

## BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

# SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORT O&S COMMITTEE

1400 hours on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2020, Online Meeting – Actions

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**Present:**

Councillor Liz Clements (Chair)

Councillors Muhammad Afzal, Olly Armstrong, Zaker Choudhry, Eddie Freeman, and Timothy Huxtable

**Also Present:**

Cllr Marje Bridle

Cllr Majid Mahmood

Kevin Hicks, Assistant Director, Highways & Infrastructure

Stacey Ryans, Parking Services Manager

Joe Green, Travel Demand Manager

Mel Jones, Head of Transport Planning & Network Strategy

Ioanna Moscholidou, Transport Planning & Investment

John Myatt, Transport & Planning Investment Manager

Jennifer Coombs, Principal Travel Demand Officer

Daniel Garcia, Regional Contracts Manager, NSL

Ceri Saunders, Acting Group Overview & Scrutiny Manager

Baseema Begum, Scrutiny Officer

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**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**

Councillor Julie Johnson.

Cllr Afzal gave his apologies for having to leave the meeting early due to a medical appointment.

### **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

Standing declarations noted.

Cllrs Huxtable & Clements declared that two of the schools to be discussed as part of the school streets pilot sit within their respective wards.

### **4. SUSTAINABILITY & TRANSPORT O&S COMMITTEE ACTION NOTES**

The action notes of the meeting held on the 21<sup>st</sup> October were agreed.

### **5. WORK PROGRAMME**

(See Item No.9)

To allow time for adequate discussion the Chair brought forward this item and outlined to Members potential agenda items for the following meetings:

- November – An update on the Emergency Active Travel fund and schemes implemented in response to the Covid pandemic and plans for the second funding tranche.

The second item for discussion will be an update on transport schemes related to the Commonwealth Games (CWG) including SPRINT and rail.

- December – Cllr Waseem Zaffar, Cabinet Member for Transport & Environment to be invited to give an update on his portfolio priorities as this has been delayed and would normally have taken place in September.

This will also be an ideal opportunity to look at the ongoing development on the implementation of the Clean Air Zone (CAZ).

The action plan in relation to the Climate Emergency is due to be presented to Full Council in December and it would be useful for a discussion to take place on this with the Cabinet Member in attendance.

- January – the focus for this meeting will be on clean air. As part of this Network Rail and train operators will be invited to update the committee on the action plan to tackle poor air quality at New Street station. This will also be an ideal opportunity to receive some feedback on the Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) consultation that was presented to Members at September's meeting. The final item for discussion will be the Clean Air Strategy that is currently being drafted and in particular dealing with the issue of clean air outside of the city centre.

Cllr Huxtable raised the statutory responsibility that the Council has in relation to Flood Management and noted that the annual update is considered by the

Committee. The Chair agreed that it would be listed for discussion at the March meeting.

Cllr Afzal shared his concerns on the infrastructure works taking place in the Perry Barr area and if the work was on schedule and to budget. He noted the impact of the road works on residents and businesses with an increase in congestion being experienced.

**RESOLVED:** -

1. The Annual Flood Risk Management Report to be scheduled for the March meeting.
2. Appropriate officers to be invited to update the Committee on transport schemes relating to the CWG from Transport for West Midlands & City Council.
3. Further information to be sought from Environmental Health and circulated to all Members in relation to noise pollution created by car exhausts in residential areas.

## **6. PARKING ENFORCEMENT**

(See Item No.5)

The Chair, Cllr Clements welcomed all attendees and outlined the background discussion to this item noting that it was last debated at the Committee's February meeting as part of a wider item on verge parking.

Kevin Hicks, Assistant Director, Highways & Infrastructure gave an overview of civil enforcement parking and noted the broader scope of the Traffic Management Act (TMA) in relation to the expeditious movement of traffic and the devolved powers to local authorities that include the ability to issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs). The local authority is also responsible for traffic management as part of the TMA.

In addition, the service also deals with related issues that can be categorised as an expanded form of statutory duty to pick up nuisance parking. This is commissioned to NSL.

