

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORT O&S COMMITTEE

1400 hours on 27th July, Council House Extension, Margaret Street – Actions

Present:

Councillor Chaman Lal (Chair)

Councillors Alex Aitken, David Barker, Martin Brooks, Colin Green, Timothy Huxtable, Richard Parkin and Miranda Perks

Also Present:

Councillor Liz Clements

Phil Edwards, Assistant Director, Transport & Connectivity

Kevin Hicks – Assistant Director, Highways & Infrastructure (via Teams)

Mel Jones, Head of Transport Planning and Network Strategy

Amelia Murray, Overview & Scrutiny Manager

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

2. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE AND CHAIR

Noted.

3. ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIR

Cllr Barker confirmed as Deputy Chair.

4. APOLOGIES

None.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Cllr Huxtable stated that he is vice chair of the West Midlands Combined Authority's Transport Delivery Committee. He is also lead member for metro and rail as part of his role on that committee.

Cllr Lal is a member of the West Midlands Combined Authority's Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

6. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Noted.

7. SUSTAINABILITY & TRANSPORT O&S COMMITTEE ACTION NOTES

The action notes of the meetings held on 16th March and 28th April were agreed.

Cllr Huxtable raised an issue relating to the CAZ baseline data shared at the meeting on 16th March and for completeness added that it was stated that there was a 13% reduction in air pollution levels within the CAZ. A reduction of 14% alongside the ring road and 13% outside the ring road was also recorded.

8. CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT – ANNUAL PRIORITIES

(See Item No.8)

The Chair welcomed the Cabinet Member Cllr Liz Clements and officers to the meeting.

Cllr Clements spoke to her presentation outlining the transport priorities for the city and made the following points: -

- The Birmingham Transport Plan (BTP) adopted in October 2021 addresses some of the key strategic priorities of the city including addressing the climate emergency, decarbonising transport, improving air quality across the city by implementing the Clean Air Strategy and supporting a green recovery from Covid-19.
- The BTP has set some ambitious targets drawing on best practice from other European cities and sets out 4 key principles for delivery: -
 - Reallocating road space to ensure more spaces for mass transit buses;
 - Prioritising active travel in local neighbourhoods so that walking and cycling are easier and more appealing for people to do;
 - Managing demand through parking measures to ease congestion and allow people to move around easier; and

- Transforming the City Centre to make it easier to move around through city centre segments. Extend pedestrianisation of the city centre and improve cycling infrastructure.
- The BTP Delivery Plan is in development and will identify key projects. Ongoing projects are being delivered in line with the BTP however decarbonizing transport is the big driver and will also determine the priority of projects. This will include measures on behavioural change, mode shift and key performance indicators. It is imperative that the measures being put in make a difference to people's experience of moving around the city so that it is easier and safer to do through a variety of active travel measures. A number of schemes are in progress and being developed to support this agenda in the city centre and across the city through improved bus priority and cycling connections.
- An on-street cycling hangar pilot is being brought forward and an opportunity for further learning from the London Borough of Hackney who have carried out some significant work in this area is being explored.
- Further distribution of free bikes to enable more people to travel actively are being funded through the net service revenue generated by the Clean Air Zone (CAZ).
- A number of Car Free School Streets (CFSS) projects have been delivered and this is being expanded with engagement at ward level with local Members and residents. This work is being supported through the revenue generated by the CAZ.
- Building on this and a key ambition to improve air quality across the city is the monitoring of air quality outside schools. A project is currently underway to recruit schools to do this with at least 1 school in each of the 69 wards given an air quality monitoring unit. It is anticipated that this will encourage parents to think about their method of travel to school and to make changes if they are able to understand the impact of pollution generated by vehicles idling outside schools.
- With the decarbonisation agenda work is being done to look at accessibility for people to charge electric vehicles for those with no off-road parking.
- The Council is working in partnership with Transport for West Midlands on improving public transport specifically making bus use more attractive by ensuring that buses are given priority and space on the public highway. This is to give people confidence to use buses as much of the feedback from surveys relates to people suffering delays and congestion and has meant that people have been reluctant to use them.
- Cllr Clements is now also on the West Midlands Rail Executive to drive forward and influence the city's ambitions for an integrated public transport system and by engaging both with local and regional rail bodies.
- To make major changes and improvements another source of revenue is required and the Workplace Parking Levy (WPL) would allow for this if it goes ahead and currently a study is taking place to consider this.
- A temporary contract arrangement is in place for the maintenance of the public highway up until April 2023 whilst a permanent contractor is appointed to run a restructured highways PFI programme.

- Whilst this is taking place work is ongoing to tackle potholes and poor pavements and initiatives such as the Street Works permits to minimise disruption to all road users, developments of a 'last mile' strategy in relation to the delivery of goods and Kerbside Management strategy to manage kerbside space fairly and in a sustainable way.

