

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

**SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORT O&S COMMITTEE
MEETING**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 13th June 2024 at 1400 hours in Committee
Room 6, Council House, Victoria Square, Birmingham**

Present:

Councillor Lee Marsham (Chair)

Councillors Raqeeb Aziz, David Barker, Colin Green, Timothy Huxtable, Lauren Rainbow and Waseem Zaffar

Also Present:

Councillor Izzy Knowles

Geraldine Collins, Head of Operations – Digital & Customer Services

Philip Edwards, Assistant Director, Transport & Connectivity

Craig Evans, Parking Services Manager

Wendy Griffiths, Director Centralised Services

Mel Jones, Head of Transport Planning

Pam Powis, Senior Service Manager - Safer Places, Community Safety & Resilience

Mark Shelswell, Assistant Director, Highways & Infrastructure

Amelia Wiltshire, Overview & Scrutiny Manager

Baseema Begum, Scrutiny Officer

NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST

- 1 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.

APOLOGIES

- 2 Apologies were received from Councillor Richard Parkin.

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

- 3 The following declarations were made: -

Cllr Zaffar is employed professionally in the area of air pollution.

Cllr Huxtable is a member of the West Midlands Combined Authority's Transport and Delivery Overview Committee. He is also the lead member on the Rail/Sprint and Metro Member's engagement group.

Cllr Rainbow works in the water sector.

Cllr Marsham is a friend of the Canal & River Trust and pays a monthly subscription.

MEMBERSHIP OF SUSTAINABILITY & TRANSPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

- 4 The membership for the 2024/25 municipal year was noted.

ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIR

- 5 Cllr Barker was confirmed as the Deputy Chair.

MINUTES

- 6 **RESOLVED:** -

- i) That the Minutes of the meeting held on 16th May 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ACTION TRACKER

- 7 **RESOLVED:** -

- i) That the action tracker be noted.

SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE AND WORK PROGRAMME 2024/25

Cllr Marsham outlined future items for the work programme and re-iterated that the Committee's work would focus on the Council's continuous journey as part of the Improvement and Recovery Plan.

It was felt that the Savings Implications Task and Finish Group meetings being held by all Scrutiny Committees in July would be postponed for this Committee until the outcome of the Highways PFI was clear following court proceedings in the year.

Cllr Marsham then made the following suggestions based on previous priorities and discussions: -

- A 6-month interim report on Flood Risk Management would be presented in November.
- A discussion item on Dropped Kerbs would be added to the work programme.
- Understanding the current position in relation to rail and bus operations across Birmingham, and specifically, the progress on the new train line and plans around bus franchising. Site visits to take place and this would be planned for the new year.
- A session to discuss how the Route to Net Zero Carbon work is being implemented.
- The Committee to hold additional sessions to consider reports to be presented to Cabinet later in the year on the Road Harm Reduction Strategy and Average Speed Enforcement, respectively. It was anticipated that the Committee would meet in advance of the proposed Cabinet meeting so that feedback on points for consideration would be shared with Cabinet in advance of a decision.

Members then made the following points for consideration: -

- The utilisation of revenue of Clean Air Zone funds and the impact of this on service areas.
- An in-depth look at how the Highways service moves forward once a decision has been received from the court on the Highways PFI.
- An invitation to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport to attend a future meeting to allow Members to better understand the alignment between the cabinet portfolio and specifically the Committee's remit.

ROAD SAFETY INQUIRY EVIDENCE GATHERING

The Chair welcomed officers to the meeting and explained that this was the first part of a two-part evidence gathering session with Council officers that would continue the work that the Road Safety Task and Finish Group chaired by Cllr Barker had started.

Cllr Barker as Chair of the Inquiry then outlined the Terms of Reference to the Committee, highlighted the evidence received to date and explained the main issues raised were on poor parking and traffic enforcement activities and reporting safety concerns. Cllr Barker added that these issues required further dialogue and response from officers.

Wendy Griffiths, Director Centralised Services; Mark Shelswell, Assistant Director, Highways & Infrastructure; Philip Edwards, Assistant Director, Transport & Connectivity; Pam Powis, Senior Service Manager - Safer Places, Community Safety & Resilience; Geraldine Collins, Head of Operations – Digital & Customer Services; Mel Jones, Head of Transport Planning and Craig Evans, Parking Services Manager were in attendance for this item.

