



Environment Scrutiny Commission

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Environment Scrutiny Commission held on Monday 27 November 2023 at 7.00 pm at 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT: Councillor Margy Newens (Chair)
Councillor Graham Neale
Councillor Cassandra Brown
Councillor Leo Pollak
Councillor Reginald Popoola
Councillor David Watson
Anna Colligan
Simon Saville

PARTNERS Dr Ian Mudway, Imperial University

Dr Polyvios Polyviou : Transport Strategy & Policy, TfL

Jonathan Baggs : Community Partnerships Lead – South, TfL

Ian Mach, Founder & CEO and Chartered Civil Engineer (CEng MICE), Charge Gully

Christopher Bibb, CEO , Electrica, Pavcross

OFFICER SUPPORT: Dale Foden, Head of Highways, Highways Division, Environment, Neighbourhoods and Growth Department

Michael Tsoukaris, Head of Design Conservation and Transport Planning Division

Tom Sharland, Head of Climate Change & Sustainability

Tim Cutts, Senior Regeneration Manager

Julie Timbrell, Project Manager , Scrutiny

1. APOLOGIES

Councillor Youcef Hassaine gave apologies.

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

There were none.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

There were none.

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

5. VEHICLE FOOTWAY CROSSOVERS

The chair introduced the item by explaining that the officer report had been requested to address the installation of dropped kerbs (Vehicle Footway Crossovers) and associated paving over of front gardens to create parking. Officers have been asked to explore what can be done to prevent this, or if that is not possible, how it can be mitigated.

The reports from Royal Horticultural Society, National Park City Foundation & Ealing Front Gardens Project have been provided as background information. As these lay out that by 2010 approximately 12 square miles of front gardens – equivalent to 22 Hyde Parks - had been paved over. By 2015, 50% of all of London's front gardens had been paved over – a 36% increase through the decade. With the growth in EVs, there is now an additional catalyst driving applications for dropped kerbs. Loss of front gardens is having a significant impact on biodiversity, it also increases risks of flooding and is leading to rising temperatures in the urban environment.

There are ways to reduce the impact by insisting on the use of permeable materials and retaining planting.

Later in the agenda, we will explore pavement channels as a potential solution for charging Electrical Vehicles. The growth in EVs is one of the drivers for both the installation of paving and of Vehicle Footway Crossovers.

Dale Foden, Head of Highways, Highways Division, Environment, Neighbourhoods and Growth Department was then invited to present the enclosed report on Vehicle Footway Crossovers. Michael Tsoukaris, Head of Design Conservation and Transport Planning Division is also joined the meeting to answer questions.

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

- Officers said that an Article IV Direction has to be agreed by the Secretary of State. These are usually employed for areas of particular concern rather than widespread over a large geographical area. There is a consequence risk of appeal with residents seeking redress based in loss of value of parking. This is roughly estimated at £20k based on letting for garages.
- Dropped kerbs are only allowed where there is sufficient space for parking and no over-hanging of the pavement. Preventing this is through enforcement, but this has not been undertaken to date.
- Officers said that there has been no equalities audit of the implementation of dropped kerbs. It was noted by members that generally these are installed in wealthier areas with larger properties with front gardens.
- CPZs are used as a condition for refusal of dropped kerbs in the London Boroughs of Haringey and Camden. The justification is that dropped kerbs reduce access to parking on the highway. Officers were asked if there have been any legal challenges and they said that they have requested information on this from Camden. Members noted that this sets a precedent. Officers said this does come down to legal opinion and they would seek more advice before seeking to implement an Article IV Direction in Southwark.
- Members asked if more can be done with the material used creating a hard standing and planting. Officers said there is some leverage in Conservation areas to follow the RHS advice. However in a situation where there is no demolition in a Conservation area, or under 5 squares metres is laid down as a Permitted Development right, then options are limited.
- Members asked if it would be possible to increase the charge for the installation of dropped kerbs to nudge people away from this. Officers said the table comparing charging with other boroughs is provided to show by how much the council could reasonably increase fees.
- The chair said that the Commission will consider what can be done, including looking to give advice to residents on mitigation, as set out in the RHS report, and alternatives, such as allowing pavement channels.

6. SUSTAINABLE FREIGHT REVIEW - HIGHWAYS UPDATE

Dale Foden, Head of Highways, Highways Division, Environment, Neighbourhoods and Growth Department gave a short summary of the Highways report provided.

