

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORT O&S COMMITTEE

1400 hours on 19th October, Committee Room 2, Council House

Present:

Councillor Chaman Lal (Chair)

Councillors David Barker, Colin Green and Timothy Huxtable

Also Present:

Cllr Majid Mahmood

Darren Share, Assistant Director, Street Scene

Ellie Hignett, Principal Portfolio Officer (online)

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. APOLOGIES

Cllrs Aitken, Brooks, Parkin and Perks.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

4. SUSTAINABILITY & TRANSPORT O&S COMMITTEE ACTION NOTES

Cllr Huxtable clarified that his point noted on the Action Tracker referred to the need for Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) due to the displacement of vehicles due to the CAZ and the potential introduction of car parking charges at parks.

5. CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO FOR ENVIRONMENT - PORTFOLIO OVERVIEW

(See Item No.5)

The Chair welcomed Cllr Majid Mahmood, Cabinet Member for Environment, and officers to the meeting.

Cllr Mahmood made the following key points from the paper circulated: -

- Work with neighbouring authorities collaboratively on issues relating to key issues affecting housing and transport.
- A sum of £3.6bn is estimated to retrofit 60,000 Council homes over 30 years and this is a significant challenge in terms of sourcing the funds to do so.
- Working collaboratively with the Cabinet Member of Transport in relation to the Birmingham Transport Plan ambitions to reach the Council's target of net zero carbon.
- The 12-year Birmingham Charge Point Strategy to support the transition to Electric Vehicles (EVs) includes increasing the number of accessible charge points available. This needs to be aligned with the Council's Transport Policy objectives to achieve at least 40% modal shift to public transport, walking and cycling, by deploying a minimum of 3,600 charge points by 2032.
- It is estimated that 250-300 tonnes of waste collected in the last year could have been recycled. More needs to be done to tackle recycling rates as the city is not where it would like to be, and new initiatives are being introduced including a recycling pilot for tower blocks with larger.
- A communications plan will follow to help and support people to increase the city's level of recycling. This includes all Household Recycling Centres (HRCs) now having additional space for people who want to leave items that can be re-used.
- A 'Love Your Neighbourhoods' scheme is being trialled. This includes all resources being targeted to clear up an area in one day. A pilot has been undertaken in Sutton Reddicap ward with further pilots planned. Members can advise where there are hotspots in their wards that can be targeted.
- Birmingham is the first city to create an Environmental Justice map with an ambitious target of increasing tree canopy in every ward to 25%. An additional 20,000 trees are set to be planted.

A discussion was then held with Members and in response to queries raised the following were among the points made: -

- Underground recycling facilities for those living in maisonettes and tower blocks have previously been available however it was proven that this was causing contamination and co-mingling of recycling had increased. However, the Council is exploring several options to increase the city's recycling rates especially in areas with poor recycling levels.
- Several methods for collecting waste from flats above shops have been tried and due to a transient population, this is an issue that needs more work. An additional crew visits these areas to tackle waste generated and the aim is to get a list of all flats above shops listed on a route, so the waste is collected at the same time.

- Officers are talking to Faith Action Groups to get the message out to communities on the Route to Zero ambition and improving recycling. The Council is willing to work with a wide variety of people to spread the message.
- The Environmental Act 2021 will change waste collection across the city. Further details on what the local authority will be mandated to do in respect of green and food waste is to be confirmed.
- There is demand for a facility for recycling of food waste from feedback received from litter picking groups and others however to implement this would require government funding and resources to do so.
- It was highlighted that figures released by other council's that have a food waste collection show that initially the figures are high but then drop off over 3-4 years. This was due to residents realising how much is wasted and changing their behaviour resulting in less waste over time.
- The Council is in the procurement process for its Waste Disposal contract and the aim is for the contract to be more flexible and adaptable to change.
- More work needs to be done in respect of increasing the number of EV charging points as there are more EVs on the road. Currently there is a lack of charging points on council-owned land. Mapping work needs to take place to understand the stakeholders who are installing charge points and ensuring that we use our data to reach as many people as possible by placing charging points in the right locations. There is a need to work collaboratively with a range of partners to increase capacity.
- The city is still working out the role of hydrogen to power private vehicles. More research needs to be done in the technicalities of using hydrogen to power vehicles and whether the infrastructure is available to do so in comparison with EVs.
- Currently the Council leases it's mobile recycling trucks and there are benefits that outweigh the cost saving of owning these vehicles through the savings made by not being liable for maintenance. There is also the added benefit of replacement vehicles being available straight away if there are issues with any vehicle without any extra cost. There is also no financial burden if a truck needs refiguring.
- The Cabinet Member has reviewed the allocation of mobile household recycling trucks for all 69 wards. As a result, from 1st October 2 member wards will have 1 truck every month. Every single-member ward will be allocated a truck every other month as standard, and this is based on calendar weeks.
- In addition, any spare trucks will be allocated to tackle fly-tipping for the top 10 wards with the highest number of incidents. This has been based on statistics from July with single member wards getting a truck every other month and 2 member wards receiving a truck every month. Officers will be notifying councillors of their allocation for the next 3 months between October and the end of December. Members can share the information with residents in advance.
- Reconfiguring of waste trucks is being looked at so that they can take green waste including leaves. At the present time street leaves are not recycled through this way as there is an issue with potential contamination however small amounts in the green waste recycling bin is acceptable. Leaves in parks

and other open spaces are fully recycled. HRCs do not recycle leaves from the public highway.