Stacey Ryans, Parking Services Manager then explained the role of the City Council in relation to the management of the contract with NSL and made the following points: -

- A Parking Enforcement Team was set up to monitor and ensure that NSL deliver the contract to specification. Each member of the team cover and observe an area of the city to ensure FPNs and restrictions are delivered appropriately by CEOs.
- This delivery plan is closely monitored so that any issues related to signage and road markings on the highway are reported to ensure that they are kept in good condition. Monitoring also allows for changes to be made according to need and CEOs can be deployed as required.
- The team regularly liaises with the Police, local engineers and Business Improvement Districts to ensure compliance and works with the Council's

Travel Demand team and schools to support their work with parking enforcement and modal shift.

- Over 8,000 reports are handled per month. In addition to routine patrols CEOs are also trained to look at blue badge enforcement where the user has been found to not meet the criteria set out. 128 cases of misuse or invalid use of the badge have been found resulting in £15,000 in fines.

Dan Garcia, NSL talked through the presentation and explained that NSL had worked with a number of other local authorities on road safety. He added that: -

- NSL first secured a contract with Birmingham City Council in 2008 and the current contract has been extended to 2022.
- 100 people are employed as part of the contract including CEOs who work between 7am and 11pm and work with the Police.
- CEOs role includes enforcement of on and off-street parking, arterial routes, bus lanes and outside schools and red routes. Officers also deal with abandoned vehicles and a contract is also in place with the Driving and Vehicle Licensing Agency to deal with untaxed vehicles.
- The role of the CEO also includes improving neighbourhood and visual presence, customer service, helping people to use pay by phone to park and helping people to understand parking restrictions.
- In 2019-20 141,500 FPNs were issued. 60%+ of FPNs are issued at the higher level.

During discussion with Members the following key points were made: -

- The safety of CEOs is a priority especially as they have been the subject to verbal and physical abuse in the past. Members noted that they have continued to work during the pandemic in a role that benefits communities.
- Obstruction of the highway in relation to parking spaces is a problem that occurs across the city including residents using wheelie bins to save a car parking space causing concerns among other residents and has been raised with councillors. The highways contractor, Kier are responsible for removal of anything causing a blockage on the highway where a complaint is made. The Waste Service has been involved in tackling the misuse of wheelie bins and does provide residents with a leaflet about appropriate usage of bins.
- Misuse of disabled parking is an issue noted by CEOs especially in relation to where the Blue badge is still being used by relatives after the person that it belongs to has passed away. It is however difficult to keep track of and in terms of disabled parking outside of residential housing it was noted that this can only be considered currently when roads are resurfaced or reviewed as to whether disabled parking is needed or relevant. Disabled marked bays outside of residential properties are not enforceable by the Police as are only advisory road markings.
- There is a backlog in dealing with the removal of untaxed vehicles that have been reported to the DVLA. This is due in some degree to the impact of the

lockdown and the differing restrictions in place in Wales however these vehicles will be dealt with once the service becomes available.

- The Government consultation on Pavement Parking is currently open and will close on 22<sup>nd</sup> November. The City Council will be providing a response and Cllr Zaffar has agreed to share it with this committee.
- The Council needs a clear policy on pavement parking as currently one does not exist. Examples of good practice such as the Shard End scheme has been successful because residents were supportive of and took ownership of it making it sustainable in the long run with residents policing it themselves.
- In relation to signage for grass verges it was clarified that no actual information has been given by Department for Transport (DfT) on how regular or frequent this should be. The Council's has used its own assessment to be reasonable and this can be refined as needed.
- In terms of implementing a city-wide ban on parking on verges there are ramifications for parts of the city where there are severe parking issues, and this does have an impact on the parking policy that is currently being revised.
- A supplementary planning document (SPD) for parking includes revised parking standards and reflects issues such as verge parking and replaces some elements of the existing parking policy.

**RESOLVED:** -

1. Kevin Hicks to provide further information on a bye-law in relation to causing an obstruction on the highway.
2. Darren Share, Assistant Director, Street Scene and Parks to be contacted in respect to sharing information produced by the service for residents on appropriate use of wheelie bins.
3. Kevin Hicks to obtain a legal response with regards to criminal damage caused to verges and the burden of proof required and whether this has changed from the previous legal opinion shared with Members.
4. Kevin Hicks to share any evidence available on how the blanket ban on verge parking in London has worked in practice.
5. Any feedback if available on Norton-on-Derwent Town Council that plan to apply to Government to enact a bye-law on verge parking to be shared with Members by Kevin Hicks.
6. The response by the City Council to the consultation on pavement parking to include comments made by members at the various discussions that have taken place (such as committee mtgs). The final response to Government to be shared with this Committee.
7. Members to be provided with a note regarding building materials and skips on the highway.
8. Cllr Freeman to send details to Kevin Hicks in relation to untaxed cars left on the highway pertaining to his ward.