7. AIR QUALITY PARTICULATES - TYRE AND BRAKE

The chair invited Dr Ian Mudway, Imperial University, to present and explained that he has been invited here tonight to present on Air Quality and the health impacts of particulates from tyre, brakes and road dust, given the increasing numbers of Electric Vehicles (EV).

Dr Ian Mudway said there has been a shift of late to move from studying the health impact of tailgate emissions to also now look at particulates. He explained this is a verbal presentation but he will provide further information on emerging research underway.

He is explained he is presently working with colleagues to collate information arising from the implementation of ULEZ, which has been contentious. ULEZ has reduced tailpipe emissions and this will have a positive impact on Air Quality and health.

Particulates from braking will fall as EVs have regenerative braking.

He explained for tyres the evidence base is not considerable, and still quite sparse. It is quite difficult to identify tyre wear health impacts as tyres differ in composition and commercial propriety mean the composition is not transparent.

The largest study on particulates is funded by US in London, in the Westway, Marylebone and in parks. The first data is emerging soon.

He said that scientists are starting to think long and hard about the impact of particulates, however research is still in the early stages. He advised the Commission to keep an eye on this, not to discount particulates and to adopt a precautionary principle. Gaps and uncertainties about the impact of particulates do not mean these are safe.

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

- a) Dr Ian Mudway said the recent focus on tailpipe emissions makes sense as the harms of diesel, and other emissions, are established. The scientific community are now catching up on particulates.
- b) Members asked if there is a way to address tyre composition proprietary

confidentiality. Dr Ian Mudway said there is a study in Cambridge that is doing an analysis of composition and toxicology.

- c) Dr Ian Mudway said that the health impacts of particulates will be different than tailpipe emissions. There are different types of particulates released, including micro plastics and thermoplastics. At the moment, while there is limited evidence they are harmful, the precautionary principles applies. Public concern is ahead of the science.
- d) There was a discussion on road surface dust as vehicle weight increases in EVs, and the resultant increase in tyre wear.
- e) Dr Ian Mudway was asked about opportunities to work together to lobby for better regulation and what can Southwark can do. He suggested the following policy and regulatory approaches:
 - Less journeys
 - Fewer vehicles
 - Consolidation - one journey
 - Modal shift
 - Better research on the type of journeys and deliveries to inform reductions (e.g. the work of Price Waterhouse Coopers on deliveries).

8. PAVEMENT CHANNEL PROVIDERS

The chair welcomed the following pavement channel provider CEOs to the meeting remotely to answer questions:

- Ian Mach, Founder & CEO and Chartered Civil Engineer (CEng MICE), Charge Gully.
- Christopher Bibb, CEO , Electrica, Pavecross.

The following videos were then shown:

Charge Gully Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sht-HLIKKLE>

Pavecross Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xVru4AtRA2E>

The chair also drew members' attention to a paper provided by Ian Mach, Charge Gully.

Members were then invited to ask questions and the following points were made:

- Lamp-post EV charging comes with a higher price tariff than home charging.
- Pavement channels prevent the loss of planted front gardens, on bigger properties, and open up cheaper EV charging to people in smaller street properties.
- It is estimated that around 40% more people would switch to EV with more reliable charging.
- The government paper 'Plan for Drivers' is consulting on measures to increase charge point solutions, supporting pavement channel pilots and developing planning guidance for local authorities.
- Planning Permission is currently required, and this can make it unfeasible, however guidance is in development by the government looking at this being Permitted Development.
- Pavexcross said the material used in their design is environmentally sustainable and uses recycled rubber and steel for durability. Charge Gully said their design uses a particular type of aluminium that uses less carbon to produce and is easily recycled, which links to the circular economy.
- Pavexcross said their design can be installed by a statutory undertaker and the maintenance is through a subscription.
- There are ongoing pavement channel trials with East Lothian, Bath and with other local authorities. The results can be shared with the Commission early next year.
- A member commented that they would like to receive feedback on the issue of planning permission, and impact on the highway, from Planning and Highway officers. A member noted a concern that the process of resolving barriers to installation could be administratively time consuming.
- The pavement channel CEOs said the technology for installation is not complicated. They would like to see greater leadership from central government to enable local authorities to allow installation, and suggested that authorisation could be simplified and concerns addressed through a meeting with officers. Both CEOs indicated their willingness to discuss this further.

