

**BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL**

**SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORT O&S COMMITTEE**

**1400 hours on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2020, Online Meeting – Actions**

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**Present:**

Councillor Liz Clements (Chair)

Councillors Olly Armstrong, Zaker Choudhry, Eddie Freeman, Timothy Huxtable and Julie Johnson

**Also Present:**

Cllr Waseem Zaffar, Cabinet Member for Transport & Environment

Amit Bratch, Principal Energy & Sustainability Officer

Eleanor Crook, Senior Planning Officer

Domenic De Bechi, PFI Contract Manager

Maria Dunn, Head of Development Policy

Joe Green, Travel Demand Manager, Transport & Connectivity

Kevin Hicks, Assistant Director, Highways & Infrastructure

Mel Jones, Head of Transport Planning and Network Strategy

Ravinder Sahota, Local Highways Services 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**

Cllr Muhammad Afzal.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

Standing declarations noted.

The Chair announced that Cllr Julie Johnson would be stepping down as joint vice-chair and thanked her for her contribution to date. Cllr Armstrong will continue as vice-chair.

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

The action notes of the meeting held on the 27<sup>th</sup> May were agreed.

#### **5. CLIMATE CHANGE EMERGENCY UPDATE**

(See document No.1)

The Chair welcomed Cllr Zaffar and officers to the meeting. The following key points were highlighted from the report circulated: -

- 5 meetings of the R20 taskforce have been held of which the last two have been conducted online. This includes 'sandpit' meetings that are taking place in July with community engagement. Sandpit meetings have been held for housing, planning and transport areas with reports on policy development issues to inform the recommendations as part of the report to City Council.
- Community engagement on climate change has taken place with a variety of stakeholders. A citizen survey was carried out and 1395 responses were received. A focus group was also held.
- A technical advisory group has been set up with representatives from universities who will be acting as a critical friend to the taskforce and Council on moving forward with the climate change agenda.
- A formal meeting of the R20 taskforce is planned for the end of August to ensure that a progress report is completed for presentation to City Council in September. The report will have a set of recommendations that need to be implemented. More detailed work will need to be done to deliver the actions.
- A technical report by Anthesis is being finalised. A draft was shared at the last R20 taskforce meeting.

In discussion and response to comments and questions from Members the following points were made: -

- In relation to concerns about the delays and slippage of deadlines as set out in the motion to Council in June 2019 it was confirmed that due to the pandemic the presentation of the report was moved to September. The report will include recommendations that require more detailed work to be done through the development of an action plan.
- A draft of the Anthesis report has been shared with R20 taskforce members and the findings include the scale of the challenge that the city faces. Key messages from the report include the lack of baseline data relating to carbon emissions to begin with and identified pathways to reducing emissions. The future governance process has also been highlighted as feedback has

suggested that the R20 taskforce is Council centric. The report also recognises what has and hasn't worked and identifies high level interventions with recommended next steps for the Council to take in respect to each area. The findings and recommendations will be discussed with the taskforce members in workshops facilitated by Anthesis.

- The R20 taskforce is looking at future governance and one of the options suggested includes a sub-committee of the city board to take work forward on housing. The taskforce is also considering a hybrid of other options.
- Major challenges in how the Council has reacted following the declaration of a climate emergency. Some of this has been linked to work around the R20 taskforce and the massive cultural shift needed across Council service areas. There have been some good aspects of work such as the measures included in the Draft Transport Plan however a conversation is needed with new Chief Executive to ensure that all areas of the Council are playing their part going forward. The Council also needs to commit to being one of the leaders in the city on this agenda.
- Early commitments and progress made in relation to Passivhaus housing are shown in the table in Part 7 of the report. A site has been identified for a Passivhaus trial in the city. Visits have been made to other local authority areas to identify best practice and costs relating to building standards and Passivhaus accreditation.
- The R20 taskforce has a number of different projects in relation to achieving net zero carbon and has been engaging with different specialists and organisations on each of the areas. The sandpits work provided a specific opportunity for a broader level of engagement wider than Birmingham prior to the lockdown.
- Waste disposal is key to achieving heat decarbonisation (for which there is government support) however the Council needs to take the opportunity to do some cross-cutting work to achieve the benefits and eliminate its own silo working.
- The Council's waste disposal contract has been discussed at the R20 taskforce and Cllr O'Shea as relevant cabinet member has been involved. There has been much dialogue and discussion with all councillors as it is one of the key areas in tackling carbon emissions. This Committee has been involved in receiving regular updates on the procurement process for a new contract.
- Resourcing and financing changes needed to the city's housing stock is a key issue and should be followed up by the Housing & Neighbourhoods O&S Committee.

**RESOLVED: -**

1. The finalised report by Anthesis will be shared with Committee following approval at the R20 taskforce meeting in August.

2. Briefing note to Committee on the benefits of the Chancellor's statement in relation to heat efficiency and how these can be maximised for Birmingham residents.
3. Briefing note on housing development and retro fitting with examples of best practice to be circulated to the Committee including examples of good work in the city in relation to Passivhaus and eco housing.

