



SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE C

MINUTES of the Scrutiny Sub-Committee C held on Wednesday 11 November 2009
at 7.00 pm at Town Hall, Peckham Road, London SE5 8UB

PRESENT: Councillor Toby Eckersley (Chair)
Councillor Anood Al-Samerai
Councillor Susan Elan Jones
Councillor Richard Livingstone
Councillor Jane Salmon
Councillor Robert Smeath

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT: Paul Kyriacou, Executive Member for Environment

OFFICER SUPPORT: Wayne Chance, Chief Superintendent, Southwark
Glenn Higgs, MVA
Barbara Selby, Planning and Transport
Sally Masson, Scrutiny Project Manager

1. APOLOGIES

1.1 There were no apologies for absence.

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

2.1 There were none.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

3.1 There were none.

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the open sections of the meetings held on July 20 and November 11

2009 be approved as a correct record.

5. BUDGET AND POLICY REPORT SIGN OFF

5.1 The sub-committee agreed and signed off the report.

6. 20 MPH ZONES AND SPEEDING REVIEW

6.1 The sub-committee considered the report commissioned from the MVA.

6.2 The executive member for environment informed the sub-committee that discretionary funding from LIP had amounted to £100,000 to be used for 20mph speed limits. Recently, the executive member met with Wayne Chance, Southwark's Chief Superintendent to discuss future plans.

6.3 The sub-committee heard that restricted speed zones were very appealing for local councils because they are self enforcing and they have significantly reduced accidents. Most notably they provide a reduction in fatal accidents involving cyclists. However there are currently no plans to increase road safety campaigns around problem arterial routes. The Chief Superintendent of Southwark said that he continues to support plans to increase the number of 20mph zones and to enforce speed limits. The police are being actively vigilant to road traffic offenses in general, including dangerous driving and driving without due care and attention (bad driving also comes under this definition).

6.4 Officers reported that overall there has been a reduction in serious collisions in Southwark and that there should be continued support for similar speed restriction schemes. The Chief Superintendent said that they could bid for resources through a centralised tasking process but he emphasised that he supported further schemes as long as they conformed to statutory guidelines.

6.5 Speed restriction schemes were a pan London response and he confirmed that the police had a community safety role, which included taking an active role in promoting road safety awareness in schools and with the general public.

6.6 Members of the sub-committee wanted to know what other measures Southwark could finance to improve the road safety situation. For example, members thought that the Rotherhithe new road junction was a problem spot and wondered if Southwark is doing enough overall to improve the situation in this and similar areas. The executive member for environment said that Southwark was looking at road safety overall but that the work was always going to be limited by how much is available to spend.

6.7 Members were concerned that speed humps were not necessarily the best traffic calming measure, as these themselves can create problems. Speed humps had an impact on the maintenance costs to private vehicles and they also posed some significant problems to emergency vehicles. For instance there was anecdotal evidence to suggest that pregnant women had experienced discomfort in ambulances and cars which are forced to go over speed humps. The

Superintendent said that he couldn't speak with any authority on the experience of those using and operating emergency vehicles apart from to say that the humps were designed to allow emergency vehicles through. In reaction, members wanted to know if this might also mean that emergency vehicles were slower at getting to emergency calls. The Chief superintendent said that he thought that the response times were in fact getting quicker.

6.8 There were still issues that Members felt needed addressing regarding speed humps:

- damage to private and emergency vehicles
- criminals smashing in to them, possibly causing other vehicles to smash into them
- reduced chasing times and response times to emergencies in general

6.9 The Chief Superintendent conceded that response times might be improved without speed humps. However, on balance, taking into consideration the safety they brought about, he didn't think that this issue was something to be unduly concerned about.

6.10 Glenn Higgs (MVA), the superintendent and the executive member all agreed that speed cameras were an effective deterrent. The cameras are managed by the London Safety Camera Partnership and it is they who decide where the cameras should be placed. However, there is an ongoing revenue cost to them which means that their placement is carefully considered. The sub-committee heard how they were not popular with the police who often set them off when responding to emergency calls and this incurred a great deal of paperwork for them as a result.

6.11 Members wanted to know if 20mph zones were always appropriate. Were there times when installing road calming measures can run the risk of needlessly annoying and inconveniencing responsible motorists. Members felt that more consideration should be given to this.

6.12 Barbara Selby, head of transport planning, said that they were aware that Southwark needed to review its Road Safety Plan after the departmental restructure. She reported that the policing of 20mph zones had its difficulties, and there was a need to look at the mechanisms that underpinned how this might work better in future. Any review undertaken needed to actively seek the views of local people by those without a vested interest in the subject. MVA were commissioned on this basis and provided the report that the sub-committee were now considering.

