme for the first 3-4 months and discussions would be had in the best way to achieve added value and positive outcomes in terms of how each piece of work would be carried out.

RESOLVED: -

1. The report was noted.
2. Suggestions made by Members will be added to the work programme accordingly.

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

None received.

The Chair outlined that he would most likely present the report on the Call-In heard by the Committee on 18th May to the next proposed Cabinet meeting later in the month. A further update will be shared with Committee when this is available.

12. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

None.

13. SCHEDULE OF MEETING DATES FOR COMMITTEE MEETING AND SCRUTINY WORK

The Chair proposed a change of meeting day to Thursdays if Members agreed however, he was mindful that it would not have an adverse impact on other Members' commitments. It was also noted that, if possible, consideration would be given to bringing the meeting forward to 1pm if there was meeting room availability to allow this to happen and to explore options to hold meetings in a larger room.

RESOLVED: -

1. It was agreed that officers would explore the options for a change of date and time (where possible) and these would be shared with the Committee as early as possible.

14. 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 14:35 hours.