

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMISSION

MINUTES of the Environment Scrutiny Commission held on Wednesday 4 December 2019 at 7.00 pm at Ground Floor Meeting Room G02A - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT: Councillor Leanne Werner (Chair)
Councillor Graham Neale (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Radha Burgess
Councillor Tom Flynn
Councillor Richard Leeming
Councillor Damian O'Brien
Councillor Michael Situ

**OTHER MEMBERS
PRESENT:**

**OFFICER
SUPPORT:** Pip Howson, Team Leader Transport policy
Julie Timbrell, Scrutiny Project Manager

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

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. MINUTES

The minutes of the Environment Scrutiny Commission held on Tuesday 1 October 2019 were agreed as an accurate record.

5. ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMISSION REPORT ON THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY ROAD MAP

The report was noted.

6. TRANSPORT POLICY AND PRACTICE

Pip Howson, Team Leader Transport policy, Place and Wellbeing introduced the Movement Plan.

The chair invited questions and the following points were made:

- i. A member asked the officer to sum up the plan in brief. She responded that the new Movement Plan is a people centric plan. The aspirations are considered to be ambitious and at the forefront amongst transport policy peers in Europe.
- ii. The officer was asked if the plan contained targets and she responded there is a target for 80 % of people to be walking, cycling or using public transport, when undertaking a journey. The plan also integrates of health objectives, which is strength.
- iii. A member said the plan's aims are very good, but queried if the council had the capacity to delivery; including sufficient expertise and financial resources. The officer responded that the detail covering delivery will be in a subsequent document, with a draft expected in February. Funds are available from TFL, though this is reducing gradually, even though costs are rising. Currently the council get approximately 2 million per annual, and a combination of, physical and social projects are funded through this source, with a plan for this spending approved by Cabinet annually.
- iv. The officer was asked about delivery and the relationship with the Highways team. She said that there is a matrix management approach with employees from highways combining with policy leads.
- v. A member commented that transport contributes 27 % of carbon emissions and asked what the council will need to do to achieve zero carbon by 2030? The officer responded that ambitious solutions would be included:
 - Rolling out a borough wide CPZ and restricting kerbside to Electric Vehicles (EV)
 - Ensure that almost nobody owns a car - but where they do

- it is an EV
 - All car clubs are EV
 - Council fleet is EV and only contracting with providers using EV
 - Cargo bikes are the preference for moving goods, where feasible.
- vi. She added all the above are dependent on partners and are a challenge in democracy, and where extensive consultation is required for every policy change.
- vii. A member cautioned against the approach of devolving choices to individuals given the risks associated with Air quality and Climate Change, and asked instead how the council can actively discourage car driving. The officer responded that there is a requirement to consult extensively; however this is also about the political leadership required for significant change.
- viii. A member added that given our public health responsibility members ought to be setting a vision, and this ought to include the that a car ought to be a vehicle of last resort. The officer agreed that we do need clear political leadership, particularly when there is push back on car parking provision. She added that officers have been insisting that all new housing schemes are advertised as car free on Old Kent Road, so clear expectations are set in advance.
- ix. A member commented that Canada Water is still allowing cars. The officer responded that she could not comment on that in detail as her role is focused on the Old Kent Road. She offered to respond to any additional questions in a follow report.
- x. There was a discussion about the capacity to drive change speedily. The officer said the process for highway change requires an initial consultation, followed by a formal consultation, and this must address any formal objections. She commented that the system is quite cumbersome. She said this procedure could be looked at to see if changes could be introduced more swiftly. Highways would need to look at the existing process in more detail. Members indicated that they would take away the point about cumbersome procedure slowing change, and the need to address this if the council is to deliver on a more radical ambition.
- xi. The officer was asked about the delivery of pocket projects, and why only 2/4 has been delivered. The officers said that delayed and blockages from TfL have stalled projects.
- xii. There was a discussion about political will and political pressure. Members that they are lobbied by residents in car free developments. They suggested that the adverts in Southwark Life advertising this coming Saturday as a car free days are setting an unhelpful tone, and queried if these are still needed? The officer said that the council have to balance the need for thriving

highstreets, however she added that there are alternatives that could be promoted, for example cargo bikes in London Bridge and many other ideas.

- xiii. Members commented that there is a gap between aspirations of the Movement Plan and the delivery, which would need to be closed to reach zero carbon emissions.

7. PLAY STREETS

Fiona Sutherland, Deputy Director, London Play presented. Southwark has a play Streets policy in place for about 5 years. The procedure in place is fairly straightforward; a letter is required to residents and 4 weeks notice. She advised this is much better than some boroughs, some of which required 70% of residents to sign up in favour. This is very fearful and not really necessary as the evidence has shown that 90% of people will be in favour, 5% on the fence, and 5% against. Residents can still drive out, although slowly, if they need to, for example if some one has a disability. There is proposed legislation to make things easier.

She said that 80% of the urban fabric is tarmac. The growing dominance of cars over the last several decades has had an adverse impact on children, with freedom to roam reducing severely.

Members asked what approaches have been successful in other boroughs to increase the use of Play Streets. The Deputy Director said having one councillor to promote the scheme in each ward was effective in Redbridge. Encouraging Play Street activism can be effective, for example using Play Streets to have a temporary closure of a rat run street.