6.13 Glenn Higgs of MVA reported that sinusoidal speed humps were now the usual and preferred road calming measure. This was mainly because they affected less of a jolt when vehicles went over them. They were also preferred by cyclists who were often forced into the gutter with the conventional humps and by vehicles swerving to reduce the impact of striking the hump. However, members felt that the humps were another deterrent to people becoming cyclists and thought that more consideration should be given to how cyclists use the road and who is cycling. Although road humps were the most cost effective measures, they are not suitable for all areas. For instance it might be that chicanes might be more suitable

on bus routes.

- 6.14 Southwark was now correlating data on traffic calming measures. They sought to examine the impact over a period of 3 years across 19 zones. On average collisions were down by 28% but there was little change in the types of collisions that occurred. Speed humps were seen as very cost effective way of reducing collisions, requiring little maintenance with no added costs after their implementation. The environmental costs were seen as negligible compared with the benefits of their success in improving road safety. Glenn Higgs said that these traffic calming measures had little impact on the statistics for accidents involving pedestrians, as pedestrian numbers are increasing.
- 6.15 Members drew attention to the frustration caused to pedestrians by installing 'speed tables.' Often pedestrians were left waiting a long time for larger vehicles to pass over them. Glenn Higgs said that it might be that raising pedestrian crossings might help change the dynamic of road users so that pedestrians were given more of a priority.
- 6.16 According to Transport for London figures, traffic has plateaued on major routes in recent years. Traffic calming measures are more tricky to implement on major routes, where most accidents take place.
- 6.17 There are increasing amounts of psychological traffic calming measures such as encouraging mixed street use where pedestrians and traffic share the same space. This can help to discourage traffic from roaring through densely populated areas. Southwark is starting to collect data from other boroughs over a 3 year period to measure schemes such as the mixed use schemes.
- 6.18 A member pointed out that there is a gap in the cost-benefit analysis, in that increased journey times in 20mph zones has not been addressed in this MVA report.
- 6.19 Members felt that there were negative costs associated with the introductions of such schemes to small businesses and other commercial operations and that it was the measures themselves which were frustrating motorists and lengthening the time of their overall journey. Officers said that journey times were more likely to be controlled by how traffic behaved at junctions rather than the traffic calming measures themselves. Members wanted more data on this but Officers informed the sub-committee that the data had only just started to be collected. Officers were not aware of any comparative studies elsewhere.
- 6.20 The sub-committee went over an officer briefing on the sustainable communities act:

'In July 2009, Southwark Council submitted eight proposals to the Local Government Association (LGA) under the Sustainable Communities Act. These proposals had been submitted by local residents and were approved by a panel of local people and by Council Assembly. The eight proposals that were submitted

are as follows:

1. *A Southwark Safety Camera partnership*
2. *Relaxing requirements for 20mph zones to have self-enforcing calming measures*
3. *A national plastic bag free day*
4. *A duty on Network Rail and any other rail operators to work in partnership with local authorities and local communities*
5. *Simplifying tax incentives that encourage businesses to promote sustainable commuting*
6. *Incentives to budget for leaseholder repair bills*
7. *Civil penalties for unlawful use of properties to cover enforcement costs*
8. *Support for perma-culture design principles in national planning policy'*

- 6.21 Officers said that more community involvement must be encouraged in all policy making, including those pertaining to traffic calming measures.
- 6.22 The sub-committee went through the recommendations in the MVA report.
- 6.23 The chair requested a briefing note from Eamon Doran (Group Manager sustainable travel and road safety) for the next meeting.
- 6.24 Officers said that they would get back to the sub-committee regarding a consultation which is currently being undertaken in North Dulwich which might help inform our review.
- 6.25 Members wondered if there was a case for closing appropriate streets to vehicles altogether.
- 6.26 The sub-committee agreed that they would be recommending to the executive that they take up the recommendations set out in the MVA report. The sub-committee felt that proper consideration needed to be given to any road calming measures along with proper investigation into the resulting effects.
- 6.27 The sub-committee would also be recommending that that the executive keeps itself fully informed and up to date on the latest research and findings in this area.

7. WORK PROGRAMME

- 7.1 Members discussed the next topic on the work programme; Planning Enforcement.
- 7.2 The sub-committee agreed to invite Councillor Gordon Nardell to the next meeting to help inform the scoping of the review.

- 7.3 The topic to include: retrospective planning applications, such as housing renovations. Members also wanted to look at how Southwark monitor private developers and to receive quarterly information for each community council area.

The meeting ended at 9.00pm.