

Item No. 7	Classification: Open	Date: 11 October 2022	Meeting Name: Environment & Community Engagement Scrutiny Commission.
Report title:		Sustainable Freight: Highways activity	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
Cabinet Member:		Cllr Rose, Cabinet Member for Leisure, Parks, Streets and Clean Air	

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, Movement Plan, and Climate Emergency Action Plan.

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 on the local environment, including carbon emissions and other air pollution, and improve the quality of life for residents and visitors.

River freight

3. In collaboration with the Cross River Partnership (CRP), Southwark is investigating establishing a river freight trail at Greenland Dock in Rotherhithe. Building on CRP's existing relationships with suppliers, this will seek to consolidate and transfer local business deliveries to the Thames. The area is also largely residential, including a large number of residential boats. Through the installation of a parcel locker, the trial will also look at the feasibility of also transferring domestic freight traffic to the river.

Bikes for Business

4. Southwark plays host to the Bikes for Business scheme, which provides financial incentives and operational support to encourage businesses in the north of the borough to use cargo bikes for their deliveries. This is either through the purchase of their own cargo bike, or through using cargo-bike courier services. The project is due to last 18 months, until March 2023, and has resulted in 77 businesses switching so far.

Cargo Bikes

5. Southwark has sponsored the introduction of cargo bikes in East Dulwich through partnership with Peddle My Wheels, as part of the OurBike scheme. These can be utilised by local residents allowing them to sustainably make their own deliveries and collections (such as weekly shopping) that might otherwise require a car.

Accessible Cycle Tool

6. The Highways department has developed the Accessible Cycle Tool (ACT). The initial aim of the ACT was to ensure that all cycle routes in the borough were usable by adapted cycles. An additional benefit of this is that such doing this will generally ensure that cycle routes are usable by cargo bikes. This goal has now been explicitly incorporated into the use of the ACT. This will help provide cargo bikes with a distance and time advantage over other forms of road freight, encouraging its use.

High street improvements

7. The point closure on Bermondsey Street and the traffic restrictions on Rye Lane have been designed to limit the impact of goods vehicles on the enjoyment of the high street while still allowing business to be serviced.

Bookable loading bays

8. The borough is currently developing trials of “Bookable Loading Bays”, with sites at Bankside (New Globe Walk) and Walworth (site TBC). These will seek to minimise the impact of logistics in areas with limited space by prioritising space only when it is needed.

Future direction

9. In the medium-to-long term, the Programme, Policy and Support team is revising the council’s policy on all aspects of mobility (formerly known as the Movement Plan). This will include substantial focus on reducing the environmental and health impacts of freight, servicing and construction activities within the borough. This will include recommendations for future investment, as well as identifying the potential for further collaboration with third-party bodies.
10. The council is also currently updating the 2015 cycle strategy, developing from the 2019 Movement Plan and refresh process, Air Quality strategy, Climate Change strategy, other policy documents and best practice. This will include provision to better accommodate and encourage cycle freight.
11. The focus will remain on reducing the dependence of supply chains on motor vehicles through shifts to alternative modes and more efficient routing through the use of consolidation and distribution centres, including microdistribution centres such as parcel lockers.