Following the presentation, a discussion took place and the following were among the responses and points made: -

- A report will be presented to Cabinet in September to extend the E-scooter trial. A procurement process is being led by TfWM to put in place a new operator. A number of lessons have been learnt such as the needs of other road users, docking and where scooters are being left that will be part of the specification. The Council is contributing to this specification and will include the views of all affected groups and residents.
- The use of e-scooters has had some impact on mode shift. The trial has been enabled through government and there are various pilots around the country. DfT are looking at all the feedback being received before legislation is passed so pilots are being extended.
- The Highways Local Improvement budget was discussed at Full Council in July and responses are currently being drafted to the questions asked. Funding for improvements locally is being sourced from net surplus revenue from the CAZ monies. Improving air quality locally is an ambition and in support of this a fund for local work in partnership with schools and community groups is being set up.
- Requests to carriageway modification and implementation have been delayed however testing has been taking place during the last 12 months. A robust governance process for all items relating to highways is in place. Post pandemic accessing contractor workforce has meant some delay. Also, the HS2 effect on taking more contractors out of circulation has had a knock-on effect of availability of workers. Concerns have been noted and in future the aim is to make this more efficient.
- Recognition that a lot of work in relation to cycling has taken place and partnership work continues with the Canal & River Trust.
- The introduction of strategic blue routes such as the A38 was a driver to improving and offering more people a way of active and alternative travel. Canal towpaths are used as an alternative to the public highway, but they are not a substitute for cycle infrastructure however in the battle against congestion it is a choice that some people do make. It is acknowledged that the safety of cyclists needs to be considered in whatever future infrastructure is installed and within the available resources.
- It was noted that during the pandemic work was undertaken to widen some pedestrian footways. Opportunities should be taken when any resurfacing works are taking place to undertake other work such as putting in provision for walking and cycling especially so in local centres and high streets to further the Council's commitments on active travel.
- It was confirmed that the Council is in the process of developing a Walking and Cycling Strategy which will include an additional £1m for a cycling network. It

was noted that work happening on the public highway needs to be more aligned.

- Connecting neighbourhoods is a key ambition as well as ensuring that an integrated public transport system allows people to travel easily between areas and from all parts of the city to the centre within 30 minutes.
- 'Vision Zero' is a road traffic safety project that aims to ensure that there are no deaths or serious injuries on the road and has been an approach taken by some European countries such as the Netherlands. The challenge for the city is how it is achieved and funded. However, at a local level a number of interventions are being considered as part of a package for wards that will tackle a number of traffic, safety and air quality issues.
- The CFSS project has been piloted in the city with more schools coming on board on a yearly basis where feasible. However, it has been acknowledged that it will not be appropriate for every school and the key aim is to get parents and carers to understand the impact of how they travel on congestion and air quality and the effect of that on children. The potential for parents to understand and change their travel behaviour is a key aim. All schools have been asked to sign up to the free Modeshift STARS planning tool to review the schools travel plan.
- Reassurances have been received by VOI, providers of the E-scooters being trialled that scooters that are abandoned in unsafe locations and are reported are removed by a team of staff however this does remain an ongoing concern.
- Prior to the election all Members were notified about the opportunity for schools to nominate themselves to host an air quality monitoring unit outside the school. Members were asked to engage with all schools in their ward, so the opportunity is available to all schools. It is currently envisaged that there will be one unit per ward.
- Currently there are no plans to extend the CAZ however the Clean Air Strategy sets out the need to take action in each neighbourhood in the city and address poor air quality.
- A commitment has been made to pedestrianise the Gay Quarter in the Southside area of the city to address safety concerns.

RESOLVED: -

1. The report was noted.
2. Cllr Huxtable requested a list of all schools that have signed up to CFSS.

9. STREET NAMING & NUMBERING POLICY REVISION

(See Item No.9)

Phil Edwards, Assistant Director, Transport & Connectivity spoke briefly to the presentation that outlined the proposed changes to the existing policy and made the following points:

- The consultation started earlier in the year however due to the election period and summer holidays there hasn't unfortunately been as much feedback as hoped but there is still the opportunity for Members to share their views.

- The consultation has been shared with all Councillors and circulated widely.
- Naming of streets after deceased people and a proposal to change this from the current national practice of 50 years to 25 years to enable promotion of good relations between groups with special characteristics, as well as other groups. The added benefit of this is that by deferring the use of peoples' names for at least 25 years after their death it protects the Council against potential reputational damage should unexpected information about that person be revealed.
- The numbering system has also been highlighted as an area for change to reflect that all cultures/religions in the city are treated equally as all numbers are used to ensure logical number sequences, which are easy to locate.
- Currently the renaming of existing streets requires two-thirds majority to agree and can have a wide-ranging and detrimental effect on residents and businesses that may have been underestimated in the past. The current proposal is to increase the ability to resist renaming of existing streets except where redevelopment dictates. A pool of pre-approved street names will be available to developers with limited knowledge of the area enabling them to choose relevant, quality names for their sites.
- It is anticipated that a report with next steps will be presented to Cabinet in September and if Members have any comments these can be sent directly to Phil or his team.