- Volunteers across the city were praised for the work they do in respect of litter picking and keeping local areas clean. The safety of volunteers is paramount and therefore they are not permitted to undertake these tasks on the public highways due to current WISH24 guidance followed by the authority. It was acknowledged that council officers undertake similar roles however this was on the basis that adequate risk assessments have been carried out for employees on traffic speed and volume to ensure safety.
- Local litter picking groups can be provided with bags from the Council's waste service.
- Members worked cross-party on the declaration of a climate emergency to ask government for a significant amount of funding to reach the ambitions and targets set. However, this is now a real challenge to deliver in the current economic climate and the Council is working with the West Midlands Metro Mayor on this agenda.
- It is anticipated that the government will continue with providing funding for investment zones of which in the city there is East Birmingham (and North Solihull) area which will generate employment opportunities for example in retrofitting properties. Procuring local people to undertake the retrofitting would make a positive impact on the community creating lots of jobs.
- Further details will be provided on the Decent Homes Standard Plus for refurbishment of kitchens and bathrooms and it was noted that this hasn't been completely rolled out to the whole of the city. There is a government target by 2025 for Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Grade C to be in place for all new tenancies. This will challenge landlords to improve efficiency so that tenants benefit by paying reduced energy bills.
- The Council has set itself an ambitious target to reach net zero carbon by 2030. There is a pilot of 300 properties in relation to retrofitting. Once the pilot is completed there will be a better idea on how long it will take to achieve. A good team of officers has been put in place to achieve the net zero target however there is a need for Members to work together cross party to achieve the ambition collectively.
- There are plans for a city centre park as part of the Smithfield development. Proposals for making the park larger than in the original plan is being looked at due to the public appetite however there are several considerations to take into account to see if this is feasible.
- The Cabinet Member confirmed that he is working with elected Members to encourage more people to use certain parks and green spaces that are currently under-used in wards with high levels of social deprivation. In addition, the Future Parks Accelerator Scheme has been set up to tackle environmental justice. A detailed breakdown of requirements/needs is being completed with local members for those parks that may require extra resources to see where new funding can be sourced from as this is a key barrier to improvement. Relevant Cabinet Members are working together with local members to see if there are benefits through economies of scale in

purchasing resources across several parks and whether certain pots of funding can be ringfenced to enable this to happen.

- The city's ambition is for tree canopy of 25% in every ward and to plant 20,000 trees across the city to mitigate against extreme weather, however identifying budgets to fund this is a key issue.
- In relation to improving air quality outside schools there is currently a target to provide 1 air quality monitoring unit at a school in each ward of the city.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member and officers.

RESOLVED: -

1. The report was noted.
2. A private member briefing on the Waste Disposal Procurement contract to be arranged to include how it fits into the Council's commitment on the Route to Zero plan and Net Zero strategy and other relevant legislative changes that the Council will need to put in place in-line with Environment Act.
3. Darren Share to share WISH24 safe cleansing on the highway guidance.
4. Ellie Hignett to provide further details on Decent Homes Standard Plus.

6. WORK PROGRAMME

(See Item No. 6)

Amelia Murray, Overview & Scrutiny Manager talked through the upcoming items for the November meeting and amendments to the work programme. In discussion with Members, it was agreed that: -

- An update on Footway Crossings Policy to be confirmed for the January meeting.
- Displacement of vehicles due to the CAZ and potentially from Parks as a result of charges coming into effect can be scheduled either for the February or April meetings.
- The City of Nature briefing will be rescheduled for the February meeting if possible.
- Further to recruitment of staff to progress the development of a new Road Safety Strategy in the new year this will be scheduled for an appropriate future meeting.
- Enquiries will be made for a member visit to University rail station possibly a joint visit with members of the Transport Delivery Committee if this is a viable option at the most beneficial/appropriate time.
- In relation to cost of living crisis these are being picked up by the Co-ordinating O&S Committee in relation to revenue issues. Members may wish to consider at this stage how people changing their behaviour in relation to travel, and recycling will impact their living costs and what more the Council could do to support residents to enable and support these changes that can generate additional benefits.

RESOLVED: -

1. The report was noted.

2. Scrutiny Officers to liaise with Tom Painter, WMRE in relation to organising a joint visit to University Station with members of the West Midlands Combined Authority Transport Delivery Committee.

7. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Noted.

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

None.

9. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

None.

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 15:55 hours.