9. EV PLAN

Tom Sharland, Head of Climate Change & Sustainability, presented a summary of the enclosed Electrical Vehicle (EV) plan, which is presently out for consultation.

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

- Members praised the opening statement that the most environmental journey is the car journey not taken.
- Members asked about installation of pavement channels and the Head of Climate Change & Sustainability referred to health & safety concerns with the installation of electrical cables and offered to discuss this with relevant officers, as it was not his area of expertise, and come back to the commission.
- Members asked about the commercial opportunities and officers said they had commissioned 'City Side' to explore opportunities, especially on rapid charging. There is an intention to recruit a dedicated EV project manager with technical and commercial experience.
- Officers said there are actions to support car sharing.
- Officers were asked about the risk of over- provision given the desire to reduce car journeys over time, and they said there is modelling behind the scenes to prevent this.

RESOLVED

A letter will be draft by the Chair and Commission to respond to the draft EV plan , drawing on the evidence received this evening.

Officers will be asked to comment on pavement channels, and health and safety concerns, in particular.

10. SUSTAINABLE FREIGHT REVIEW - TFL

The chair welcomed Transport for London representatives:

- Dr Polyvios Polyviou : Transport Strategy & Policy
- Jonathan Baggs : Community Partnerships Lead – South

TfL representatives gave a presentation on decarbonisation of deliveries and the London Freight Lab.

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

- A member referred to the Freight Service Plan, circulated in advance, and actions related to reducing serious accidents and deaths from HGVs. She

asked if reducing the amount of HGV journeys would reduce these further and about the 'Direct Vision Standard'. In response TfL said that the aim to move 80-90% of road journeys to other modes -rail / river / cargo bikes - will positively impact on road safety. In addition the implementation of the 'Direct Vision Standard' is estimated to have helped to reduce, by around 45% , those accidents attributed to poor sightlines. TfL is now aiming to enhance the safety standard from one star to three star .

- A member welcomed the references to River Freight in the TfL plan and commented that Southwark Council has been looking at four places for floating docks, and added that the Port of London Authority (PLA) have been exploring this, and there is huge scope. TfL were asked how closely they are looking at this and they responded that there are capability and feasibility studies . TfL now need to look at integrating these into their plans and consider matters such as the safety impacts. Currently TfL said while there is not much delivery detail at present, there is lots to draw upon, and the potential is recognised .
- TfL has a plan for zero carbon deliveries by 2025 and then they will be moving toward a higher standard . TfL procurement powers are limited to an extent but they are also working with the GLA.

11. SUSTAINABLE FREIGHT REVIEW - PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

The chair invited Tim Cutts, Senior Regeneration Manager, to present the report circulated in advance. The chair then invited questions and the following points were made:

- A member asked if the large logistical hubs in development would use green roofs and manage the water sustainably and the officer provided assurances that they would.
- Members asked about the size of the logistical hubs and the officer said these are very big as major jumping off places for London deliveries.
- Members asked if it is right to concentrate many of these hubs on the Old Kent Road, and noted the Cross River Partnerships (CRP) presentations (see item 13) , which emphasised the need for these sites to come with electrification to support EVs. The officer said that the hubs do come with electrification to support EV. The hubs are also serving Westminster.
- The officer was asked about reliance on the road network and asked if there is a risk of baking in the road network rather than the rail network, which is lower carbon. The officer said that they are working with the CRP to explore rail freight distribution networks and associated hubs at stations, however

there is a massive need for distribution with the growth of online deliveries.

12. SUSTAINABLE FREIGHT REVIEW - FREIGHT SERVICE UPDATE

The chair said that in October Cabinet approved a strategy for Commercial Fleet Procurement and the documents for this item have been provided by Mick Lucas, Head of Traded Services, Environment and Leisure, to note, as an update on work Fleet services is undertaking to reduce emissions, following a briefing provided last year.

13. SUSTAINABLE FREIGHT REVIEW - CROSS RIVER PARTNERSHIP

The chair drew members attention to the presentations enclosed, to note, and explained that these came from an event she attended on 23 October 2023. This event emphasised the importance of freight linking in with rail and the river, not just major roads.

14. WORK PROGRAMME

The chair invited comment on the work-plan and members requested more female speakers. The co-opted members suggested commenting on the walking and cycling plan, and there was a brief discussion on exploring how this would fit in with the work- plan.