

Environment Scrutiny Commission

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Environment Scrutiny Commission held on Wednesday 4 November 2020 at 6.30 pm at Zoom

PRESENT: Councillor Jason Ochere (Chair)
Councillor Graham Neale
Councillor Tom Flynn
Councillor Margy Newens
Councillor Damian O'Brien
Councillor Leanne Werner
Councillor Renata Hamvas

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillor Johnson Situ, Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency, Planning & Transport
Councillor Catherine Rose Cabinet Member for Leisure, Environment & Roads
Councillor Radha Burgess Deputy Cabinet Member for Low Traffic Southwark

OFFICER SUPPORT: Simon Bevan, Director of Planning
Tom Buttrick, Team Leader - Planning Policy
Dale Foden, Head of Highways
Julie Timbrell, Scrutiny Project Manager

1. APOLOGIES

There were none.

2. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT

There were none.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATION

There were none.

4. LOW TRAFFIC NEIGHBOURHOODS: OFFICER AND PARTNER UPDATE

Dale Foden, Head of Highways, presented the report provided on planned Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN) schemes.

Lucy Saunders, Director, Healthy Streets Ltd, Guy's and St Thomas Trust Charity (GSTTC), who are providing funding for Southwark's Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTN) schemes, presented on GSTTC funding objectives for the schemes.

The chair then invited questions and the following points were made:

- Several councillors have received informational briefings on local schemes from officers, and representations from local constituents on a range of issues.
- The selection criterion for schemes is:
 - High child obesity
 - Poor air quality, particularly around schools
 - High levels of social housing and deprivation
 - Higher proportions of Black ethnicity
 - Schools
 - Local parks
- There will be robust evaluation of the GSTTC schemes with 20% of the budget assigned to this, which is much higher than usual. This is in order to inform future learning in Southwark and London wide. The evaluation will look at changes in behaviour, such as increased walking and cycling, on the streets with schemes as well as adjacent streets. The number of car journeys will also be monitored.
- The evaluations will not include measuring air quality as there is not a robust methodology at local level to monitor this.
- Members raised concerns that information on the number of parking permits and parking spaces on street and in estates is outstanding from the previous administrative year. Officers explained that providing this poses some data challenges, however if an area has a CPZ is relatively easy to get that information.
- Potential displacement of traffic onto main roads by the schemes will be monitored, with control areas. What usually happens with LTNs is there are a reduction in short journeys, which is usually perceptible quite quickly. The schemes will be reviewed at 6 months. GSTCC have worked with the Head of Highways to identify likely displacement and mitigate this in advance. Work with Route Planner is part of this.
- This is a very unusual time with Covid 19 and the recommendations to not use public transport.
- Once the evidence is back Southwark can look at impact on public health, and decide if the council want to take forward, modify, or not make permanent and replicate. GSTTC will be providing data tools to evaluate the impact on obesity, life expectancy and other measures.

- Members advocated for bike hangers to be installed to reduce and replace car parking spaces and asked about the budget for this and if other measures would be employed to increase cycling, such as training. GSTCC said their work is not aimed at directly increasing cycling, however officers said there was complementary work on promoting cycling including doubling the provision of cycling hangers.
- Social justice and the impact on the BME community was brought up as a concern, particularly the risk of displacement around schools and on main roads. Oliver Goldsmiths School was provided as an example and the importance of providing safe, lower pollution walks along main roads to get to schools. GSCTTC and officers agreed this was a priority.

RESOLVED

Officers were requested to provide information on CPZs, parking permits and parking spaces, both on estates and street kerbside, by Ward.

5. LOW TRAFFIC NEIGHBOURHOODS: ACCESS TO EMERGENCY VEHICLES

The Southwark Fire Service Borough Commander was unable to contribute because of technical difficulties and provided apologies, however Steven Vydelingum, Southwark Fire Service road lead, did attend.

Steven Vydelingum said that there had been information provided by council officers on schemes, but interaction had been minimal. The Fire Service is keen to increase engagement as there are concerns with the increase in LTN schemes and they want to be involved in the consultation process early in order to iron out problems at the start.

The Fire Service assured members that they had been sighted on all schemes, however sometimes officer contacts at Tooley Street have not been up to date. Clarification on who to liaise with is being pursued by the Fire Service in order to improve communication with the council.

Currently Southwark Fire Service is collating information on schemes and sending these to fire stations, which may not overlay exactly with each borough, so they can do an assessment. The Fire Service priority is establishing attendance times; with a target of the first appliance taking 6 minutes to arrive, and the second 8 minutes. Their approach has been to visit and look at the route, planters, barriers, access and egress and overall impact of LTNs.

Members said there had been reports of problems getting past barriers and asked about this. Steven Vydelingum said that on occasions static barriers had been problematic- however after consultation with the Fire Service these bollards were now moveable. When asked if there was a preference for moveable bollards over planters Steven Vydelingum explained this does depend, and he appreciated costs

and other issues.

