

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORT O&S COMMITTEE

1000 hours on 8th November 2018, Committee Room 2 – Actions

Present:

Councillor Liz Clements (Chair)

Councillors David Barrie, Zaker Choudhry, Kath Hartley, Josh Jones, Chaman Lal, and Timothy Huxtable.

Also Present:

Simon Needle, Principal Arboriculturist, City Design Team

Mel Jones, Head of Transportation and Traffic Management

Andrew Radford, Principal Infrastructure Delivery Officer

Jennifer Coombs, Principal Transportation Behaviour Change Officer

Joe Green, Transportation Behaviour Change Manager

Professor Carolyn Hicks, Russell Road Residents Association

Baseema Begum, Scrutiny Officer

Rose Kiely, Overview & Scrutiny Manager

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

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Hendrina Quinnen.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

4. SUSTAINABILITY & TRANSPORT O&S ACTION NOTES

The action notes of 11th October 2018 were noted. In response to Cllr Huxtable's request for an update on issues raised at the last meeting relating to the Sprint consultation and a further report on the Integrated Transport System it was confirmed that these were being followed up with Transport for West Midlands (TfWM).

5. TRACKING REPORT – BIRMINGHAM TREE POLICY INQUIRY

(See document No.1)

Simon Needle set the scene in relation to the key drivers of the work of the Tree Policy Task & Finish Group.

- The Tree Policy Task & Finish group was set up following a motion to City Council and was a cross party set of members with an interest and background in trees. They took evidence on a number of areas from Council departments and external stakeholders. This resulted in a report to City Council in February 2018 with 12 recommendations that were agreed for implementation.
- Members of the group raised concerns from residents on the number of trees being lost due to the amount of development on the highway. Furthermore where replacement planting of trees was taking place this was not always appropriate due to a number of factors.
- The Council's Tree Policy was last updated in 2009 based on work carried out in 2002. As part of this policy there was a commitment to plant 2 trees for every 1 tree removed.

Following the update to the background of the report members were updated on the recommendations. It was noted that some of these were still in progress and were due to be completed in 2019.

During discussion with Members the following points were made:-

- Noting the hard work of former Cllr Fiona Williams in pushing this agenda forward and in particular her work with Birmingham Trees for Life and subsequently since being a Cllr. Cllr Debbie Clancy's input was also praised.
- The Biophilic Cities network is a group of cities across the globe that come together to share best practice and deliver liveable green cities. This is primarily about how people can use and interact with nature and for it to be mutually beneficial with a focus on the positive health and wellbeing benefits.
- What and how much consultation takes place with members and communities on the removal of trees where major development is taking place? This includes where new trees should be planted if they can't be planted on the original site and noting resident's wishes for streets where they would like trees planted.
- Some trees can obscure buildings and there are cases where businesses or developers want trees removed. In this case it is important to understand and

secure the planting of replacement trees in the right place but also suitable to the environment so consideration of the correct species is imperative.

- Cllr Huxtable noted that there was a separation of responsibility in the maintenance of trees. Trees on the public highway come under the jurisdiction of the Highways PFI contract and Amey PLC are responsible for their maintenance. The remainder of tree stock lies on the City Council's estate. It was noted that there were perceived differences in the cost of upkeep of trees on the public highway and elsewhere such as parks.
- The cost of planting trees in parks is underestimated significantly as compared to the highway. Planting trees in park land is dependent on the particular environment and therefore hidden costs are not always noted.
- It was imperative to maximise resources whilst increasing the tree canopy in the city. Whilst the old policy states a 2 for 1 replacement it was noted that there was not always the appropriate location to re-plant in the same road however this did not mean that that replacement could not take place elsewhere in the area or city.
- Members noted the impact of an increase in car ownership leading to tree removal in many cases where kerbs are dropped to provide parking.
- With reference to recommendation R03 it was noted that the de-designation process has not yet started.
- In respect of recommendation R07 there is a lot of cross reference with the Birmingham Design Guide (that will shortly be under consultation) and this will be picked up as part of the guide. There was a need for all information relating to trees to be on one webpage on the City Council's website.
- It was agreed that the implementation date for recommendation R10 is extended to June 2019 to allow for partners and stakeholders to be consulted with.
- Members felt that consultation and communication with Amey with regards to trees on the highway was poor for both Cllrs and residents. However it was confirmed that a schedule of tree works has to be approved before any work can be done. Simon Needle confirmed that he reviews this where possible.

RESOLVED:-

1. Briefing note to be provided to the Committee on the consultation mechanism with elected Members on tree issues specifically removal/planting.
2. The next tracking report to be programmed in the March or April 2019.

