

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORT O&S COMMITTEE

1400 hours on 19th April 2023, Committee Room 3-4, Council House

Present:

Councillor Chaman Lal (Chair)

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

Also Present:

Mel Jones, Head of Transport Planning & Network Strategy

Simon Needle, Strategic Lead Urban Forestry and Nature

Martin Rowe, Transport Planning Manager

Christian Scade, Head of Scrutiny and Committee Services

Amelia Wiltshire, Overview & Scrutiny Manager

Sarah Fradgley, 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 Public i 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 and Alex Aitken.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

4. SUSTAINABILITY & TRANSPORT O&S COMMITTEE ACTION NOTES

The action notes of the meeting held on 14th March 2023 were approved.

The following updates to the Action Tracker were noted:

- Update on A45 Segregated Cycle Route – information briefing forwarded to Councillor Colin Green

- Potential impacts of proposed changes to HS2 Delivery Programme – information briefing forwarded to Members
- Waste Disposal Procurement – an informal briefing for Members would follow the committee meeting.

Members expressed their disappointment that the Waste Disposal Procurement would be considered at an informal briefing for members, rather than as a formal agenda item. It was felt the issue should be publicly scrutinised at a formal committee meeting. It was further noted that Cabinet decisions were subject to the Call-In procedure that would require a formal meeting.

Responding to questions, Christian Scade, Head of Scrutiny and Committee Services explained that it was recognised best practice that cabinet reports were shared with the relevant O&S Chair, but this was not the case for all reports. He noted Members' concerns and highlighted that there was an option for members and the chair to attend Cabinet to feedback before a decision was made, and also the call-in option.

The Committee requested that future action trackers indicate completion dates and asked that future briefing notes be provided before the next agenda despatch date, to ensure Members had time to digest the information.

RESOLVED: -

1. That future briefing notes on actions arising from the committee be provided before the next agenda despatch date and the Action Tracker document include completion dates.

5. CITY OF NATURE 25 YEAR PLAN UPDATE

(See Item No. 5)

Simon Needle, Strategic Lead Urban Forestry and Nature, spoke to the presentation circulated. Responding to questions from Members the following points were made: -

- The City of Nature Plan focused on both improving existing green space and creating new green spaces. He summarised work undertaken across the city to date including the natural rivers and green corridors projects and biodiversity work with communities. He undertook to provide a copy of the Green Infrastructure Masterplan Vision Document that identified where new green spaces were required.
- The option for a city park at Smithfield was subject to an outline planning application. He had advised on the ecology of the site and integrating biodiversity but could not comment on the broader planning application details.
- The Future Park Standard provided the mean to improve the site management of existing parks.
- The support of volunteers and friend of parks groups was acknowledged. Work with the City of Nature Alliance and Green Champion Network sought to increase park volunteers and engage communities in the development of local green spaces.

RESOLVED: -

1. The report was noted.
2. Simon Needle to provide a copy Green Infrastructure Masterplan Vision document for committee members, following its publication end of April 2023.

6. REFRESH OF THE ROAD SAFETY STRATEGY FOR BIRMINGHAM

(See Item No. 6)

Martin Rowe Transport Planning Manager, spoke to the presentation circulated. Responding to questions from Members the following points were made: -

- There were a range of options to reduce traffic volumes in residential areas such as low traffic neighbourhoods, or reallocating road space. Proposals would be locally specific, and it was important to work with local communities to develop schemes. The wider Birmingham Transport Plan will include significant investment in alternative modes of travel, including public transport, active travel and mobility hubs.
- The Strategy was not anti-car but focused encouraging appropriate car use.
- Mel Jones reassured the meeting of the resources to develop and deliver schemes. BCC had recently increased team capacity and had an ongoing recruitment campaign to attract transport planners and engineers, despite the global shortage of such expertise. She also used the professional services framework to bring in additional support and specialists.
- BCC had secured Active Travel Round 4 funding and work continued to develop a pipeline of schemes ready to bid in future funding rounds. She was confident of BCC's ability to continue to attract funding.
- The Strategy's proposed move to a major scheme approach aimed to address the disconnect between the highways PFI and transport planning, by consolidating all the smaller schemes into a whole neighbourhood programme that would ensure right people were involved in planning and delivery.
- Martin Rowe was working with local ward councillors on HS2 Road Safety schemes and undertook to report back in due course.
- Orbital Routes would be included in strategy.
- Mel Jones undertook to provide an update winter maintenance programme associated with active travel including progress on the provision of grit bins.
- Positive conversations had been taken place with the new Chief Constable of West Midlands Police to increase capacity of Average Speed Cameras. BCC had the capital capacity to install new sites but was subject to WMP enforcement capacity.
- The meeting also discussed how to encourage car owners out of their cars, multiple car households, and future park and ride schemes.
- The criteria to prioritise road safety schemes was set out within the Road Safety Strategy. However, there was a backlog implementing the programme.

RESOLVED: -

1. The report was noted.
2. Martin Rowe to update the Committee on the HS2 Road Safety schemes in due course.

3. Mel Jones to provide an update on the winter maintenance programme associated with active travel including progress on the provision of grit bins.

7. WORK PROGRAMME

(See Item No. 7)

The current work programme was noted, and it was agreed that a decision on whether to bring forward the remaining outstanding work programme items should be left to the new committee.

RESOLVED: -

1. It was agreed not to recommend any forward programme items, leaving the decision on outstanding work programme items to the new committee.

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

None

9. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

A vote of thanks was recorded for Councillor Lal's chairing of the Committee for the 2023/24 Municipal Year.

Councillor Lal thanked committee members, the Cabinet Member, and officers for their contributions and collaboration throughout the year.

10. 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 15:44 hours.