## **6. EMERGENCY BIRMINGHAM TRANSPORT PLAN (EBTP) UPDATE**

Cllr Zaffar updated members on progress made on some of the initial schemes and plans as set out in the EBTP that was launched on 14 May 2020 and made the following points: -

- The full Birmingham Transport Plan is due to be published later in the year.
- The initial sum of £250m as Tranche 1 of the Emergency Active Travel Fund (EATF) from government has been secured and the Council has been given 8 weeks to deliver identified schemes (by end of August). The level of design for this work will be less than normal and temporary traffic management will allow for this. Work is expected on site by the end of July.
- The city was also part of a successful West Midlands Bid that secured an additional £400k to what was requested. The Birmingham package in total for Tranche 1 is £1.6m with an additional £1m match funding from the Council through its BCR funding.
- Cabinet approved the EATF on 17 June. The Tranche 1 package has 14 temporary projects including pop up cycle lanes and low traffic neighbourhoods pilot schemes in Kings Heath and Lozells. Community engagement on this has taken place online so that locations can be finalised. Tranche 2 is also being developed and includes more permanent schemes. The Council is awaiting further guidance on how this will work.
- A sum of £1.1m has been secured as part of the High Street Recovery Fund for social distancing measures (including support to BIDs and urban centres). This includes schemes such as widening of pavements, reallocation of road space, suspending on-road parking and signage. Currently engaging with stakeholders and local businesses on measures.
- A review of all existing schemes and programmes will be undertaken and final schemes will be named. Every scheme in the capital programme is being looked at and key questions asked such as does the project fit in with the EBTP and objectives.
- Schemes to support the opening of high streets safely is being covered through revenue funding in advance of the funding being received. Temporary changes have been made to the public realm and those schemes identified in the Urban Cities framework or have active BIDs have been prioritised initially.

- Very disappointed that the 20mph city-wide default request to government was rejected. Will continue to roll out but it will take time to complete as it can't be done in quickly due to time and cost.

**RESOLVED:** -

1. Cllr Zaffar agreed to provide all members with information that can be shared with communities in relation to changes to the public realm as high streets are safely opened.
2. Mel Jones undertook to share further details on all existing schemes when the review of all schemes is completed including a short update on each (e.g. next steps and how it fits in with the capital programme).

**7. HIGHWAYS MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE PFI CONTRACT UPDATE**

(See document No. 2)

Kevin Hicks summarised the main points in the report and made the following points: -

- The level of service being provided under the new contractor, Kier is at about the same level as Amey. Kier were bought in to stabilise services during the interim period.
- Long term procurement going forward is the main point of work. Due to Covid-19 delays there will be a need to look at the end date of the contract. There is the potential to extend beyond June 2021 however this does need to be discussed with all the Council's partners in the contract.
- In relation to the procurement process meetings are being held with market providers however there is an air of caution.

Kevin Hicks confirmed that he will be following up the query raised at the last meeting in relation to highways procurement and future plans for community wealth development.

**RESOLVED:** -

1. The report was noted.
2. Members noted the smooth handover and the good work of the highway's stewards.

**8. LOCAL ENGINEERING SERVICE RE-DESIGN**

(See document No. 3)

Cllr Zaffar outlined the process of the re-design and highlighted that local members had been consulted with and feedback was used to re-design the service.

As part of the re-design the service was moved to sit under the Highways area. There are 3 teams based in local area offices. The service is the frontline local link on highways related matters dealing with day to day issues and this includes school

crossing patrols although the cabinet responsibility sits with Cllr Jayne Francis. The opportunity with the re-design of the service is that local priorities have been reset.

In response to queries from Members on the vacancies and gaps in the structure Kevin Hicks confirmed that: -

- Recruitment is ongoing however there are a shortage of graduates and people coming into the engineering profession. There is an added pressure of this coupled with lower pay levels in the public sector making it difficult to recruit and fill posts and why there has been a need to supplement with agency staff to provide a fully functional service however this is not a long-term solution. There has also been an additional issue of losing staff internally to other Council service areas.
- Recruitment is taking place currently and posts have been advertised both internally and externally. Candidates have been shortlisted in the last 2 weeks. Interviews are due shortly with socially distanced guidelines in place.
- There is an apprenticeship scheme in place with 2 people on this scheme within Highways. As previously highlighted retention of staff is an issue.

**RESOLVED:** -

1. The report was noted.
2. Members noted that the new roles and additional contact information provided was very helpful.

**9. SUSTAINABILITY & TRANSPORT O&S COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

(See document No. 4)

The Chair outlined items for discussion as listed on the future work programme and added that the Committee would keep an eye on the waste disposal procurement contract with the climate change aspect also of note. Development of PI's as per the Council Plan was also something of interest.

The opportunity to conduct hybrid meetings was mentioned however the Chair was clear that although this was desirable the advice & guidance on health and safety must be adhered to. Cllr Clements agreed to keep members updated on future developments.

**RESOLVED:** -

1. The work programme was noted.
2. E-scooters was raised with concerns about safety of e-batteries and possible issues with theft. The Chair requested a note for Committee.

**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.

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The meeting ended at 15:57 hours.