The following points were made in discussion with Members in relation to queries raised on parking and traffic enforcement, Average Speed Cameras and third-party reporting: -

- A full review of the Parking Service area is due to start and will be completed before the procurement of a new parking enforcement contract is let in 2026. It was important that the contract was fit for purpose, meets the Council's policy objectives and offered value for money.
- It was felt that this Inquiry would help shape the service going forward and was very timely. As part of the review third party reporting would also be considered as well as looking at what other core cities are doing. A visit to Leeds was planned to undertake learning.
- It was felt that this Inquiry would help shape the service going forward and was very timely. As part of the review third party reporting would also be considered as well as looking at what other core cities are doing. A visit to Leeds was planned to undertake learning.
- Members were keen to understand the level of data held by the Council and its enforcement partner on the nature and number of enforcement activity conducted and how this could be used to communicate more with residents and road users.
- Lack of feedback to residents on reports made on the Council's website was raised. Members highlighted that the public lose trust and confidence in using the Council's system because they do not know if and how the issue was resolved. Officers agreed that improvements were needed on the Council's reporting website. The Council providing timely information to the parking enforcement contractor was identified as a key issue.
- It was acknowledged that the Council Customer Contact Centre was very efficient in answering and handling calls however there was work to do on the feedback loop and this would be picked up as part of the review of the parking enforcement contract especially in terms of finding a digital solution.
- Members recognised that there was an issue with meeting the demand across the city for enforcement activity related to poor parking. There was a resource issue in the number of enforcement officers employed and this was aligned to the available budget.
- The Parking Services Enforcement Team assesses each enforcement request received. These are logged and passed onto the enforcement contractor for action as appropriate however how quickly this is dealt with is dependent on the available resource.
- The legislative framework in relation to parking enforcement and the powers (known as Traffic Regulation Orders) available to local authorities was noted. Officers outlined that legislation which underpins pavement and verge parking enforcement is different for Greater London than for the rest of England.
- Members were concerned that where there were powers available to the Council to enforce these were either not used or done so in a haphazard way.

It was felt that this was something that the Council could lobby government on.

- It was acknowledged that members of the public do not understand the difference between Council and Police powers and where the revenue generated from enforcement activity goes. It would be helpful if people were made aware of this.
- Concern was relayed on the amount of time taken for road safety schemes to be implemented following allocation of agreed spend. An example was shared of a ward allocated monies for road improvements 2 years ago that was still waiting for the work to be completed.
- A crucially important factor in improving road safety was about changing the behaviour and mindset of all road users. Encouraging behaviour change through education and prevention work with all communities to sit along more enforcement was seen as the centrepiece in achieving safer roads for all road users. However, Members recognised that this was a challenge in the current financial climate.
- Revenue generated from Average Speed Cameras was not received by the Council to re-invest locally in enforcement rather this money goes to HM Treasury. Any increase to the number of cameras would mean an increase in operating costs that the Council currently cannot afford and would require funding from partners.
- The Council can use Section 222 (Local Government Act 1972), Public Space Protection Orders and Community Protection Notices to deal with issues such as car cruising in conjunction with partners including the Police. These are all in line with The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.
- The Police reporting portal known as Nextbase launched in 2023 was particularly good for using when issues required direct police action. Members felt that there was learning that the Council could benefit from both from partners such as the Police through the Nextbase reporting mechanism but also through the use of technology to take real-time evidence of poor parking and other issues that could be acted on. This was something that the Council could work on in partnership with the Police however it was acknowledged that there would be a cost associated with it.

8 **RESOLVED:** -

- i) That the report be noted.
- ii) That the Terms of Reference be agreed.
- iii) That the annual parking report is added to the work programme.
- iv) That the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport is invited to a future meeting to discuss the alignment between the cabinet portfolio and specifically this Committee's remit.

SCHEDULE OF MEETING DATES

- 9 Future meeting dates were noted. The Chair acknowledged that the next meeting fell within the school holiday period however after some consideration and feedback from Members on their availability it was agreed that the date of 25th July would remain unchanged.

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

- 10 There were no requests for Call In received.

OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

- 11 There were no items of urgent business to consider.

The meeting ended at 15:21 hours.

Chair's signature: