

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORT O&S COMMITTEE

**1400 hours on 16th February, Council House Extension, Margaret Street –
Actions**

Present:

Councillor Liz Clements (Chair)

Councillors Eddie Freeman, Julie Johnson-White and Timothy Huxtable

Also Present:

Ceri Saunders, Acting Group 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 Zaker Choudhry and Hendrina Quinnen.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Standing declarations noted. Cllr Huxtable declared that he sits on the West Midlands Bus Alliance as the West Midlands Mayor's nominee.

4. SUSTAINABILITY & TRANSPORT O&S COMMITTEE ACTION NOTES

The action notes of the meeting held on 20th October were agreed.

Phil Edwards clarified that the metro extension to Edgbaston Village is due to open in May 2022.

5. CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT & ENVIRONMENT- ANNUAL REPORT

(See Item No.5)

The Chair introduced the item and welcomed Councillor Waseem Zaffar, Cabinet Member for Transport & Environment; Phil Edwards, Assistant Director, Transport & Connectivity and Kevin Hicks, Assistant Director, Highways & Infrastructure who had joined the meeting virtually.

Councillor Waseem Zaffar outlined the key points from the presentation and during the discussion, and in response to Members' questions, the following were among the main points raised: -

- Supporting public transport recovery and helping people return to work is one of the keys to economic recovery. This is a challenge and work is being done with the West Midlands Bus Alliance and National Express West Midlands in respect of increasing public confidence in the bus network for work journeys however additional support from government is needed to ensure that vital services can continue and this includes keeping buses efficient and affordable.
- A vital part of increasing passenger confidence is being done as part of the Commonwealth Games. Significant work has been done to promote it as a 'public transport games' encouraging people to use public transport to access venues and events.
- Cross city bus development and bus priority lanes are key to encouraging more people to access and use buses.
- Improving air quality through the city and regions transport fleet is key and government proposals for Zero Emissions Buses for Regional Areas (ZEBRA) funding would be welcomed so that the hydrogen economy in the area can be grown by working with partners to do more. There is an appetite for the city to become the test pilot for hydrogen buses and infrastructure ahead of the Commonwealth Games and hydrogen buses could be used to help deliver the Bus Rapid Transit (SPRINT) routes.
- The first set of data from monitoring the air quality since the introduction of the Clean Air Zone (CAZ) is due to be published next week. There has been some behaviour change in terms of compliance with 9/10 cars going through the zone compliant. World Health Organisation (WHO) targets are being monitored as well as keeping an eye on what the government are doing. The Council has produced a Clean Air Strategy with its key aim being to improve air quality and a target to reach safe levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) in the air for the whole of the city.
- Raising awareness of the importance of good air quality with all citizens as their personal input is crucial. The message has been to focus on what more individuals can do personally in changing their behaviour alongside local authorities and others to make an impact on NO₂ levels.
- Tackling idling outside schools is being discussed with colleagues from Environmental Health in respect of enforcement to ensure that the correct traffic regulation orders are in place. Best practice from other local authorities is also being looked at to understand how best to act in terms of penalties. The Council's civil enforcement contract is due to be renewed next year and so this

issue will be picked up as part of the tender process and form part of the new contract.

- Improving driver behaviour and road safety are a key concern and priority. Both physical and education/behavioural interventions need to be put in place however resourcing this is crucial with schools unable to fund this. CAZ revenue funding is being used to prioritise a safe environment and promote air quality through the installation of air quality monitoring stations in a school in each of the city's 69 wards over the coming months.
- An email will be sent to all councillors in relation to Modeshift stars to encourage them to lobby schools in their wards. Information will be included on which schools have signed up and those that haven't so that members can contact the schools directly.
- The work on the Midland Metro is vital as part of the public travel offer and the Cabinet Member is given weekly updates on the status of various works. Currently the Westside extension is due to open in May 2022. Section 1 (Bull Street) is due to be completed before the Commonwealth Games. The work on Section 5 (Digbeth High St) will be stood down until after the Commonwealth Games but the area will be tidied up for visitors. The overall deadline for completion of the Eastside extension is anticipated as 2024 however there is a key linkage with HS2 subject to negotiations on when works can take place.
- An integrated rail plan is being worked on with stakeholders and is a big opportunity to do more especially in respect of connectivity across the midlands region.
- The Perry Barr neighbourhood is the most connected in the region and this covers all modes of transport including cycling, walking, buses and rail.
- A funding bid for City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements (CRSTS) is currently being assessed by government. It is anticipated that further details may be shared at the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Board meeting on 18th March and to the Cabinet meeting on 22nd March as part of the report on the Transportation & Highways Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2027/28.
- The additional capital funding from CRSTS is welcomed as it provides certainty for planning and a programme of schemes for the next 5 years. This funding will not cover all the ambitions and objectives that the city has as part of the Birmingham Transport Plan, Birmingham Development Plan, Clean Air Strategy and other key policies. The Council is therefore not relying on government resources and is looking at several other funding options to supplement these monies.
- E-scooters have geo-fencing technology that means that the speed limit drops to 5mph when used in pedestrian areas such as the city centre to help keep people safe. Unfortunately, privately owned e-scooters do not have this speed limiter technology.
- The Council continues to work with partners and TfWM in relation to park and ride and a number of sites are being explored however rail commuting in particular has taken the biggest hit in terms of lower usage following the recovery from covid.

- Work is continuing on Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) with key larger schemes moving forward in Newtown, Cheapside and the city centre. There is potential displacement to be considered with the latter with the introduction of the CAZ however the Council is working with the WMCA on this as well as identifying monies for improvements from ward improvement budgets, section 106 and ward funding.
- Approximately £130m in capital investment over 3 years (since last year) on top of the revenue payment to the current interim contractor has been put into road resurfacing. It is acknowledged that the issue is important, and members are receiving a lot of complaints. It should be noted that a lot of work is happening across the city and the additional impact that has on the road network (such as the additional work for the Commonwealth Games) so there is a balancing act needed.
- The Department for Transport has approved a business case for procurement for the highways PFI contract and the Council has been given the go ahead to proceed with putting the contract out for procurement and as such it has been added to the procurement contractors' portal this week.
- Interagency work is taking place with the Environment Agency and Severn Trent in relation to managing flooding and the River Cole. A further update will be provided as part of the Flood Risk Management Annual Report to be presented to this committee next month.

RESOLVED: -

1. The report was noted.

6. WORK PROGRAMME

(See Item No. 6)

The Chair confirmed details and agenda items for the next meeting and during discussion two further items were agreed to be added to the agenda as follows: -

1. Clean Air Zone baseline data – discussion on findings.
2. Transportation & Highways Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2027/28

In respect of the report to Cabinet on 22nd March on the Transportation & Highways Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2027/28 a briefing will be organised for the Chair in advance of the committee's next meeting. A copy of the report to Cabinet will be circulated when it is available.

RESOLVED: -

1. The report was noted.
2. Additional items to be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

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

None.

8. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

None.

9. 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 15:43 hours.