The Fire Service was asked what best practice would look like and Steven Vydelingum said he would take that question back to address more centrally.

RESOLVED

Steven Vydelingum undertook to outline best practice by Local Authorities in consulting the Fire Service on Low Traffic Neighbourhoods

6. PLANNING UPDATE

Simon Bevan , Director of Planning and Tom Buttrick, Team Leader - Planning Policy provided a presentation . The chair then invited questions which Cllr Johnson Situ, Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency, Planning & Transport contributed.

The following points were made:

- The vast majority of buildings are already up now , and these are often much less efficient than new build, so a council priority is interventions that will reduce the carbon they admit - the carbon offsetting fund offered an opportunity to deliver on this
- Improvements are planned on biodiversity in current and new developments, which will be addressed through area action plans and additional polices to the New Southwark Plan (NSP).
- The NSP will go to an examination in public very early next year – with additional updated environmental policy to be agreed shortly there after, including a revised Energy policy.
- Old Kent Road phases that comes through will reflect different aspects of the scheme- social housing , leisure and shopping, and will be subject to environmental standards. Future phases are more able to reach higher targets, as earlier phases are nearer completion.
- Members asked if there will be an encouragement in the guidelines to intensify , but not lose embodied carbon, by, for example, building additional floors and using existing hard standing . The cabinet lead and officers said that these approaches to conserving embodied carbon are being encouraged and the council do want to see more reuse of existing buildings – for example the positive aspects of the Biscuit Factory and Canada Water . Social housing increases are usually an intensification on existing sites.
- The Urban Greening Factor, promoted by the GLA, was recommended by

members. This is used to score development and is being used in the Old Kent Road .

- Community Energy is envisaged as playing a future role in the delivery of increased renewable energy, as it has both carbon and community benefits .

7. CABINET RESPONSE TO THE AIR QUALITY STRATEGY SCRUTINY REVIEW

Cllr Catherine Rose Cabinet Member for Leisure, Environment & Roads introduced the Cabinet response and noted the recent developments on air quality - particularly Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTN), updates to the Movement Plan's equity framework and the wider development of Low Traffic Southwark. Cllr Radha Burgess, Deputy Cabinet Member, for Low Traffic Southwark, said she would be happy to come back to set out more detail on Low Traffic Southwark.

The chair invited comments and the following points were made by commission members:

- A few of the cabinet responses say 'to be considered', for example on Southwark's diesel fleet. The commission would welcome an update on this.
- The ambition of the new appointees was welcomed, alongside the vision of a Low Traffic Southwark. However in places the cabinet responses falls short of this, in particular the review called for 10,000 bike hangers but 500 are promised, there is no freight strategy, nor is there a commitment to a borough wide CPZ, yet other boroughs are doing this.
- Where cycle hangers are introduced they are used immediately, even in Dulwich, with lots of gardens. If the council is serious about a modal shift (from car journeys to walking and cycling) then this needs to be resourced.
- The south of the borough has some of the poorest public transport and consequently some of the lowest PTAL scores.
- LTNs need complementary improvement to main roads.

Cabinet members said in response to these points:

- They are mindful for the need for improved public transport south of the borough.
- There are strategic plans to increase bike hanger provision that they would like to come back to the commission on.
- They agreed that LTNs need to make connections at main roads and with other transport modes , which will be done incrementally, working with TFL.

- Low Traffic Southwark is a vision and framework for a Southwark with much improved air quality and near zero car traffic injuries.

RESOLVED

The responses provided by cabinet to the Air Quality report will be tracked, including recommendations still under consideration.

8. CABINET RESPONSE TO THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY STRATEGY SCRUTINY REVIEW

Cllr Johnson Situ, Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency, Planning & Transport thanked the commission for the report and said that he is absolutely happy to keep coming back to update on development of the strategy.

The following points were made in the subsequent discussion:

- Ecology and biodiversity is a key part of the strategy. The approach is to talk about 'people, place and planet'. All our impacts on the planet are included in this, as well as celebrating a sense of place.
- Monitoring will be key and establishing measurements that are meaningful across the borough.
- The strategy is aiming for a high level of engagement and ownership with residents and stakeholders.
- Members said it was critical to engage stakeholders in order to drive change. The cabinet member said that the council is on the cusp of announcing a plan for leaders in Southwark and for planned citizen's panels.
- The climate strategy will be engaging with schools and young people, who were front and centre at the conference.
- The conference is an annual commitment; there was widespread enthusiasm to attend.

9. WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED

The Commission work programme this year will include:

- The emerging Climate Emergency strategy and work programme,
- Inviting Chris Page, Climate Change Director , to regularly attend and provide a briefing on progress on the above,
- Track previous scrutiny report recommendations,
- Keep strong links between LTNs and air quality in the Commission's follow up review on Air Quality.