

Meeting Name:	Cabinet
Date:	3 December
Report title:	Response to the Environment Scrutiny Commission: Sustainable Freight
Cabinet Member:	Councillor James McAsh, Clean Air, Streets and Waste
Ward(s) or groups affected:	All
Classification:	Open
Reason for lateness (if applicable):	N/a

FOREWORD - COUNCILLOR JAMES MCASH, CABINET MEMBER FOR CLEAN AIR, STREETS AND WASTE

In July 2023, Southwark adopted Streets for People, setting out how we plan to transform transport in the borough. The central goal of Streets for People is to ensure that we use our streets in a way that reflects the needs of people in Southwark. It is divided into four chapters, focussing on delivering Streets for Communities, Streets for Journeys, Streets for Nature and Streets for the Economy.

One of the main responses we have heard from residents and visitors when discussing Streets for People is that they want to see less traffic on our streets. This is key to making our streets feel safer and more welcome and encouraging them to spend more time outside in their community. Creating welcoming and more enjoyable streets is also key to supporting our town centres and local economy. High streets and other retail areas designed around pedestrian comfort see increased footfall and higher spending. Additionally, by reducing the dominance of motor vehicles on our streets, we can create new opportunities for retail activities such as markets or outdoor dining.

Freight traffic is a major contributor to air pollution. It is responsible for 34% of NO_x and 27% PM_{2.5} particulate matter emissions, despite accounting for only 15% of vehicle miles.

As part of the Streets for People Strategy the Council is committed to publishing a Freight Plan and this is currently being drafted by officers to be consulted on in the new year and then published. I welcome the work done by the Scrutiny Commission and thank them for their recommendations which we have considered, and this report details our response to each of the recommendations and confirmation of inclusion in the proposed document.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet: -

1. notes the report.
2. Provides response to the seven recommendations of the Scrutiny Commission in the table in paragraph 9. Where relevant, these have been acknowledged and incorporated into the Freight Plan and other Highways work. It has also been noted where responsibility for addressing the recommendations sits with other parts of the council.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3. To agree to accept or partially accept the recommendations of the Scrutiny Panel and to note their inclusion in the draft Freight Plan.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

4. 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 Streets for People, Climate Emergency Action Plan, Economic Strategy, Air Quality Action Plan and the Walking, Cycling and Electric Vehicle Plans.
5. The programme was considered by the Scrutiny Commission, and this led to a Sustainable Freight Scrutiny Review Report that included seven recommendations that was reported to Cabinet on the 22 July 2024.
6. Cabinet noted the report and recommendations from the commission and recommended that they be considered and for the relevant cabinet member to report back to cabinet with a response on each of them.
7. The Council's Freight Plan, a commitment through the Streets for People Strategy, is currently being drafted and consulted on internally prior to going out to public consultation early in the new year.
8. This report provides the response to each of the Scrutiny Commission recommendations in the following table: -

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATION 1 TO CABINET	
1.	The Council should join with other local authorities, the GLA, academic institutions and others as appropriate to push for more research and, where appropriate, participate in scientific trials, on non-tailpipe vehicular emissions, whether ICE vehicles or EVs, particularly with regard to the links with vehicle size and weight.
RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION 1	
1.	The EV Plan emphasised the need to reduce car journeys, even while supporting electrification.

	<p>This approach is repeated in the Freight Plan, which prioritises moving away from motor vehicles, including EVs, towards consolidation, cycle freight and rail and river transport. This will generally tend to reduce non-tailpipe vehicular emissions.</p> <p>Specific research into the pollution and its effect on human health will be led by the Environmental Protection Team</p>
RECOMMENDATION 1: ACCEPTED	

COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATION 2 TO CABINET	
2.	<p>The Commission recommends that the final Freight Plan adopts the same starting principle as the EV Plan, namely that: 'The most impactful [car] journey is the one that isn't taken'.</p> <p>Where a vehicle is deemed necessary, the Council should actively minimise the production of particulate matter by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • favouring the use of the smallest possible EV for the job • ensuring that drivers are trained to minimise generation of particulates. • using higher quality tyres and maintaining a good quality road surface.
RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION 2	
2.	<p>The Freight Plan focuses on reducing freight movements in general, the distance of freight journeys, and encouraging cycle, rail and river freight, in line with this recommendation. Management of the council's own fleet, however, is outside the scope of the Freight Plan.</p> <p>Through the Gateway procurement process and with Cabinet approval, Fleet Services are committed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That services will be encouraged to consider alternative forms of travel before opting for a vehicle replacement. • That the need to procure/replace vehicles is supported by a service director approved business case. • That vehicles will be 'fit for purpose' to ensure that the council continues to deliver reliable services and ultra-low emission vehicles where possible. <p>Training is completed by all Council drivers to minimise vehicle impacts and raise cyclist safety/awareness.</p> <p>The council can also require the use of sustainable freight and servicing during the construction and operation of private development through the planning process.</p>
RECOMMENDATION 2: PARTIALLY ACCEPTED	

COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATION 3 TO CABINET

3. The Commission recommends:
- that the Council takes full account of any learning opportunities arising from the CRP report expected in relation to the Bankside trial.
 - That the Council collaborates with the PLA, TfL, the CRP and neighbouring boroughs to understand the infrastructure required to substantially shift freight from a road-based distribution system to one which relies more heavily on rail and river interfacing directly with last-mile logistics.
 - That the Council carry out an immediate review of plans to deliver logistics hubs that rely exclusively on the road network. This will include those described above in the Old Kent Road area and any others in the pipeline, to ensure that limited resources are not spent on over delivering road-based freight infrastructure at the expense of prioritising more sustainable options.
 - Any plans to deliver road-based logistics hubs should be predicated on an evidence-based analysis of projected need in a future where, working with partners such as the PLA, TfL, CRP and neighbouring boroughs, Southwark maximises its potential to deliver river and rail freight options.