RESOLVED: -

1. The report was noted.

10. PLACES FOR PEOPLE IN BIRMINGHAM

(See Item No.10)

Mel Jones, Head of Transport Planning and Network Strategy spoke to her presentation and during discussion with Members the following points were made: -

- The purpose of Local Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) and the use of the phrase as a catch-all term for the use of long-established traffic management techniques (such as modal filtering, one way streets and other types of closures/restrictions) to reassign through (motor) traffic from residential streets to main roads.
- The aim is to create safer (by reducing speed) and quieter places for walking and cycling that still maintain access to the area for vehicles. It has been used in the UK since the mid-1960s. There are examples of traffic management techniques and engineering put into roads such as bollards and speed humps to tackle speeding. Moving forward measures are being put in to encourage positive behaviour with changes being made to areas that are conducive to active travel rather than preventing negative behaviour such as speeding.
- Recognition that LTNs support policy imperatives –social, environmental, economic such as tackling the climate emergency through the reduction in air pollution bringing about a positive effect in people's health and wellbeing as well as encouraging more people to take up active travel. Other benefits to an

LTN area include reductions in, and shorter, motor traffic journeys across the area with fewer collisions and vehicles using roads designated rather than side roads.

- The Covid-19 pandemic and social distancing significantly curtailed public transport capacity and citizens needed safer travel space. LTNs became a very important response and resilience tool. Many LTN schemes were made permanent and, in many cases, they were of an ambitious and holistic scale which generated a great deal of attention.
- The Emergency Birmingham Transport Plan published in 2020 and in response to the pandemic contained LTNs. Learning from this was included in the Birmingham Transport Plan (BTP) adopted in October 2021 emphasising the need for behaviour change.
- Government Emergency Active Travel Fund investment has allowed for a number of LTNs pilots using Emergency Traffic Regulation Orders (ETROs). Due to the pandemic and time constraints consultation took place (online) throughout the first 6 months of a scheme being put in place with the option to remove or make permanent within 18 months. For clarification ETROs are only put in place when it is not known what the impact of the scheme will be and allows people to see in real time the effect rather than what might be anticipated.
- The schemes are in different stages however the Kings Heath & Moseley scheme has proved particularly controversial with community concerns about displaced traffic. The Council has provided additional engagement, monitoring and support funded through the Active Travel Fund Tranche 2 (ATF2) which is the funding mechanism for the Council to expand the LTNs into Places for People (PfP) projects.
- Monitoring of schemes with key indicators has taken place to determine success. It is acknowledged however that due to the rapid nature of having to set up schemes in response to Covid-19 there is a lack of baseline data. In particular for the Kings Heath & Moseley scheme which is larger additional traffic analysis together with traffic modelling, consultation feedback and air quality monitoring is all being considered and evaluated.
- Next steps for all schemes will mean refining the detail with local people before suitable submissions are proposed to Cabinet for approval. If schemes are agreed, then a detailed design will follow with the expanded scheme deployed using an ETRO.
- CFSS and LTN schemes are related components that originate from the same toolbox. As more are delivered and the programme evolves it is anticipated that if there is a school within a LTN area then it would be sensible to develop CFSS proposals at the same time. However, a key distinction between an LTN and a CFSS is that an LTN allows access to motor vehicles however the route is not as direct as walking or cycling for example. A CFSS means that the road is closed to all traffic for a period of 30 minutes at the beginning and ending of the school day and encourages the key principle within the BTP that promotes and encourages more people to use walk and cycle in their locality. As a precursor to this it is to reduce the speed and volume of vehicles in the area which then has an impact on the amount of physical infrastructure that needs

to be put in for example segregated cycle lanes and pedestrian crossing as it would effectively police itself.

- It is anticipated as set out in the BTP that these schemes will be rolled out across the city subject to funding and the BTP Delivery Plan will provide further details on specific schemes.
- Petitions received by the Council and relevant to the Cabinet Member's portfolio are noted and all petitions are responded to and reflected in any report to Cabinet where relevant.

RESOLVED: -

1. The report was noted.

11. WORK PROGRAMME

(See Item No. 11)

RESOLVED: -

1. The report was noted.

12. PROPOSED DATE OF MEETINGS

Agreed.

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

None.

14. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

None.

15. 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 16:28 hours.