6. 20MPH IN PILOT AREAS

(See document No.2)

Mel Jones highlighted the key points from her presentation most notably that significant baseline work had been done before the implementation of the pilot scheme. The pilot scheme has been running for 2 years however the report today was

an interim monitoring report based on 1 year worth of data due to the time it takes to collate data for road traffic collisions. Full data collection at the end of the 3 year pilot will allow for a full analysis. Furthermore:-

- The Department for Transport (DfT) encouraged the implementation of 20mph in residential areas and following the publication of guidance the City Council held a consultation to gather the views of residents in 2014. Overall this was positive and the City Council decided to do a pilot project with funding that had been secured from the Cycle City Ambition Fund. Other local authorities have implemented similar schemes.
- 3 areas were chosen based on where there were a high number of KSIs (Killed and Seriously Injured); where there was a high number of child pedestrian accidents and those where there was a high level of public support. A further area known as 'Central South West' will be launched shortly.
- There is a growing body of evidence that supports the road safety benefits of vehicles travelling at 20mph primarily the reduction in the impact and severity of accidents.
- 20mph limits are known as 'signs and lines' schemes as there are no physical measures implemented. The focus is on changing the behaviour of drivers and roadside education to communities and school children through the 'slower is safer' campaign taught in schools.
- The City Council works with the Police and partners with the emphasis being on encouraging change by working together. The role of social media is very important in getting this message across.
- A series of toolkits have been developed to help and support communities, schools and businesses. These toolkits can be shared with the Committee.
- The speed limit is enforceable and the Police take a very proactive approach with educating drivers at the roadside. The Central Motorway Policing Group provides support and training to local police units and this is co-ordinated through the Birmingham Road Safety Partnership.
- In terms of lessons learnt it was noted that it was important to get the balance right in terms of signage of 20mph limit areas. There was a need to ensure that as drivers access these areas there is a clear and obvious change and this may require putting in road measures or additional signage as there have been some concerns about poor compliance.
- As part of the full evaluation of the programme these decisions will need to be made. Some roads were not included in the pilot where it was known that compliance is poor. However as part of the consultation in 2014 more roads were added in at the request of residents including contentious roads but the analysis to date has shown that these roads have taken up a disproportionate amount of resources and therefore it maybe that these particular roads require a different approach.

During discussion with Members the following points were made:

- The primary benefit of 20mph limits is the road safety benefits. Any modal shift to public transport, walking and cycling is a secondary benefit. Although some broad conclusions can be drawn there would be no direct evidence in support of this.

- Currently 250,000 journeys made by car in the city are less than 1 mile and this has a huge impact on congestion. The impact of the implementation of 20mph limits on the speed of buses is that there has been no material effect. Modal shift would impact congestion directly and have the biggest impact on bus journey times.
- The changes to modal shift in cycling happening in Bristol as a result of 20mph limits were noted and it was enquired as to whether those could be expected in Birmingham.
- In respect of a national default 20mph limit across the city (apart from 'A' roads) this would mean that signage would only be required where the speed limit was above 30mph. This would result in a saving in terms of the costs associated with putting in the required signage and traffic calming measures as the norm would be 20mph and no signs would be required. In this case 90% of the roads in the city would not require signage and the cost saving could be used to invest in targeting problem areas and those gateway entry points to speeds above this.
- Investment in capital measures to build safer routes to school schemes to target those crossing points at high risk school crossing patrol locations.
- 20mph limits address a lot of issues however the resources for local safety schemes and safer routes to schools can be used to tackle the remaining hotspots.
- Features of 'homezones' (such as shared space) are being included into new road designs in parts of the city.
- The Birmingham Road Safety Partnership (BRSP) is mirrored at a regional group working with TfWM, the West Midlands Combined Authority board and the Police & Crime Commissioner. The Partnership is currently working on a regional road safety strategy with TfWM and the regional road safety group will get a refresh as part of this. The City Council, Police and Fire Service make up the BRSP.

RESOLVED:-

1. Cllr Hartley requested clarity of definition of a residential road (including the city centre).
2. Details of speed exercises with residents involving the City Council and/or the Police relating to areas A1, A2 and A3. Confirmation also to be given on if local members are invited to these exercises.
3. Further information on if the speed averages calculated were based on free flow traffic speeds or everything including congestion to Professor Carolyn Hicks directly.
4. Clarification on the figures for areas A2 and A3 as stated on page 6 of the report was requested.
5. Toolkits shared with schools and communities to be emailed to the Members for information.

7. CORDON COUNTS

(See document No.3)

Andrew Radford outlined the key points from his presentation and during discussion with Members the following points were made:

- The last 10 years has seen the biggest increase in the use of rail to travel into the city centre however there has been very little investment in new infrastructure. There has been an increase in passenger numbers but no additional capacity in new services. In the last year there have been more journeys by rail than by car for the first time. This is beneficial to congestion especially journey times for buses with fewer cars on the road and the added benefit to air pollution.
- Cordon counts undertaken on buses are done through swift card analysis including those that pay concessionary fares and this is done on a monthly basis. A separate exercise is also undertaken manually. It would be advantageous for processes to be harmonised including moving to an electronic system that would help reduce errors.
- More data on cyclists would be helpful. There has been an increase in cyclists on the road up to 2015/16 and there is an expectation that with the two new cycling routes (A38 Bristol Road and A34 Perry Barr) being completed a further increase should be reported in the future.

RESOLVED:-

The report was noted.

8. SUSTAINABILITY & TRANSPORT O&S COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee's work programme and Terms of Reference for the Plastic Free Birmingham Inquiry were noted:

- Cllr Hartley shared details of the visit planned for the Transport Delivery Committee to the University and Perry Barr stations on 27th November and confirmed that details would be sent to the Scrutiny Officers for circulation to Members. With regards to the Committee's visit to TfWM Cllr Hartley asked members to identify areas of interest so that a visit can be arranged in due course.
- Cllr Jones mentioned that the future of the Veolia plant should be considered as part of the Plastic Free Birmingham inquiry due to commence in January.

9. DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Noted.

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

None.

11. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

None.

12. AUTHORITY TO CHAIRMAN 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 12:17 hours.