London Play said that have been asked to roll out and promote schemes in various boroughs to tackle themes, for example one in Greenwich was part of a programme to improve air quality and reduce cars use.

Member asked about the historical changes in car use. The Deputy Director said the 80s saw a big increase in car ownership and a switch in priorities, previously children came first on the road and any death was treated with horror.

Members asked how Play Streets could be incentivised further. She suggested that members holding Play Streets locally, to promote culture change. There are permanent Play Streets in Westminster borough.

There was a discussion about changing the colour of a Play Street and the Deputy Director said the children creating chalk drawings change behaviour.

A member pointed out that some people live on busy roads which cannot be Play Streets, and it would be unfortunate if initiatives like these were to divide people in neighbourhoods from those living on side streets from those living on main streets. The Deputy Director said that with the right publicity and promotion Play Streets encourage people from a wider area

to enjoy a car free space.

A member commented that Southwark's Play Street page could be more user friendly, and that it lacks joy. The transport policy officer said that resident feedback has been the process is was easy. She agreed the process ought to be a simple as possible, however she cautioned that setting up a Play Street involves taking on a legal duty. She offered to take this away and the comment on conveying the process as simply as possible, and the issue over the attractiveness of the design.

RESOLVED

Officers will provide a note on improving the application for Play Streets.

8. WALKING

Katherine Jacobs, Living Streets London manager presented. She started by saying that we are facing a global climate emergency, and that changing modes of transport plays a big role in tackling this. In the city 88 % of space is claimed by cars, and yet 60% of people do not have cars, which is 9/10 households.

She advocated filtering out cars though the implementation of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, which increase play, walking and cycling space. These can be introduced relatively easily though the use of chicanes, bushes, trees and simple structures. Alongside this complementary measures are needed on major roads to promote active travel and public transport, and the creation of people friendly places such as markets.

There are several Southwark groups working to increase green routes and engaging residents

Living Streets is working with schools on the 'wow walk to school', encouraging and rewarding hundreds of children.

Living Streets indicated they are keen to step up their work in Southwark and the transport policy officer noted that currently Southwark have adopted programmes such as Wow. There is a cycling stakeholder group, and they are now looking at walking group.

A member asked about Low Traffic Neighbourhood versus measurements to reduce car ownership and use overall. An audience member commented that the filtering effect of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods means the short journeys are just not worth doing, and this means there is an overall traffic evaporation effect.

9. AIR QUALITY CAMPAIGNERS

This item was deferred.

10. CYCLING

Peter Walker; cyclist, blogger, journalist, author and local resident presented first. He said that cycling is safer than not cycling because of the positive health impacts, however to encourage a wider uptake more is needed to be done to increase safety. This can be done through the provision of separate bike lane and modal filters.

He advocated reducing endless consultation and getting more changes done faster.

Peter Walker cautioned against a focus on EV, as there is rising evidence is that the emissions are still high from brake dust etc.; the safety problems of cars remain, alongside the predominance of roads given over to cars. The transport policy officer clarified she is not advocating wholesale switching from petro cars to EV , only that EV is a option of last resort.

Peter Walker highlighted the perverse parking charges; currently it is common for cars to be charged in the region of £125 per year, whereas a bike hanger is £48, despite the health benefits and low use of kerbside space. Nottingham has bucked this trend.

Simon Munk, London Cycling Campaign then presented. He said he lives in Waltham Forest, which has introduced Low Traffic Neighbourhoods and Mini Hollands. They have been very effective at changing transport habits.

He said there are bold targets in Southwark's Movement Plan and hitting these targets would go a long way to reaching zero carbon and improving Air Quality.

However he said the bad news for Southwark is:

- Cycling not changing
- Car ownership is high for the borough
- Some of the worst collisions data, and not on a downward trend.

He advocated:

- Doing a borough wide CPZ, like many other London boroughs
- Increasing Cycling lanes
- Reducing parking
- Low Traffic Neighbourhoods and active travel provision on main roads

He said the Movement Plan advocates behaviour change; however the evidence is that these will not be effective without the provision of safe routes.

There was a discussion about political will, which Simon noted is evidently

present in the Commission. He advised that that driving change requires retooling the engagement process. Social media means things can get heated. Political leadership is required to address this setting out the vision and consequences of not changing, with clear communication. He said that in Waltham Forest there was a scheme by scheme battle, and the approach was to do each one done faster and better .Provision on main roads is needed as well as Low Traffic Neighbourhoods. He advised the reduction of car parking step by step.

Simon said that Southwark are leaders in freight movement with London Bridge cargo bikes and Peddle Me and advocated using this to get out in front on delivery and freight movement.

He also suggested adopting a workplace parking levy, and again sited good practice in Nottingham.

Learning from both Waltham Forest and the consultation on the CPZ in East Dulwich is that it can get very fraught with traders, however the evidence is that footfall actually increases which is better for local business.

Peter Walker asked if there was scope for experiments. The transport policy officer that that there was and Southwark is undertaking schemes with 18 months experimental orders, which can be repeated.

The cycling campaigners advised that there is a need for conviction and leadership, given the climate emergency and that car owners are not the majority.

RESOLVED

- Simon Munk offered to provide examples of good engagement and consultation guides.
- The Commission will visit Waltham Forest

11. WORK PROGRAMME

This was noted.