

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: 27 November 2023	Meeting Name: Environment & Community Engagement Scrutiny Commission.
Report title:		Sustainable Freight: Highways activity	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
Cabinet Member:		James McAsh	

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. The objective of the workstream is that the Council has a coherent and realistic plan to deliver Sustainable Freight that connects with existing strategies and plans, including the Air Quality Action Plan, Streets for People, Climate Emergency Action Plan and the draft Walking, Cycling and Electric Vehicle Plans.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Current projects

2. There are several completed or ongoing projects taking place within the borough which have, or seek to, significantly reduce the negative impacts of freight and servicing by reducing the number of, and distance travelled by, motor vehicles. This will lower carbon, air and noise pollution and improve personal safety.

River freight

3. In partnership with Cross River Partnership (CRP), Southwark hosted a river freight trial which took place at Bankside Pier. This involved shipping office supplies plant/machinery from Dartford to Bankside Pier before last-mile delivery was made by either cargo bike or electric van. The transfer was facilitated using the bookable loading bay installed at Bankside. A full report has yet to be released by CRP, but air and noise pollution monitoring which took place at the same time as the main project indicated no negative impacts from the freight movements.

Freight consolidation

4. A parcel locker was installed at South Dock in Rotherhithe. South Dock is home to a number of house boats which had struggled to receive parcels, resulting in missed deliveries and repeat trips. The locker allows parcels to be delivered to a secure site in one trip.

5. Southwark is working with CRP, who have extensive links with sustainable freight providers, to investigate opportunities to lease council land for consolidation centres to support cycle freight. This includes land managed by the Parking team as well as land the council owns as a private landowner.
6. In addition to the above, Southwark is working in partnership with CRP on a number of other projects as part of its Smarter, Greener Logistics programme that will run until the end of 2024. This includes a potential rail freight hub at Waterloo station, as well as smaller initiatives to support cycle freight and other zero emission deliveries, delivery consolidation and ongoing monitoring.

Cargo Bikes

7. Southwark has sponsored the expansion of the Peddle My Wheels' Our Bike programme to new areas of the borough. In addition to the two in East Dulwich, cargo bikes are now available to hire in Dulwich Village and Walworth.

Accessible Cycle Tool

8. The council has begun a consultation on the draft Cycling Plan, which includes a number of measures to support cycle freight. Most importantly, it includes using the Accessible Cycle Tool (ACT) in the design of new cycle infrastructure. The goal of the ACT is to ensure new cycle infrastructure is usable by all cycles, including cargo cycles.
9. The council has also begun consulting on the Walking Plan, setting out how we seek to make our streets usable for all pedestrians and types of journeys, including walking freight. It also highlights the importance of providing local consolidation, such as parcel lockers and click and collect to reduce the need for motor vehicle traffic and release space for walking improvements.

Bookable loading bays

10. The bookable loading bays have been installed at Bankside and help support the river freight trial that took place there in Spring 2023. Five bookable loading bays will be installed on Walworth Road in November 2023. A further bay is planned for outside East Dulwich station.

Future direction

11. To aid with the implementation of Streets for People, and the Walking, Cycling and EV Plans, a borough-wide transport policy map is being developed. This will enable the gap, demographic and network analysis needed to identify opportunities for new highway interventions and other projects. Identifying locations for potential new freight interventions,

including loading facilities, timed access restrictions, consolidation and distribution centres, parcel lockers and cargo bike facilities.

12. Internal design guidance, along with an update to the Southwark Streetscape Design Manual (SSDM) is being developed to help implement new transport policy. This will include a focus for ensuring sufficient facilities are provided for freight, including cycle freight and motor vehicles where they continue to be needed. Inconsiderate and dangerous freight behaviour is often exacerbated by a lack of suitable facilities.
13. Development of the new Freight Plan, to be completed by 2024, has begun. This will look at developing transport and planning policy to support the growth of sustainable freight and servicing in the borough. It will also identify opportunities for more focussed interventions, such as Experimental Traffic Management Orders (ETMOs), short-term trials or changes in procurement policy that the council can undertake to support the sustainable freight sector.
14. Alongside the ongoing expansion of the OurBike, research into options for a long-term cargo bike policy is being undertaken. This will explore the potential for more cost-effective and efficient approaches to delivering cargo cycle for hire across the borough. It also looking at the potential for interventions that can support the transition by local business to cargo freight, incorporating the learnings of the Bikes for Business scheme.