The Commission recommends that the findings of this work should underpin the proposed Freight Plan (2024), which should focus on reducing the overall number of vehicular freight journeys by road, prioritising instead the interface between rail, river and the use of cargo bikes to facilitate last mile delivery solutions, whilst lower down the hierarchy and on the basis of need, supporting road logistics hubs that incorporate EVs.

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION 3

3. The Freight Plan has built on existing research into consolidation infrastructure, including the work led by CRP.

The Freight Plan proposes a network of consolidation centres across the borough, both to manage the transfer incoming goods from road, rail and river for final delivery, and to manage incoming deliveries to areas such as town centres, helping separate pedestrians from motor vehicles. Rail- and river- connected locations will be prioritised, including those where such access can be future-proofed as part of initial, road-based operations. Delivery of the Plan will include identifying appropriate locations for these consolidation centres. This will be done in collaboration with neighbouring boroughs, TfL, the PLA and Network Rail. However, it is acknowledged that suitable sites and land in the borough is at a premium and is in competition with identifying sites for housing need.

RECOMMENDATION 3: ACCEPTED

COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATION 4 TO CABINET

4. The Council should assist in the promotion of Cargo Bikes to small business, the community and voluntary sector, and families, such as through the annual Car Free day and at venues such as Maltby Street Market and newly pedestrianised public spaces. The Council should set itself the task of organising promotions and trials of cargo bikes – perhaps together with other less conventional cycles – at least 3 times a year at different locations in the borough, for example at park fares, markets and through pop up events.

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION 4

4. A working group of officers drawn from across the council are developing an action plan to promote cargo bike use with small businesses, aligned to the council's Economic Strategy and Climate Emergency Action Plan.

RECOMMENDATION 4: ACCEPTED

COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATION 5 TO CABINET

5. The Council should enable and promote parcel lockers and other click and collect solutions in the Freight Plan.
The Council should work with other stakeholders such as TfL, the GLA and London Councils to actively engage with online retailers and push at a borough-wide and London-wide level for click and collect options to be offered and promoted to consumers as the norm.
The Council should engage with the borough's largest retailers (including those with physical premises used for online sales) to ensure that where parking space is available there is adequate priority given to offering safe access by bike as well as convenient and secure cycle parking in order to facilitate collection/ transportation of purchased goods by bike.

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION 5

5. The Freight Plan supports the adoption of parcel lockers and methods of click and collect delivery.

Delivering the plan will involve identifying potential locations for parcel lockers, and seeking interest from operators, with a focus on open access.

RECOMMENDATION 5: ACCEPTED**COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATION 6 TO CABINET**

6. Develop a procurement policy that will deliver zero carbon emissions by 2030, as envisaged in the Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan, drawing on best practice, including the work of Ashden and TfL.

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION 6

6. Procurement is the responsibility of individual council departments. Carbon accounting has been incorporated within the planning and delivery of Highways projects.

Work is underway within Climate Change to develop a sustainable procurement policy and guidance materials, applicable to all departments in the council, to support climate neutrality by 2030.

RECOMMENDATION 6: ACCEPTED**COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATION 7 TO CABINET**

7. Undertake research to establish the principal source and destination of freight moving around the borough in order to develop an action plan to reduce the impact of freight on poor air quality.
The Freight Plan must have a research strand in order to understand, reduce and consolidate freight journeys and map their impact on air quality. This ought to include promotion of the self-service toolkits

	available through TfL to local business so they can conduct studies to reduce and consolidate freight.
RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION 7	
7.	The Freight Plan commits to delivering research on the freight sector within Southwark, including identifying the origin and destination of vehicle movements. This will be delivered with Lambeth and financed by Impact on Urban Health. Work on this is already underway.
RECOMMENDATION 7: ACCEPTED	

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Cabinet Paper 22 July 2024 - Report of the Environment Scrutiny Commission: Sustainable Freight scrutiny review	Cabinet report template 2012 (southwark.gov.uk)	Steven Grayer 02075251045
Sustainable Freight scrutiny review report	Sustainable freight scrutiny review report.pdf (southwark.gov.uk)	

APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor James McAsh, Clean Air, Streets and Waste	
Lead Officer	Toni Ange, Acting Strategic Director, Environment, Sustainability and Leisure	
Report Author	Steven Grayer, Head of Highways	
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CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance	No	No
Strategic Director, Resources	No	No
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
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