## **7. UPDATE ON EMERGENCY BIRMINGHAM TRANSPORT PLAN SCHEMES**

The Chair explained that this item will be discussed in more detail at the November meeting however it was on the agenda today for a brief update.

Mel Jones, Head of Transport Planning & Network Strategy explained that almost all the first tranche has been completed. The only exception to this is the Lozells Low Traffic Neighbourhood scheme that is awaiting a start date.

The first tranche is now at the review phase. Schemes covered by an experimental traffic regulation order will be subject to a statutory 6-month consultation and all feedback received from stakeholders and the public will be used as part of the post implementation review. This will inform the impact of the schemes and future decisions on changes required and whether schemes are made permanent as part of tranche 2.

In relation to any concerns expressed about the safety of the schemes as they were implemented in a quicker timescale than usual, it was confirmed that whilst these schemes are innovative and experimental in nature all have been subject to the necessary safety checks and balances that the City Council carries out as part of any infrastructure scheme.

A decision from DfT on tranche 2 funding is expected in early November.

## **8. SCHOOL STREETS PILOT PROJECT UPDATE**

(See Item No.7)

Joe Green, Travel Demand Manager took Members through the presentation circulated with the agenda and in discussion and response to members questions the following points were made: -

- All schemes are promoted using existing school contacts where possible and through the mode shift programme for those schools that are engaged in this. Local members are also informed. Schools that have signed up to the pilot are asked to lead on this as they are responsible for the delivery and contribute more in terms of monitoring how it is working. Schools can liaise with the Council (and Police) on issues such as enforcement for example where drivers are blocking drives and double parking.
- Displacement of parking to other residential roads is an issue that has been identified from feedback received. This will be addressed going forward in those circumstances where parents/carers are continuing to drive and how best to manage this with the available options such as identifying suitable places to park. The emphasis however is to continue to encourage people to travel to school in different ways and options are being looked at, where permissible such as extending the zone that would encourage people to walk or cycle as it is quicker.
- It was confirmed that additional road safety measures were being looked at for some schools that would encourage more people to walk and cycle safely however these measures would need to be cost effective due to limited

resources. Officers are consulting with residents and local members where applicable. No major roads or bus routes would be affected as part of any changes.

**RESOLVED:** -

1. The report was noted.

**9. E-SCOOTERS UPDATE**

(See Item No. 8)

Ioanna Moscholidou, Transport Planning & Investment Officer talked the Committee through the presentation circulated and during discussion with Members the following points were made: -

- All riders must have a provisional license and the minimum age for riding a scooter is 16 years.
- E-scooters are safe and sturdy to ride and can be ridden in cycle lanes safely for those commuting in traffic.
- 2 serious incidents have been reported to date to Voi via their app. Neither of the incidents recorded any injury to the user and no incidents have been reported that have resulted in any injury to other pedestrians.
- E-scooters will not be able to be ridden on canal towpaths and automatically lock off at the canal so cannot be used. They can however still be pushed.
- In terms of the effect on disabled road users and other vulnerable groups it was confirmed that ongoing engagement is taking place with stakeholders including the RNIB on a bi-weekly basis and feedback is being taken on board with any concerns being addressed. Feedback being received during the trial period is very helpful.

**RESOLVED:** -

1. The report was noted.

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

None.

**11. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

Cllr Huxtable raised flood risk management and highlighted the good work that Solihull Council has done in securing funding for flood defence work on the River Cole. As this river runs through South Birmingham a briefing note on the impact of the forthcoming work on the area was requested. Cllr Huxtable also asked why Solihull were good at securing funding for flood defence work but was not aware that Birmingham were doing the same.

**RESOLVED: -**

1. Kevin Hicks to provide a briefing note with further details.

**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.

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The meeting ended at 16:03 hours.